

The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm

# **Pets Are Welcome**

Program



“Encouraging communication between landlords and responsible pet owners”

The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm  
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## **Acknowledgements**

The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm would like to express gratitude to the following pioneers in landlord/pet owner communication and cooperation. Much of the information in this publication is based on literature from these programs.

The Pet Project: Pets in People Places Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) 350 South Huntington Avenue Boston, MA 02130 (617) 522-7400

The Open Door Program  
San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SFSPCA)  
2500 16th Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 554-3000

The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm would also like to thank the Rochester Housing Authority for contributing pet policy and pet rider examples.

## **Preface: About the Pets Are Welcome Program**

The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm is striving to become a 'Shelter of Hope' for needy animals by placing every adoptable animal that is admitted to the shelter into a loving home. Two ways this goal can be reached are by (1) finding more homes for admitted pets, and (2) reducing admissions to the shelter. In doing so, more pets may find homes in rental communities and fewer pets may enter the shelter, thus reducing, and eventually eliminating, the need for pet-euthanasia.

The Pets Are Welcome (P.A.W.) Program is one of several initiatives being used to achieve the 'Shelter of Hope' goal. P.A.W. directly addresses the two ways to achieving the 'Shelter of Hope' Goal mentioned above:

1. Encouraging and helping housing managers to rent to responsible pet owners, will increase the number of homes open to pets.
2. Since many animals are surrendered to the shelter each year because their owners have difficulty finding rental properties that allow pets, assisting tenants in finding pet-friendly housing will reduce admissions to the shelter.

The P.A.W. program encourages communication between rental management and responsible, pet owning tenants. If rental management and pet owners work together, they can create a mutually beneficial pet-friendly environment, keeping the pet's family intact and ensuring protection of management's properties.

The Pets Are Welcome Program aims to

- Provide housing management with the tools necessary to identify *responsible* pet owners, create and enforce pet policies and pet riders to leases, and solve pet peeves before they become pet problems.
- Offer assistance with establishing pet policies and in answering questions regarding animal behavior and pet ownership
- Help responsible pet owners find pet-friendly rental housing and help housing management advertise its pet-friendly properties by maintaining the Rochester Pet-Friendly Apartment List.
- Show responsible pet owners how to present their pets and themselves as the good tenants that they can be.

This brochure provides information needed to pave the way for open and honest communication between property management and tenants. However, property managers and tenants are encouraged to contact the Humane Society at Lollypop Farm for assistance.

Any feedback or suggestions concerning this publication would be welcome. Please write to: P.A.W. Program, The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm, 99 Victor Road, Fairport, NY 14450.

## Tips for Property Managers

Many property managers are hesitant to rent to pet owners for fear of damage to the property or complaints about pets from other renters. Yet, a clear understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of pet owners and management will ensure the successful introduction of pets into multi-unit housing. In addition, renting to pet owners can be a financially rewarding experience by:

- Lowering vacancy rates
- Reducing tenant turnover rates
- Broadening the pool of prospective tenants
- Promoting a sense of tenant safety and security

The primary keys to success are

- **Learning to identify *responsible* pet owners** using a careful screening process. By asking a few simple questions, property managers can screen out irresponsible pet owners, and gain not just responsible pet-owners, but responsible tenants, since people who are responsible in one area of their lives are likely to be responsible in other areas. Management can use the *Characteristics of Responsible Pet Owners*, to create a list of questions to ask in the management-tenant interview which will help identify responsible pet owners.
- **Creating and enforcing a written Pet Policy and Pet Rider** to the lease. The Pet Policy and Rider contain explicit rules and disciplinary procedures which must be agreed to and signed by all tenants with pets; a written policy will protect the interests of both the property owner and tenant.

Other contributors to success, though not required, are:

- Clearly posting the Pet Policy in each building
- Providing tenants with information on available pet-related services (pet sitting, pet-behavior specialists, obedience classes) and educational material on proper pet care and responsible pet ownership. Free publications may be available from your local humane society.
- Using the Humane Society at Lollypop Farm support services to get advice on pet behaviors, assistance in creating a successful pet policy, and free literature on animal ownership. Also, the Humane Society at Lollypop Farm offers training classes that landlords and property managers may wish to recommend to their pet-owning tenants.
- Encouraging discussion between management and tenants (those with and without pets) regarding the Pet Policy
- Establishing a pet committee for Pet Policy management. The committee might consist of pet owning tenants, non-pet owning tenants, a veterinarian, a knowledgeable person from the local humane society, and a member of management. By acting as the first line of complaint-receipt as well as complaint-solution, the pet committee can alleviate the management's involvement with tenants' questions and complaints concerning pets. If a committee is used, management should outline the responsibilities of the committee in the Pet Policy or another written document which must be made available to all tenants.

