

# How to Talk to Rental Housing Operators About Their Pet Policies

It's important to approach rental housing operators from a partnership perspective for the best results.

## Seek to understand

Ask questions about their pet policies and pet fee structure to be sure you know exactly what they are, and why these are in place. These could be owner- or corporate-driven rules that the local staff cannot control. Ask if there are ever exceptions (aside from service or ESA animals), and why; as well as what renters can do to make them feel comfortable with bringing their pet into the community.

## Speak their language

We've created a "[pitch deck](#)" for rental housing operators that you may use to tell the story of why embracing pets is actually good for their business and highlight the positive impact for renters and shelters. Keep in mind that often, operators haven't thought about their pet policies for years, and this information can be quite eye-opening.

## Understand that they are running a business

It's good to always remember that, whoever you speak with, their primary goals are the health and efficient operation of the business of operating the rental community - and that this involves a myriad of priorities around resident satisfaction, property maintenance, marketing to maintain occupancy, customer retention, accounting, and many other areas. Again, this is why appealing to them as business people and demonstrating the benefits of fewer restrictions is so powerful.

## Don't play the blame game

It may be tempting to point the finger, but your diplomacy skills are invaluable when having these conversations. Alienating rental housing operators will make them more unlikely to effect change. Contrary to popular belief, there are many good people working in the rental housing industry who will want to help and work with you in a spirit of partnership.

## Look for baby steps

It may be difficult to convince an operator to completely lift restrictions or eliminate pet fees all at once. But there may be opportunities to move the needle; increasing a weight limit from 30 to 60 lbs., striking five of the ten breed restrictions in the policy, or decreasing pet rent to a more manageable level will all be steps in the right direction.