

A PLAYBOOK FOR PET-FRIENDLY CITIES





PETS MATTER. YET MILLIONS OF PETS END UP HOMELESS EACH YEAR. RESTRICTIONS AND PET FEES MAKE IT HARD FOR PET PARENTS TO FIND HOUSING. A LACK OF PET AMENITIES AND GREEN SPACES MAKES PET OWNERSHIP A CHALLENGE IN MANY CITIES. BUSINESSES THAT EXCLUDE PETS MEAN PETS LEFT BEHIND WHEN WE'D RATHER BE WITH THEM ALL DAY.

There's A Better Way for People and Pets

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PETS GIVE PEOPLE LOVE, COMPANIONSHIP AND COMFORT. THEY GET US OUTSIDE FOR EXERCISE AND HELP US MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND OUR COMMUNITIES. THEY MAKE BUSINESSES AND WORKPLACES BETTER, BOOSTING MORALE AND REDUCING STRESS. **LET'S HELP MORE PEOPLE ENJOY THE MANY BENEFITS PETS BRING.**

A Playbook for Pet-Friendly Cities

Science tells us that when people have a pet, they tend to get more exercise, report less loneliness and stress, and have stronger social ties. At the same time, more people than ever see pets as family, and they want to spend as much quality time with pets as possible.

Yet there are still far too many homeless pets. Restrictive policies mean fewer housing options for pet owners. Limited green space and pet-friendly places can make it hard to enjoy time with pets away from home. And, responsible pet ownership education is needed to make sure pets, pet owners and non-pet owners alike can enjoy their time in pet-friendly spaces.

The **Better Cities For Pets™** program is one way Mars Petcare is helping tackle these challenges and live our purpose: A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS. With the U.S. Conference of Mayors, we surveyed mayors across the U.S. to understand perceptions about pets and what makes a city pet-friendly. Then, through research, dialogue with thought leaders, and test-and-learn programs, we developed tools and a suggested path forward for cities.

Today, the program includes city and airport certification programs, grants, best practice research, policy advocacy and free online resources. Since 2018, Mars Petcare has provided more than half a million dollars in city grants to help advance innovative programs that make cities more pet friendly and help keep pets and pet parents together.

Read on to help your city be pet friendly. ➤



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How to Use this Book

On the pages that follow, you'll see an explanation of the **Better Cities For Pets™** model, followed by a discussion of each trait in detail. This includes::

- **WHAT'S AT STAKE**
- **WHAT YOU CAN DO**
- **HOW TO GET STARTED**

While our model and traits can be applied by cities of all sizes, as well as shelters, advocates, business districts and other organizations, the “how to get started” lists indicate the entities that are especially likely to find each item relevant.

A great place to begin for anyone is our city assessment, found on page 65, which will help you think through the pet-friendliness of your community and its greatest needs.

If you want to dive into action right away, turn to page 70 for a list of quick-start ideas you can start exploring right away.

Wherever you begin, we hope the **Better Cities For Pets™** program can have a powerful and lasting impact for your community. Visit BetterCitiesForPets.com for more inspiration and to download resources to help.

IF YOU'RE IN GOVERNMENT...

Cities play a part in nearly every trait in our model, so a careful review of the **Better Cities For Pets™** model is a great starting point. Then, take the city assessment on page 65 to determine your local focus areas. Be sure to look for materials identified for “Cities” in our resource lists.

IF YOU'RE A SHELTER OR ANIMAL WELFARE ADVOCATE...

You might be tempted to only focus on Traits 1-3, which target topics traditionally related to shelters. However, as an animal welfare advocate, you know that the overall pet-friendliness of your city affects surrenders and homelessness. Check our materials identified for “Shelters” and explore all our resources for innovative ideas and ways to make community connections.

IF YOU'RE A BUSINESS...

Traits 10, 11 and 12 are key areas for businesses. If you're involved in housing or urban planning, Traits 4, 7, 8 and 9 may also apply. Look for materials identified for “Businesses” in our resource lists and consider the others for inspiration, too. You can make a big impact through public/private partnerships.

IF YOU'RE A PET LOVER...

Pets can't speak for themselves. Government, businesses and other organizations are most likely to make changes if they know it's important to you. Raise your voice! Look for materials identified for “Pet Lovers” in our resource lists, and think about how to use your network and social channels to advocate for a pet-friendly community.