## Considerations for a Pet Policy

The following suggestions for inclusion in a Pet Policy are not hard and fast rules. Policies for individual properties should be designed to best meet the needs of the property managers and tenants, taking into account specifics of the properties' location, facilities, rules, allowable pets, etc.

Highly recommended policies:

- All dogs and cats must be spayed/neutered. If the pet entering the housing is under 6 months old, the pet owner must agree to have it spayed/neutered by an agreed-upon date (at approximately 6 months of age). Medical records may be required for proof of spay/neuter;
- Prospective Pet-owning tenants or existing tenants seeking to acquire a new pet must inform management of their intent to keep a pet, and may be interviewed by management with regards to pet ownership. If management accepts the pet, the owner must review and sign the Pet Policy and Pet Rider to their lease before bringing the pet into the housing unit;
- Only pets that can be controlled by their owner via a leash, pet carrier or cage are acceptable. Any restrictions on the types of pets allowable should be outlined in the Pet Policy;
- Any limitations on the number of pets per apartment must be specified in the pet policy. Management should consider the fact that in some cases, having more than one pet in an apartment may actually be beneficial since the pets will not be as likely to get lonely or bored, and that pets of different species can be raised together (a cat and dog, for example);
- The Pet Policy should outline any parameters: Should certain types of pets be confined to the tenant's unit? Should certain parts of the facilities be off-limits to pets? Should pets be leashed when outside the tenant's unit?
- Put disciplinary procedures in writing as part of the Pet Policy. For example, institute a \$10 fine for owners who do not properly dispose of pet waste;
- Charge a *reasonable*, refundable pet-deposit, if any. A \$100 per pet maximum, payable in increments, is suggested;
- Outline specific instructions on the disposal of pet waste

Other policy considerations:

- Management may reserve the right to require dog owners to substitute their apartment for a comparable unit on a lower floor;
- Management may restrict pet ownership to certain buildings or floors of the complex;
- Management may specify in the Pet Rider to the lease that a check up on the apartment/pet be made one month after the animal takes residence;
- Any size limitations, if any, for dogs must be specified in the pet policy. However, Management should consider that it is not so much the size of a dog that determines its ability to live in an apartment, but its activity level and the owner's ability to meet the demands of the dog's activity level. Thus, a size limitation may not be necessary, rather each dog and its owner should be considered on their own merit.
- The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm does not endorse cat declawing. Since the pet owner is fully liable for damages, management should not require this procedure. If, however, management does require declawing, it must be included in the Pet Policy.

# Characteristics of Responsible Pet Owners

Responsible Pet Owners:

- take full responsibility for their pets' welfare, including health, exercise and companionship needs;
- take full responsibility for their pets' successful integration into a community living situation by respecting the rights of other tenants and the pet policy set by the rental managers;
- are willing to work with the rental managers to develop and maintain a mutually agreeable pet policy and pet rider to the lease;
- make every effort to keep their pets by finding, or negotiating, pet-friendly housing;
- are willing to sign a written pet policy and pet rider to their lease and put down an additional, refundable pet deposit;
- have their pets neutered/spayed to help prevent pet-overpopulation, to benefit the health of the pets, and to curtail undesirable behaviors that unneutered/unspayed pets may exhibit;
- make arrangements for care of their pets when they cannot care for them;
- are honest about having pets, and if they are already renting, discuss the acquisition of a pet before acquiring one;
- prevent damage or problems from occurring by training their pets, and if damage or problems do arise, fix the damage or solve the problem promptly;
- practice being a responsible tenant in every way;
- are financially able to provide for their pets' needs, including food, supplies, veterinary care and any required licensing;
- have the time to train, exercise, and groom their pets;
- clean up after their animal, and dispose of waste in a manner approved of by the apartment manager;
- see that their animals wear collars with identification tags;
- keep the rental unit clean and free of pet odors, fleas and waste;
- keep pets restrained at all times via leash or carrier in hallways, elevators, community rooms, and other common areas.;
- will not allow a pet to disturb neighbors with excessive barking or other undesirable behaviors;
- provide management with:
  - pictures of their pets;
  - licensing certificates if necessary;
  - the name and phone number of the pets' veterinarian;
  - the name and phone number of pet sitters that will be used when they are out of town, and in emergencies.

