

Creating Your Pet Policy

The key to a successful pet-friendly workplace program is a clear policy that helps pet owners and non-owners understand the rules, expectations and how to address issues that might arise.

Keep in mind that all employees are affected by a pet-friendly workplace program – not just those who have pets – so your policy needs to encompass more than just the behavior of the pets who will visit. It needs to address the entire experience for all involved.

How to Create Your Policy

Every organization is different, so plan to follow whatever process will work best knowing your organization's needs and culture. But here are a few ideas to help you get started.

Establish a small team to write the policy:

- Include a few people who want pets at work as well as a few who can play devil's advocate
- Be sure to include someone from Human Resources and from your legal counsel
- Have representatives from different areas of the organization to be sure all needs are reflected
- Be sure you have a leadership sponsor who will help you navigate any needs in terms of convincing management to proceed

If you want to build buy-in and help employees feel engaged in the policy, conduct a survey to get their input on topics such as:

- What pets should be allowed
- How often pets should be allowed at work (e.g. every day or on certain days a week)
- What pet amenities are most important

- What rules are most important to pet owners
- What rules are most important to non-owners

Be sure that your policy includes:

- Clear scope – who is eligible to participate, which of your site's organizations are in scope, etc.
- Clear expectations for participants and participating pets
- An escalation process for handling issues that might occur
- An agreed-to Participant Pledge that employees must sign in order to participate