The Better Cities For Pets™ Model

To make the benefits of pets accessible to as many people as possible, we developed a model for pet-friendly cities. It identifies 12 key focus areas and the fundamentals that support them.

The model is divided into four pillars:

SHELTERS:

Pet-friendly cities have fewer pets in shelters and more pets in loving homes.



HOMES:

Pet-friendly cities have open housing policies and enable pet ownership.



PARKS:

Pet-friendly cities have green space and amenities for healthy outdoor time with pets.



BUSINESSES:

Pet-friendly cities have programs and policies that make pets welcome.



Around its outer edge, the model highlights two fundamentals of pet-friendly cities:

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP:

In pet-friendly cities, pet owners know how to care for their pets and act responsibly toward other people and pets. Turn to page 32 to learn more about responsible pet ownership and how cities can support it.

HEALTHY PETS AND PEOPLE:

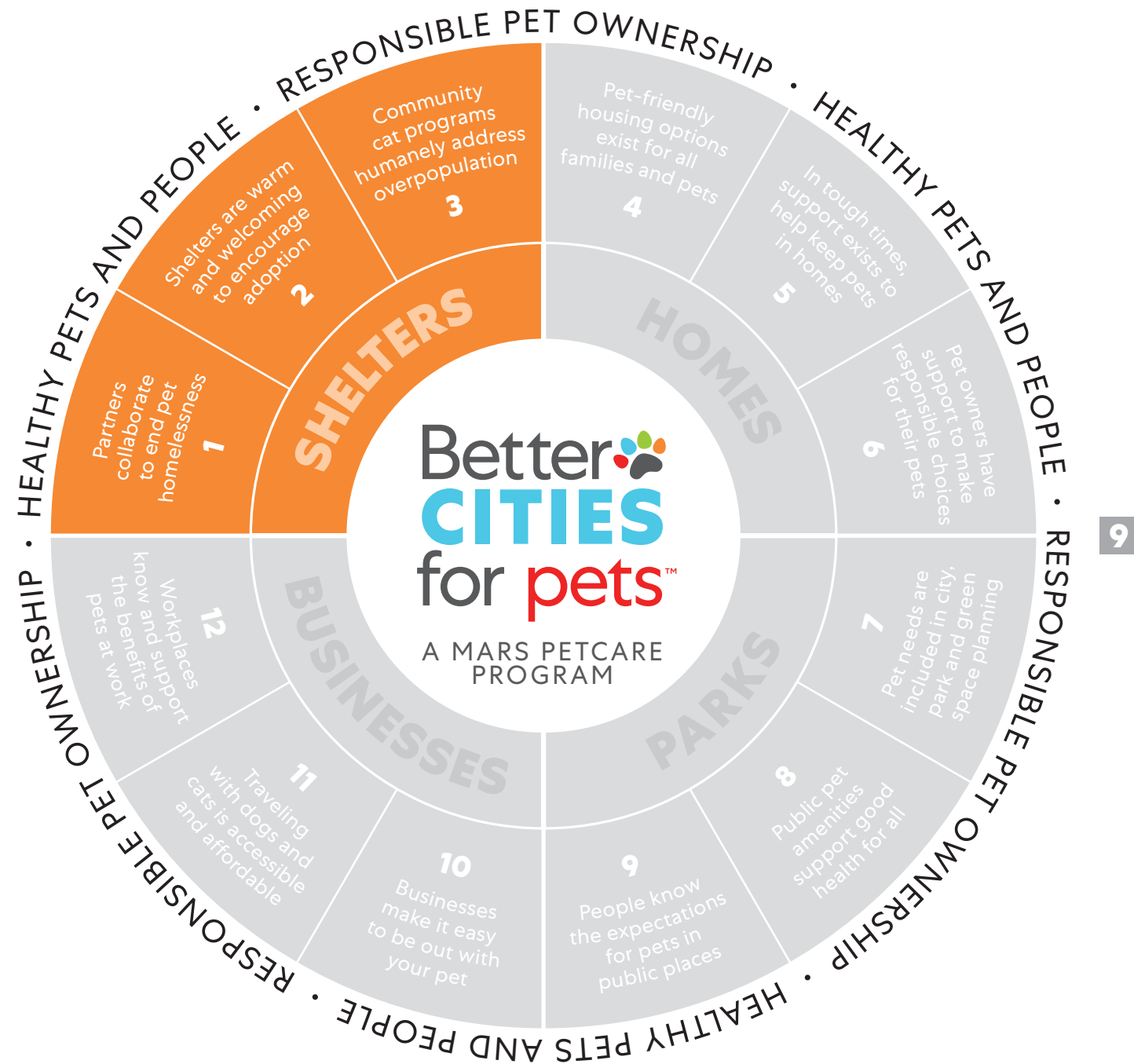
In pet-friendly cities, people have access to the many benefits of time spent with pets, from companionship to exercise to increased social connections. Keeping pets healthy, in turn, can extend and enhance the time we get to spend with them.