## Tips for Pet Owners

Finding pet-friendly rental housing in Rochester is no easy task. If, however, you are a responsible pet owner who is willing to make the effort, the following suggestions may help you find, or negotiate, pet-friendly rental housing. These tips will show housing managers that you are serious about your role as a pet owner and that you are committed to keeping your pet and ensuring that your pet can and will be a successful tenant.

- Bring up the subject of pets in person, not over the phone. Personally presenting your request, with an abundance of information showing you are a responsible pet owner, will indicate your commitment to your pet and to finding appropriate housing;
- Encourage the landlord to meet your pet, in your current home if possible;
- If you are a member of a humane organization, or in other ways demonstrate your interest in animal welfare and responsible pet ownership, share this with the landlord;
- Offer to sign a pet rider to your lease (provide one if the landlord doesn't have one!) and offer to pay an additional pet deposit;
- Prepare a pet resume for your pet and present a copy to your prospective housing manager;
- Prepare additional documentation about your pet and present a copy to your prospective housing manager:
  - A medical summary from your veterinarian showing the animal is neutered/spayed and receives regular medical examinations, vaccinations and shots;
  - A written reference from your current landlord, or others who are familiar with your pet;
  - Any certificates of obedience training;
  - Picture of your pet!

## The Pet Résumé

Creating a Pet Resume to present to a potential landlord gives you a chance to highlight the positive aspects of your pet, indicate how your pet is an important part of your family, and indicate how you will be a responsible pet owner that is willing to work with the management to build a positive relationship between you, your pet, the management and the rental community.

Your pet's resume should include the pet's physical description (age, breed, and weight), behavioral traits, and housebreaking information; spay/neuter status, hygiene and health information, and training background. Include any information on why your pet will be a good tenant, including training, demeanor, and health. The resume must also include information indicating your willingness to take full responsibility for you pet, such as how you will meet your pets exercise needs, how you will dispose of your pet's waste, and arrangements for emergencies or when you are out of town.

Between a pet resume and the additional documentation you will provide about your pet, the housing management should have a good overall representation of your pet as well as you-as-pet-owner!

# Sample Pet Résumés

Bingo  
owners: John and Jane Doe  
(585) 555-5555

## ***Description***

Bingo is a friendly, well-behaved dog who is accustomed to apartment life. He is a five-year-old medium-sized black Lab mix who is mature, calm and easy going. Bingo has been a cherished member of our family for four years.

## ***Training***

Bingo passed his Dog Obedience Training Class at the Humane Society at Lollypop Farm in 1994. As owners, we continue to reinforce his training at home. He has also been crate-trained to a large crate. Bingo is fully housebroken and obeys voice commands. He does not bark excessively, although will give a short warning bark to alert us to strangers. He also does not jump up on people or counters.

## ***Activities***

We walk Bingo at least twice a day, and often go to the area parks for more vigorous exercise such as frisbee and ball chasing. He goes with us wherever and whenever we can take him, occasionally accompanying us on camping trips and to local festivals. His behavior both on and off leash is exemplary.

## ***Health/Grooming***

Bingo has been neutered since he was 7 months old, which benefits both his behavior and his health. He visits his veterinarian for a regular check-up once a year, and is kept up to date on all vaccinations and shots. We use Program flea control, and he has never had problems with flea infestation. He receives a professional grooming approximately every month.

## ***About us***

As dog owners and tenants, we always try to act responsibly. We have taken a class on dog behavior, we always clean up after our dog, and we arrange for reliable pet care if we cannot take Bingo away with us. We are willing to work with the apartment management to ensure Bingo fits in with the rest of the rental community, including putting down an extra deposit. We are also long-time members of the Humane Society of Monroe County.

## ***References***

Our current landlord, Jim Johnson, may be contacted for additional information at 555-6666. Please see the attached documentation for more detailed information about Bingo.

*We would be happy for any potential landlord to meet Bingo, visit him in his current home, and/or check in to see how he is adjusting to his new surroundings.*

Lucky and Tavy  
owners: John and Jane Doe  
(585) 555-5555

### ***Description***

Lucky and Tavy are friendly, well-behaved cats who have always been indoors, accustomed to apartment life. Lucky is a five-year-old orange neutered male tabby cat. Tavy is a four-year-old spayed female calico cat. Both have been cherished members of our family since kittenhood.

