

**Pet-Inclusive
Housing Initiative**

PRESENTED BY

**Michelson
Found Animals**



The Search for Pet-Inclusive Housing

How Information Gaps Shape
the Housing Search Experience
for Renters with Pets



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Executive Summary

Finding housing is fundamentally an information problem.

Before renters can evaluate affordability, location, commute times, or amenities, they must first determine whether a property is even a viable option.

For renters with pets, that determination is often difficult because critical pet policy information, including whether pets are allowed, applicable fees, deposits, breed restrictions, weight limits, and pet count limits, is frequently incomplete, inconsistent, or unavailable until later in the housing search process.

Drawing on:

- » A survey of more than 1,100 California renters
- » An analysis of rental listings on three major ILS platforms¹ across five California housing markets
- » Qualitative interviews with Los Angeles County renters

Together, these sources show that critical pet policy information is often missing when renters begin their search—and that those information gaps create avoidable costs, delays, and inefficiencies for renters and housing providers alike.

¹ An internet listing service (ILS) is an online platform where prospective renters search for available rental housing.

Key Findings

California Renter Housing Search Survey

74%

say pet-friendly housing is difficult to find.

82%

encountered at least one pet-related restriction or fee.

72%

experienced negative consequences due to unclear pet policy information.

51%

paid an application fee before fully understanding a property's pet policy.

96%

support requiring pet policies to be disclosed before applying.

Internet Listing Service (ILS) Audit

Across 40 multifamily properties, the audit captured 87 property-source listings across the online sources reviewed.

Only 1 of 87

property-source listings included **all nine pet policy elements**.

15%

included **none of the nine elements** reviewed.

Critical details such as breed, size and weight restrictions, pet limits, and pet-related costs were frequently unavailable.

58%

of the 87 property-source listings included **fewer than half of the nine pet policy elements** reviewed.

The Housing Search Starts With Missing Information

The challenge facing renters with pets extends beyond whether a property allows pets. The details of a property's pet policy are often incomplete, inconsistent, or unavailable when renters begin searching for housing.

Survey Findings: California Renter Housing Search Survey

Pet-related barriers are widespread

82%

of California renters encountered at least one pet-related restriction or fee during their housing search.

These included:

- » Breed restrictions
- » Weight restrictions
- » Limits on the number of pets
- » Pet rent
- » Pet deposits
- » Pet fees

Pet-friendly housing is difficult to find

74%

reported that finding pet-friendly housing in California is difficult.

Even basic eligibility information is sometimes unavailable

19%

reported difficulty determining whether pets were allowed before contacting a property.

Qualitative Validation: Interviews with Pet-Owning LA County Renters

“Some properties were not specific or upfront about the number of pets allowed. Once I said I had two, then they would say they would only accept one.”

— Janet A.

“If properties stated that pets were allowed, they didn’t post if they had breed restrictions, and they didn’t post if they had any pet fees.”

— Ghazelle R.

Marketplace Evidence: ILS Audit



Across 40 multifamily properties, the audit identified 87 property-source listings in which a property appeared on one of the online sources reviewed.

Nearly 6 in 10 (58%) observed property-source listings contained fewer than five of the nine pet policy elements reviewed.

Only one observed property-source listing contained all nine elements, while 15% contained none of them.

The gaps were particularly important for information that can determine whether a renter and their pet are eligible for a property—including breed, size and weight restrictions, limits on the number of pets, and applicable pet charges.

The challenge is not simply that renters are overlooking information. In many cases, the information they need is not available online.



When Information Is Missing, Renters Pay the Price

Information gaps create real consequences. Renters are often required to invest money before they have enough information to determine whether a property is suitable.

Survey Findings: California Renter Housing Search Survey

Application fees are often paid before eligibility is known

51%

reported paying an application fee before fully understanding a property's pet policy.

Negative consequences are widespread

72%

reported experiencing negative outcomes due to unclear or incomplete pet policy information.

Common consequences included:

- » Additional housing search time
- » Contacting multiple properties
- » Delayed housing placement
- » Settling for less desirable housing

Qualitative Validation: Interviews with Pet-Owning LA County Renters



Wasted Money

"I didn't know that this place I am currently renting wanted an extra pet deposit or pet rent. I found that out only when I went to sign the lease."

— Beatrice S.