12 Traits of Pet-Friendly Cities: SHELTERS

The first three traits of the **Better Cities For Pets™** model focus on ways to tackle pet homelessness, increase adoption from shelters and rescues, and help limit overpopulation among community cat colonies.



TRAIT 1

Partners Collaborate to End Pet Homelessness



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Most cities have shelters and rescues, as well as government initiatives and animal control. Plus, many individuals love pets and generously give their time to help. But all these groups typically have different funding, objectives and priorities. In pet-friendly cities, partners across the animal welfare community work together to ensure there are fewer pets in shelters and more in loving homes. By building a coalition, cities can identify gaps and areas of overlap for the greatest impact with the resources available.

A Model for Success: HASS

When it comes to partnerships for pets, a model that stands out is the Human Animal Support Services (HASS) project, which launched in 2020.



**HUMAN ANIMAL
SUPPORT SERVICES**

Through community partnerships that support the bond between animals and people, HASS and its pilot and partner organizations are helping communities revolutionize animal welfare with community-centric practices and innovations that support both pets and their people.

The program provides a wealth of tools and insights for four key pathways: pet support services, lost pet reunification, intake and pet placement, and supporting self-rehoming. HASS also offers best practices for policy, communications, fundraising, and shelter budgeting.

Check out the HASS Playbook and HASS Resource Center at HumanAnimalSupportServices.org.

49 million

That's the number of homeless dogs and cats in North America according to the State of Pet Homelessness Project, a global data initiative from Mars Petcare and leading animal welfare experts. Collaboration can make it easier for stakeholders to help.

Source: State of Pet Homelessness Project.
Visit StateOfPetHomelessness.com for more insights.

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None of us can do it alone. By forming a pet-focused coalition in your community, pets and people get a better chance at a happy, healthy life together.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Form a Pet-Focused Coalition

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- ☐ **Identify participants.** Research public and private animal welfare organizations in your community, as well as pet advocates, business leaders and influencers. Invite them to the table so all voices are heard. Don't expect everyone to agree, or even choose to participate, but open the door to all. An inclusive process goes a long way toward community acceptance.
- ☐ **Establish a lead.** Identify a convening entity to lead the coalition-building. All participants must feel they have a voice and that no single agenda is driving the priorities. An independent convener with animal welfare expertise can achieve this and help guide the parties to an agreed-to mission, objectives and way forward.
- ☐ **Get input.** Host community meetings or conduct surveys to understand opinions about local animal welfare. The process of gathering this input is also an opportunity to build relationships — hosting input sessions and hearing opinions together can help spark new ideas and solutions.
- ☐ **Gain buy-in.** As your plan takes shape, discuss it with local leaders who can bolster its success, such as government, business leaders and other key influencers. Most important, gain buy-in from your mayor — their support will be critical since some animal welfare-related advances may require changes to local legislation.
- ☐ **Identify funding.** Once you determine your priorities, strategies and tactics, evaluate the funding required to support them and where it can come from. If budgets are tight, think creatively. Public-private partnerships can be a great support with mutual benefit for all involved.
- ☐ **Communicate clearly.** Make sure you have a plan for explaining coalition actions to the community and media, including shared talking points about the coalition's purpose and results. Thanks to social media, participants can help share your united message to audiences far and wide.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at BetterCitiesForPets.com to help partners in your community work together to end pet homelessness.