### ***Training***

Lucky and Tavy have two large scratching post on which they have been trained to scratch exclusively. Both are also fully litterbox trained.

### ***Activities***

Lucky and Tavy enjoy sleeping in the sun, watching birds and squirrels out the window, and playing with their toys. They also enjoy each other's company as play and sleep-mates.

### ***Health/Grooming***

Lucky has been neutered, and Tavy spayed, since they were 6 months, which benefits both their behavior and health. Both visit with their veterinarian for a regular check-up once a year, and are kept up to date on all their vaccinations and shots. We comb both cats frequently, and do not have flea problems since they are indoor cats.

### ***About us***

As cat owners and tenants, we always try to act responsibly. We clean the cats' litter boxes every day, and dispose of the litter in a sealed garbage bag with the rest of the garbage. We arrange for reliable pet care is we are going to be out of town. We are willing to work with the apartment management to ensure Lucky and Tavy fit in with the rest of the rental community, including putting down an extra deposit. We are also long-time members of the Humane Society of Monroe County.

### ***References***

Our current landlord, Jim Johnson, may be contacted for additional information at 555-6666.

Please see the attached documentation for more detailed information about Lucky and Tavy.

*We would be happy for any potential landlord to meet Lucky and Tavy, visit them in their current home, and/or check in to see how they are adjusting to their new surroundings.*

# Sample Pet Policy

*These sample policy and sample riders are intended to act as templates for the property-specific policy and rider. While some properties may be able to use them as-is, we encourage property managers to consider all aspects of the policy and rider in light of their own situation, and to make changes or additions as needed. It is also suggested that property managers review the policy and rider with their attorney before adoption.*

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Pet Policy of \_\_\_\_\_  
<Name of Development, Landlord, or Property Management Group>

The above stated housing development, landlord, or property management group requires all tenants wishing to bring pets into the community to read, understand and abide by the rules outlined in this Pet Policy.

These policies take into account the needs of management, pet owning tenants and non-pet owning tenants, as well as the needs of the pets themselves. The intent of this policy is to create a harmonious co-existence of all in our community living situation by fostering an attitude of respect, cooperation and consideration.

1. Permission to keep a pet is granted at Management's sole discretion, based in part on an interview with the owner, and the owner's willingness to agree to this Pet Policy and sign a Pet Rider to his/her lease.
2. Acceptable pets include dogs, cats, birds, small caged mammals, and fish. Requests to keep pets of any other type must be presented to Management in writing. Any animal may be deemed unacceptable by Management if it is not considered an appropriate pet for the rental situation (for example, based on its disposition). All pets must be able to be restrained by leash, carrier or cage.
3. No more than \_\_\_\_ cats and/or dogs may reside in one rental unit.
4. All dogs and cats must wear identification tags that indicate the pet's name, owner's name, owner's address and telephone number.
5. All dogs and cats over the age of 6 months must be spayed or neutered, unless a veterinarian certifies that health problems prevent it. If the pet entering the housing is under 6 months old, the pet owner agrees to have it spayed/neutered (at approximately 6 months of age). A medical receipt from a veterinarian is required to prove the animal is spayed/neutered.
6. All pets must receive proper veterinary care, and must be up-to-date on rabies and distemper vaccinations, with a veterinarian's statement to this effect provided to Management. Such verification may also be required when the tenant renews his/her lease.
7. The size of a dog is not directly related to its desirability as a resident, but may be taken into account. More importantly, the dog's acceptance will be made on its own merit and needs, and the ability of the owner to train and exercise it appropriately.
8. Tenants must control their dogs/cats via a leash when the pet is outside the unit. Pets are restricted to the following outdoor areas on the housing property: .
9. Pets shall not be allowed in any common area (including but not necessarily limited to lobbies, community rooms, halls, laundry rooms) of the building, except for purpose of ingress to or egress from the building.
10. Tenants are responsible for keeping all areas where pets are housed clean, safe, and free of parasites, including fleas. Dog owners must immediately pick up and dispose of all dog waste deposited on the housing's streets or grounds. Cat owners must place soiled cat litter in tied, plastic bags and disposed of it in the garbage facilities. A fine of \$\_\_\_\_\_ may be imposed if the tenant does not comply with these restrictions.

