

Renting with Pets

A recent renter survey by Apartments.com found that more than 84 percent of respondents own a pet, and that more than one-third of survey respondents found it very difficult to find an apartment that allowed pets. However, there are ways to convince landlords to rent to you.

- Experts say behavior counts for a lot. Your best way to move with animals is to make sure that the animals are well behaved.
- Owners of cats and small dogs - 20 pounds or less as defined by the American Kennel Club - will have an easier time finding a rental.
- If the pet is not small, demonstrate to the landlord that you take pride in owning your pet, follow good grooming practices and maintain active flea control for your pet.
- Pet owners can get a recommendation letter from their vet.
- If you've lived somewhere with this pet before ask your previous landlord for a recommendation letter.
- Be willing to pay a little extra or a security deposit.

Landlords, property managers, and community associations have legitimate concerns about renting property to people with pets. They may have had bad experiences in the past or are unsure how to deal with an unsatisfactory situation should it arise.

References can be required; conditions for pet ownership can be stated in writing as part of the lease. A simple questionnaire will provide information on which to base a decision to rent to the pet owner:

- How long have you had your pets?
- Do you have a letter of recommendation from your veterinarian stating that each pet is in good health and up-to-date on vaccinations?
- Do you have any written reference for your pets from your current landlord?
- Have there been any complaints about your pet at your current address? If so, have you paid your landlord for all the damage done?
- Does your pet have any medical or behavioral problems? If so, what treatment or training is he receiving?
- Is your dog housetrained?
- Do you keep your dog on a leash when you go for walks?
- How do you clean up your dog's waste when walking him?

Property managers, landlords and realtors networking together in the community may find they can reach solutions to renting to people with pets and have fewer vacancies as a result.