FOR CITIES

- ☐ Helping Homeless Pets Toolkit
- ☐ Do's and Don'ts for Creating a Pet-Friendly Coalition
- ☐ Model Ordinance for Shelter Reunification
- ☐ Model Ordinance for Microchipping Pets

FOR SHELTERS

- ☐ Helping Homeless Pets Toolkit
- ☐ Creative Ways to Publicize Adoptable Pets
- ☐ How to Host a Community Pet Adoption Event
- ☐ Plus, visit PedigreeFoundation.org for more toolkits that help increase dog adoption

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ Ways You Can Help End Pet Homelessness
- ☐ What to Do if Your Pet Gets Lost



TRAIT 2

Shelters are Warm and Welcoming
to Encourage Adoption



WHAT'S AT STAKE

A shelter can be a scary place for a pet. They may be caged, sleeping on a cold floor, and surrounded by other equally scared animals. If there isn't space for breaks to run and play, pets can be even more restless and stressed. This means when a potential adopter comes looking for a cat or dog, the pets may not show their true personalities, missing the chance to find a home. In pet-friendly cities, shelters are warm, welcoming places where pets can feel safe and relaxed, and people want to visit to find a pet to take home. With broader programs like training to help pet adopters succeed, shelters can make an even greater impact.

A Home Until They Find Their Home

Shelter renovations can be relatively quick and cost-effective but have a huge impact. We learned this through projects with Rescue Rebuild, a part of Greater Good Charities.

Rescue Rebuild recruits volunteers to help with projects across the country, from building outdoor exercise areas



Volunteers from Mars Petcare helped Rescue Rebuild create a "Catty Shack" for cats at Metro Animal Care and Control in Nashville, Tennessee.

GREATER
GOOD
CHARITIES

RESCUE
REBUILD

for shelter dogs to spend their pent-up energy, to "Catty Shack" spaces that allow more relaxed, communal living and greater enrichment for shelter cats.

The organization also works with corporate partners to create volunteer opportunities for employees to make a local impact — helping further spread awareness of the challenges shelters face and the opportunity to help.

Find out more at
GreaterGood.org/Rescue-Rebuild.



42 percent

That's how many potential U.S. pet owners said they'd consider adopting a dog from a shelter. For cats it was just 32%. In Canada it was 39% for dogs and 48% for cats. Changing perceptions of shelter pets and shelters can help make adoption a more appealing option.

Source: State of Pet Homelessness Project.
Visit StateOfPetHomelessness.com
for more insights.

I need a home!
By making shelter visitors feel welcome, it makes it more likely they'll come to adopt pets like me.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Enhance Local Shelters

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- ☐ **Create meet-and-greet spaces.** Pets are more likely to show their true personality outside of a kennel setting. Having at least one room where adopters and pets can interact can help boost adoption rates. These spaces don't have to be large. Just make sure it's a comfortable, clean space where potential adopters will be comfortable getting to know the pet.
- ☐ **Seek out sponsors.** Look for creative solutions and partnerships — a pet-friendly business or local leader could contribute in exchange for having their name associated with the space.
- ☐ **Make visitors welcome.** A welcoming shelter is about the people who visit, too. Have signage that helps visitors find their way. Decorate with colorful animal pictures to debunk the perception of shelters as “pet jail.”
- ☐ **Provide play space for dogs.** Adoption rates rise when dogs have dedicated outside play areas that give them a chance to run around, blow off steam and get the exercise they need for good health. Play yards also help dogs socialize with other animals and allow potential adopters to watch a dog at play, to see how they'll fit into their family.
- ☐ **Offer community for cats.** Cats in kennels can be stressed, sometimes so much they're more susceptible to illness. Instead, cats do well in communal rooms with enrichment features like toys, climbing levels and places to hide and play. This also helps visitors meet cats when they're more relaxed and helps the cats socialize with other pets and people.
- ☐ **Engage your community.** Many people think volunteering at a shelter is just about feeding or caring for animals — they don't realize skills like construction and design can play a critical role in helping pets get adopted. Talk about your shelter's needs on social media to connect with local designers and contractors who might be able to help with your projects.
- ☐ **Share successes.** Shelters have a fun, free way to advertise every single day: social media. Post stories about pets up for adoption. Share celebratory photos of every pet that's adopted with his or her new forever family. Shelters can build a significant community following that helps to further demystify pet adoption and show its benefits.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