11. Pets shall be properly licensed in accordance with applicable ordinances of the City of Rochester, or Town of jurisdiction, with evidence of licensing provided to Management.
12. Pets shall be temporarily removed from the housing for purposes to include, but not necessarily limited to, delivery of maintenance repair services, extermination services and preventative maintenance/housekeeping inspection, as requested by Management.
13. No pet is to be left unattended in a tenant's unit for a period longer than that which is appropriate in light of the needs of the pet. In general, dogs should not be left unattended for more than 9 hours, and other pets for more than 24 hours, on a regular basis. When Management has reasonable cause to believe a pet has been left unattended and either that pet is creating a disturbance or any other emergency situation appears to exist with respect to that pet, Management will attempt to contact the tenant to remedy the situation. If Management is unable to contact the tenant within a reasonable period, Management may enter the Tenant's unit and make any necessary arrangements for the pet's care, including removing the pet and placing it in a temporary home, such as a boarding kennel. Any costs incurred will be deducted from the tenant's pet and security deposit.
14. All complaints about pets must be in writing, and will be reviewed by Management. A hearing may be held by Management, with the complainant and the pet owner to clarify the situation, and attempt to resolve it. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their pets do not disturb or annoy other tenants or neighbors. Tenants whose pet(s) are determined by Management to be disturbing others must remedy the situation immediately. A tenant who fails to remedy the situation after \_\_\_\_\_ warning(s) will receive a 30-day notice to remove the pet, except in the case of a serious problem, e.g. a vicious dog, whereby the length of time may be shortened in the interest of public safety. If the tenant fails to remove the pet, the tenant will be considered in breach of the tenant's lease or other rental agreement and may be required to vacate the premises.
15. Tenants are responsible for and must immediately pay for all damages or injuries caused by their pets. In addition, each tenant who wishes to keep a pet must pay a \$\_\_\_\_\_ pet deposit upon signing the Pet Policy and Pet Rider to the lease. If the cost of repairing any damages caused by the pet exceeds the pet deposit, Management may use funds from the tenant's regular security deposit to cover the excess. The tenant must immediately restore the deposits to their full, original amount.
16. The pet deposit is fully refundable if Management determines that there are no damages or other expenses caused by the pet(s) upon tenant's vacating the apartment or permanently relocating the pet(s).

This policy and the accompanying Pet Rider shall be incorporated as part of the tenants lease. I have read, understand, and agree to the terms of the above Pet Policy.

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Tenant's Name (Printed)

---

Tenant's Signature

---

Date

# Sample Pet Rider to the Lease

## Pet Rider to Lease

This pet rider to the lease between

Tenant(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
and Management: \_\_\_\_\_  
is made a part of the lease entered between parties on \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Tenant has read, agreed to all aspects of, and signed the Pet Policy attached to this Pet Rider.

(2) Tenant shall keep his/her pet(s) in a responsible manner and provide proper care for it as provided in said Pet Policy. Management agrees to permit Tenant to keep the pet(s) described in this rider in accordance with the pet policy:

Type of Pet	Name	Age/Description
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(3) Tenant has provide evidence (in the form of a receipt or other written verification from the pet(s) veterinarian) of the following: (attach evidence to Rider)

For Dogs Only:

\_\_\_ License: Tag Number # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Cats and Dogs:

\_\_\_ Evidence of rabies vacc.: Tag Number # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Evidence of distemper vacc.: Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Evidence of Spay/Neuter

(4) Tenant shall be liable for any damage or injury whatsoever caused by the pet(s) and shall pay Management or Management's agents or employees immediately, upon demand, for any and all costs incurred by the Management as a result of damage or injury caused by the pet(s).

(5) Tenant agrees to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend Management and all of the Management's agents and employees against all liability, judgments, expenses (including costs and attorney's fees), or claims by third parties for any injury to any person or damage to property of any kind whatsoever caused by tenant's pet(s).

(6) Tenant shall provide the following information and promptly notify Management in writing of any changes. Management reserves the right to notify the veterinarian and/or emergency pet caretakers that they have been designated as such and to verify their willingness to act as such.

Veterinarian:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Pet Caretaker #1:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:(H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Pet Caretaker #2:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this pet rider, Tenant has agreed to the above and has paid a pet deposit of \$\_\_\_\_\_. This deposit is fully refundable as per the Pet Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenant's Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Management's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date