Wasted Time

"It took me about 4-5 months to find the current place I am living at because many apartments don't accept pets at all or will only accept one dog."

— Janet A.



Frustration

"When you see a listing that's vague about their pet policy, it gets your hopes up, and then you're back to square one."

— Ghazelle R.



Repeated Follow-Up

"Only when we called or emailed asking would the property share that information."

— Ghazelle R.

The Marketplace Often Fails to Provide Complete Information

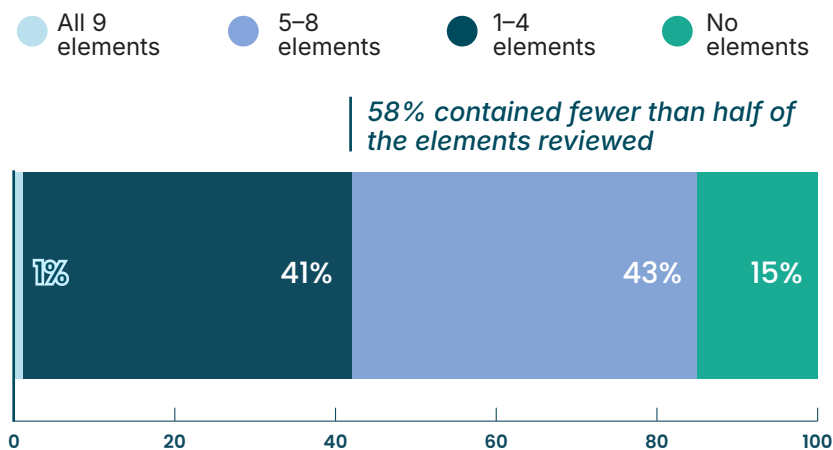
Survey respondents reported difficulty finding information on pet policies. The ILS audit shows why.

ILS Audit Findings

How Complete Was the Pet policy Information?

Survey respondents reported difficulty finding information on pet policies. The ILS audit shows why.

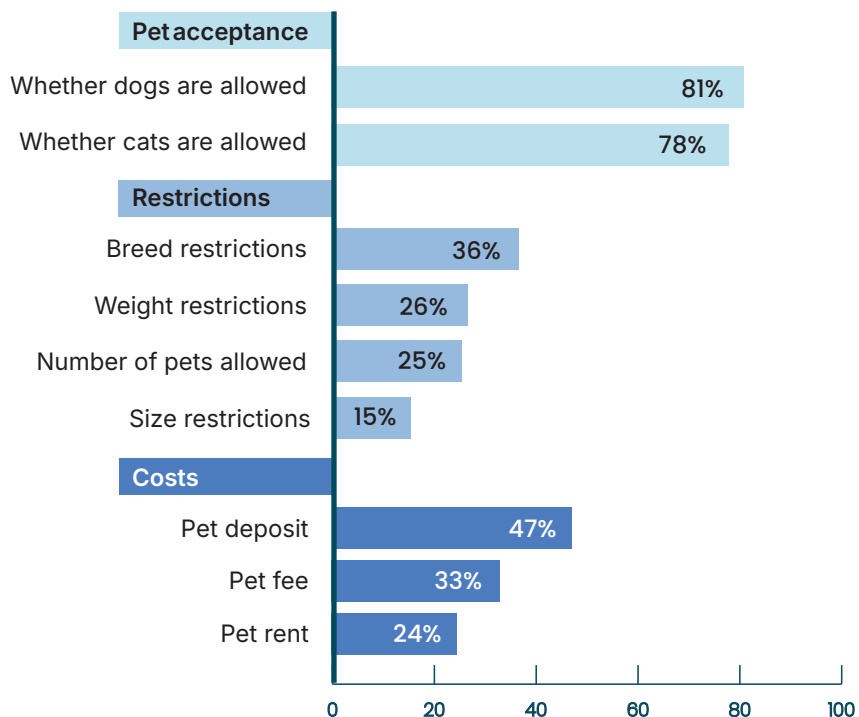
58% of property-source listings contained fewer than half of the pet policy elements reviewed. Only one contained everything.



Basic Pet Acceptance Is Easier to Find Than the Details

What this chart shows: Share of 87 observed property-source listings where information about each pet policy element was available. —————>

What we looked for: We tracked the availability of information across nine pet policy elements, grouped into three areas: pet acceptance, restrictions, and pet-related costs. The audit measured whether information about each element was available—not whether a particular restriction or charge applied.