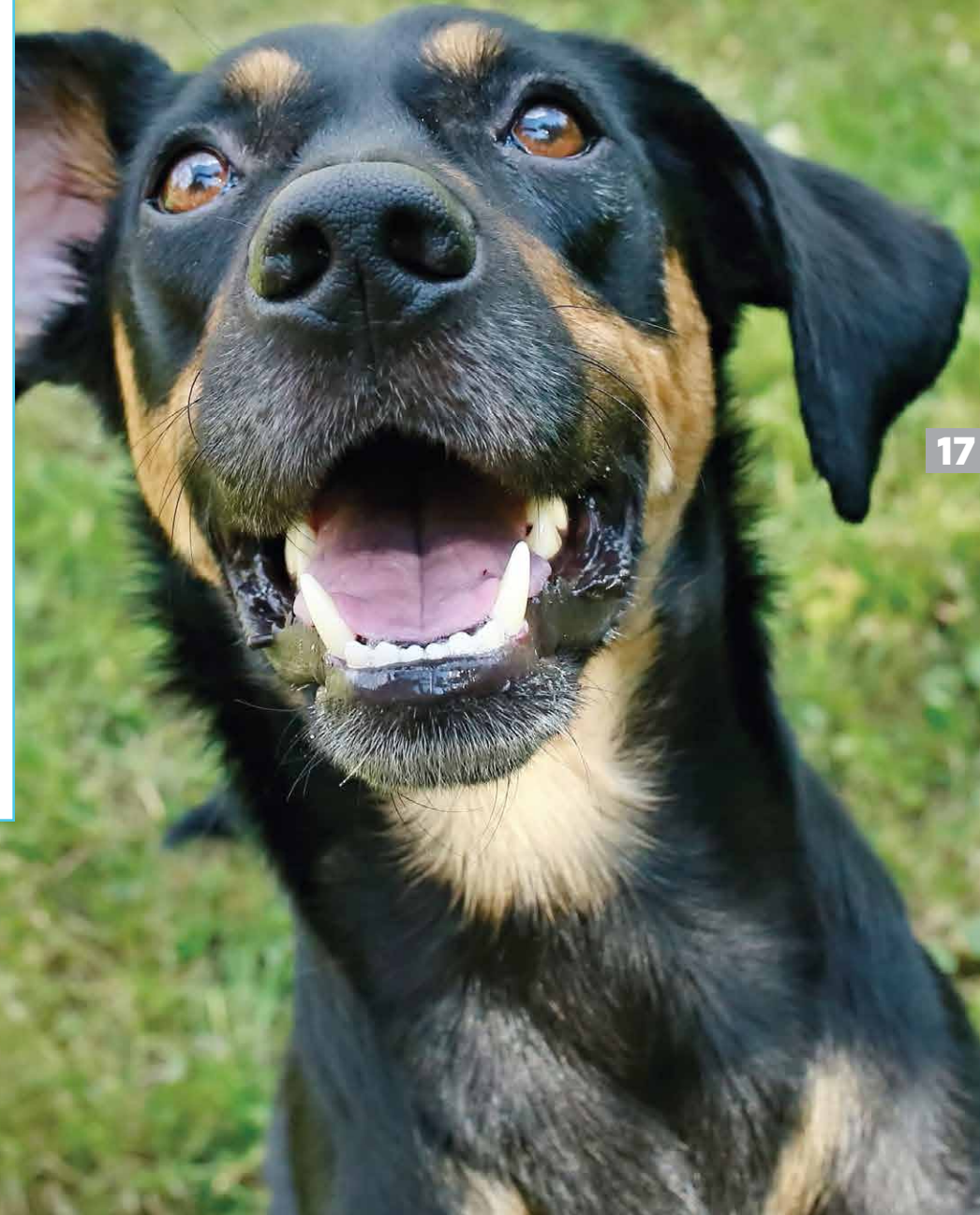
Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to help encourage and support shelter pet adoption.

