

A SUMMARY OF A PLAYBOOK FOR PET-FRIENDLY CITIES

Pets make life better, and more people than ever before see pets as family.

Yet there are still barriers in many communities that make it hard for people and pets to enjoy life together.

The **12 Traits of Pet-Friendly Cities** model can help cities make the benefits of pets accessible to more people. It's part of **A Playbook for Pet-Friendly Cities**, produced by Mars Petcare.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT AND GET THE PLAYBOOK AT
BETTERCITIESFORPETS.COM

Pets make life better. Together we can help make life better for pets, so everybody benefits.



PET OWNERSHIP IS NOT RESTRICTED BY BREED OR SIZE BANS

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Breed-specific legislation has been around for decades in the United States. Unfortunately, it has led to broader discrimination as well, such as bans on particular breeds by apartment complexes and condo associations. These rules can arise in reaction to a specific incident, or simply because of potentially misguided public perception.

However, like people, pets are individuals. Behavior is determined by their training, experiences and the care given by their owner. There is little scientific evidence that there are innately “aggressive” breeds. Any pet could potentially be aggressive, and numerous studies have shown that banning certain breeds does not necessarily lower the number of animal incidents in a community.

Some residential and rental communities also implement requirements related to size, for example allowing only “apartment-sized” dogs. However, many small dogs are excitable and vocal, while many large dogs are docile and quiet. Size is not an indicator of how well a pet will succeed in any particular home.

The reality is that pet ownership is rising, and many people seeking housing have pets. By putting arbitrary restrictions on individual pets, housing owners miss out on potentially loyal and reliable tenants, and may even force people to choose between having a pet and a home.



◀ Housing requirements related to breed or size can mean kind and well-behaved dogs end up abandoned at shelters.

All pets deserve to be in a loving home. ▶



IN A 2017 STUDY BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, 81% OF RESPONDENTS SAID PET-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS WILL PLAY A ROLE WHEN CHOOSING THEIR NEXT LIVING SITUATION.



26

Untrained small dogs can be excitable and noisy. ▼



“Don’t shut me out. See tips for breaking down stereotypes and advocating for open pet housing policies.”

Read on ▶

◀ Many large dogs can be calm and happy in small apartments. Older dogs, especially, may be perfectly at home in any space as long as it has a comfy place for them to rest.



◀ Training and temperament determine how well a pet will do in a home, not size or breed.





ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

- ❑ **Break the stereotypes.** Communicate the benefits of pets of all sizes and breeds. Many breeds labeled “aggressive” have wonderful, friendly temperaments. Some are also working dogs such as police dogs. Celebrate the good these dogs do for people and the community.
- ❑ **Teach good behavior.** Develop a communication program that educates about the training required to help all dogs — of any breed — behave appropriately with people and other pets. Also, teach people, and especially children, how to recognize behavior cues and back away from a pet that is acting aggressively. 🐾
- ❑ **Try training as a solution.** Rather than banning breeds or certain sized dogs, instead require proof that the pet has completed a required level of training and responds to owner instructions. This can be a great way to evaluate pets without implementing more restrictive requirements.
- ❑ **Raise your voice.** Add your voice to public dialogue about pets and their place in homes and families. You can speak at a government meeting, write a letter to legislators, or send a letter to the editor of your local paper. By making your voice heard, you help make sure dialogue continues about making pets welcome. 🐾

Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando offers a fantastic example of a program to make pets welcome for renters. Apartment communities that adopt a policy of no size or breed restrictions are featured on the Alliance’s website for prospective renters, which gets nearly a half a million visits a year. Plus, participants get an annual property visit to offer educational and/or medical resources to residents. For example, a property can opt to have the Alliance bring a certified animal behaviorist to conduct behavior training or host a “Check Your Chip” day to make sure resident pets have up-to-date microchip information so they can be returned if lost. petallianceorlando.org



START TODAY

Download tools at [BETTERCITIESFORPETS.COM](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com)

CITIES:

- See the benefits of a pet-friendly apartment registry
- Learn how laws and ordinances affect pet ownership

DEVELOPERS AND PROPERTY MANAGERS:

- Get tips and training ideas for renters with pets
- Download signs to encourage responsible pet ownership

CITIZENS:

- Get a sample letter template to advocate for pet-friendly housing

Whether you're a city planner, shelter, business or a citizen, you'll find resources to help.



CONTINUED

Keep up with perspectives about breed and size bans.

There are now 20 states that prohibit breed-specific legislation in their animal regulations. Other considerations:

- The American Veterinary Medical Association supports dangerous animal legislation only if it does not refer to specific breeds or classes of animals.
- There are major insurers like State Farm who recognize that breed bans are unfair. As State Farm says on its website, it “determines risk based on a dog’s bite history rather than the breed.”
- It has not been demonstrated that breed bans reduce the rate or severity of bite injuries in a community.
- A critical measure to reduce dog bite injuries is to educate pet owners about how to manage their dogs, and teach everyone — particularly children — how to interact properly with pets.

“Pet-friendly policies lead to more qualified applicants, higher occupancy rates, longer residency and a happier community.”

– PET ALLIANCE OF GREATER ORLANDO