The missing information matters

Breed, size, weight, and number-of-pet restrictions can determine whether a renter and their pet are eligible for a property. Pet deposits, fees, and monthly pet rent determine what that property will cost. When these details are missing, knowing simply that a property “allows pets” may not provide enough information to make an informed housing decision.

Information Gaps Create Costs for Everyone



For Renters

- » Application fees
- » Search costs
- » Delays
- » Housing instability



For Housing Providers

- » Repeated inquiries
- » Screening ineligible applicants
- » Administrative burden

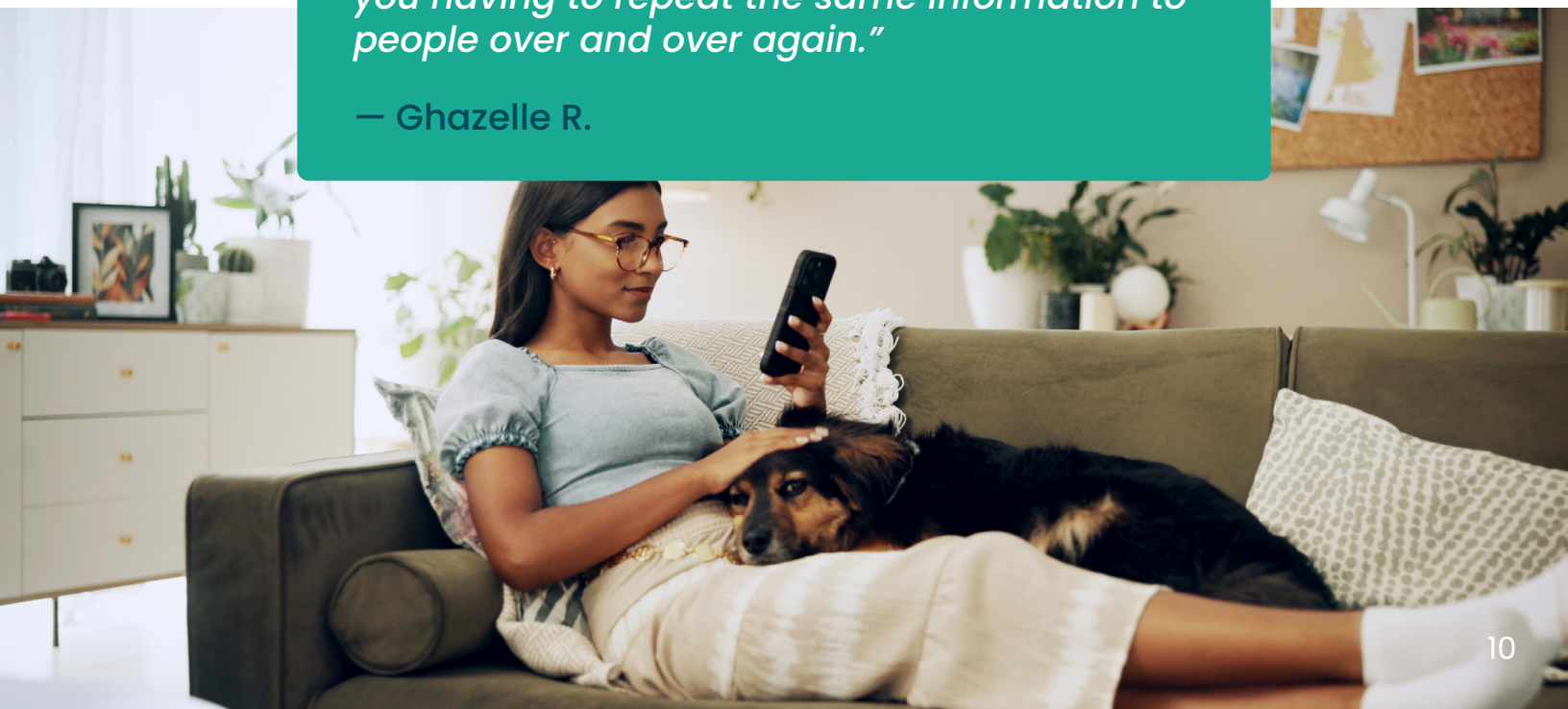


For ILS Platforms

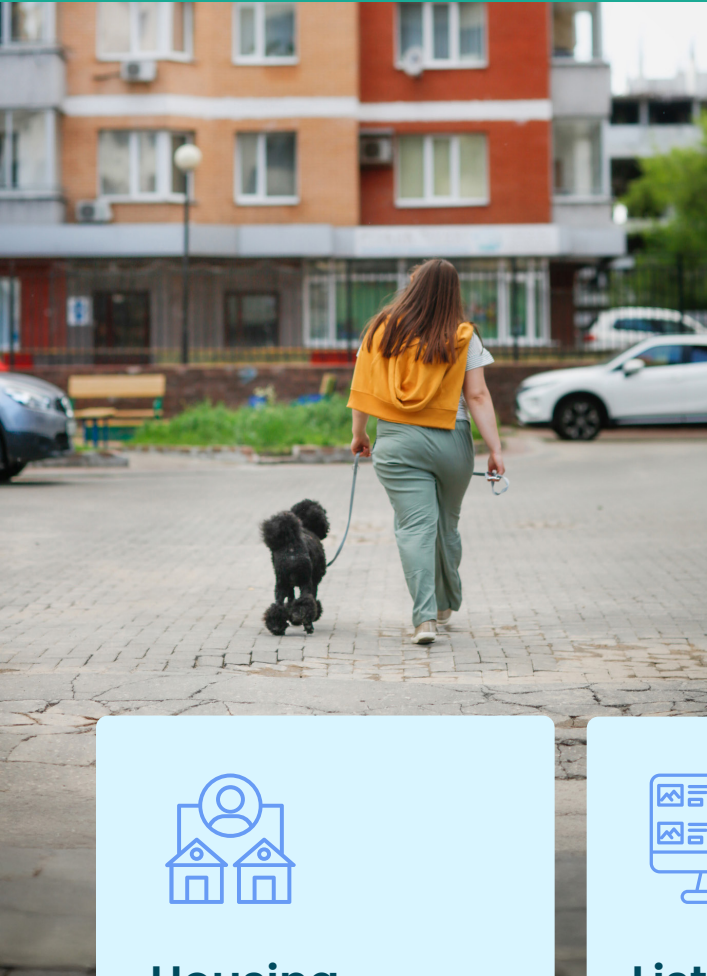
- » Less efficient search results
- » Reduced consumer confidence
- » Difficulty comparing properties

"If listings were more transparent, it would save everyone time—us having to call and ask, and you having to repeat the same information to people over and over again."

— Ghazelle R.



What a Better Housing Search Process Could Look Like



Renters do not need every property to allow pets.

They need clear information before deciding whether to pursue a property.



Housing Providers

- » Clearly disclose pet acceptance
- » Disclose fees and deposits
- » Disclose restrictions
- » Maintain consistency across platforms and documents



Listing Platforms

- » Standardized pet policy fields
- » Required disclosure fields
- » Improved search filters



Policymakers

- » Encourage disclosure before application
- » Promote transparency and informed consumer choice

Conclusion

Across California, renters with pets often invest time, money, and effort before they have enough information to know whether a property is a viable option. Survey findings show the consequences of these information gaps; the listing audit shows their source. Nearly 6 in 10 observed property-source listings contained fewer than half of the pet policy elements reviewed, and only one contained all nine. Together, the findings point to a straightforward opportunity: providing clear, consistent pet policy information earlier in the housing search could reduce avoidable costs, improve efficiency, and help renters make informed choices.

Methodology

California Renter Housing Search Survey

This report incorporates findings from a March 2026 survey of more than 1,100 California renters who had recently searched for housing. Responses were reviewed to remove low-quality data and include respondents who reached key survey questions.

Internet Listing Service (ILS) Audit

To assess the availability of pet policy information in the rental marketplace, this report includes findings from an October 2025 audit of three major internet listing service (ILS) platforms across forty multifamily rental properties in California. Because properties could appear on multiple online sources, the audit captured 87 property-source listings in total.

Qualitative Interviews with Pet-Ownning LA County Renters

To complement the survey findings, this report includes quotations from qualitative interviews conducted in March 2026 with six pet-owning renters in Los Angeles County.