FOR CITIES AND SHELTERS

- ☐ Making Shelters Welcoming White Paper
- ☐ Model Ordinance for Shelter Reunification
- ☐ Sample Pet Adoption Proclamation
- ☐ Creative Ways to Publicize Adoptable Pets
- ☐ Helping Homeless Pets Toolkit
- ☐ Plus, visit [PedigreeFoundation.org](https://www.pedigreefoundation.org) for more toolkits that help increase dog adoption

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ 8 Great Reasons to Consider Adopting a Pet
- ☐ Tips for the First Few Days When You Adopt a Pet



TRAIT 3

Community Cat Programs

Humanely Address Overpopulation

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Effective cat-focused programs are vital to help cities reduce overpopulation and improve free-roaming cats' quality of life. While some people advocate for euthanizing these cats, experts agree that won't stop overpopulation and isn't cost-effective. In pet-friendly cities, community cat management and trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNR) programs help reduce cat populations humanely over time. Cats that appear socialized may be put up for adoption. Others can live out their lives within their cat colony, but not breed more unwanted cats.

Helping Cats Humanely

The city of Nashville offers a great example of a program to help reduce free-roaming cat overpopulation. Pet Community Center, a high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter and vaccine clinic, has spayed or neutered nearly 23,000 cats since 2011.

PCC partners with Nashville Metro Animal Care and Control to provide free spay/neuter surgeries to community cats as well as community cats that enter the shelter. In the first two years of the partnership, intake in targeted pilot areas had dropped by over 80%.

PCC also supports community cat caregivers with free trap loans, low-cost spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations, winter shelters, food and others supplies, and mentoring.

Learn more at PetCommunityCenter.org/community-cat-program.



38 million

That's the number of stray cats across North America, according to the State of Pet Homelessness Project, and about 35 million of them are in the United States. City-sanctioned community cat programs and trap-neuter-vaccinate-return are critical to humanely reducing stray cat populations.

Source: State of Pet Homelessness Project.
Visit StateOfPetHomelessness.com for more insights.

I love my outdoor life. When cities and volunteers support community cat care, it can help free-roaming cats like me.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Build a Community Cat Program

- ☐ **Encourage collaboration.** Starting or expanding a community cat program with trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNR) will require partnership between local shelters, rescues, animal welfare and veterinary teams. Get all players involved to determine the best path forward and who can play which roles.
- ☐ **Support with the right policies.** You'll need the right local ordinances in place to support a community cat program and not inhibit it. For example, mandatory licensing ordinances are confusing when it comes to community cats — since they wouldn't be licensed, they're at risk of being impounded, overburdening shelters and leading to euthanasia. Feeding bans, leash ordinances and ownership definitions also need to be considered with community cat caregivers in mind.
- ☐ **Educate the community.** When people see free-roaming cats, they may worry that the cats aren't happy, aren't safe or want to be adopted — all likely untrue if a cat has spent its entire life outdoors. Educating about the benefits of TNR for both the community and the cats will help increase acceptance of this life-saving practice.
- ☐ **Support shelter and nutrition.** One of the greatest resources for community cat programs is the kind-hearted volunteers who provide food for cat colonies and maintain shelter areas for them. Consider supporting their efforts with mini-grants. Host community meetings to educate and thank volunteers. Work with local hardware and craft stores to host annual shelter-building events.
- ☐ **Consider working cats.** Many lifelong free-roaming cats don't want to become indoor or owned cats. They are independent and get stressed when confined. A solution is working cat programs in which community cats are fed and cared for while “working” by providing pest control services for a barn, warehouse or business. These programs are gaining traction across the country.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to start on the path to a free-roaming cat program that's good for cats and communities.

FOR CITIES AND SHELTERS

- ☐ Community Cat Toolkit
 - ☐ Benefits of Community Cat Programs
 - ☐ Model Ordinance for Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return Programs
 - ☐ Policies That Can Stand in the Way of Community Cat Care
 - ☐ Case Study: Nashville Pet Community Center
 - ☐ Case Study: Miami Beach Community Cat Program
 - ☐ Case Study: Williamson County Working Cat Program
-

FOR PET LOVERS

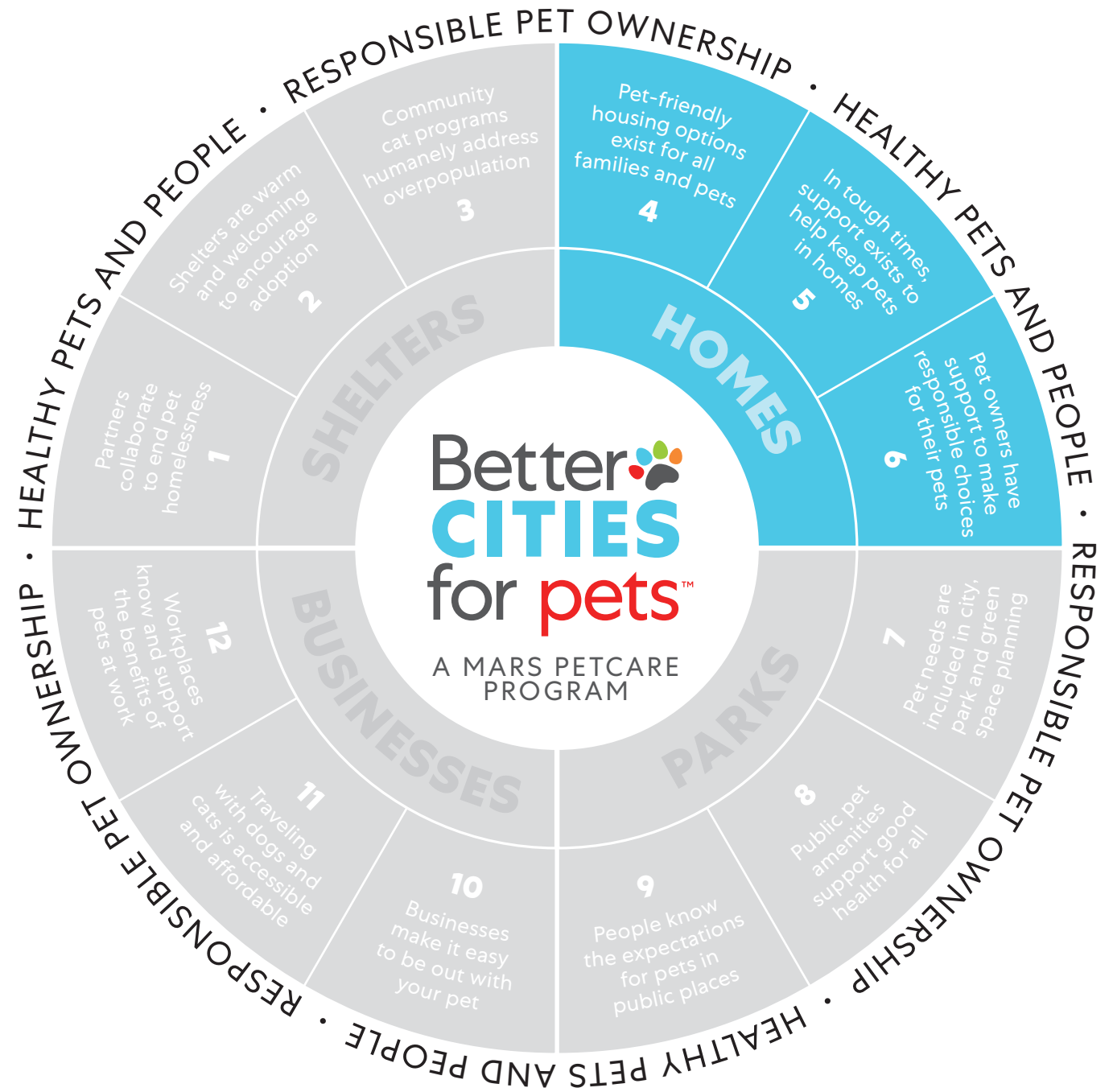
- ☐ Ways to Help Community Cats in Your City
- ☐ Sample Letter of Support for a Community Cat Program
- ☐ How to Reduce Nuisances from Community Cats





12 Traits of Pet-Friendly Cities: HOMES

The next three traits of the **Better Cities For Pets™** model target the need for housing and associated amenities that accommodate people and the pets they love. Housing issues are one of the most frequent reasons pets are surrendered to shelters.





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TRAIT 4

Pet-Friendly Housing Options Exist for
All Families and Pets

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Despite the many ways pets make life better, it can be hard for pet parents to find places to live — especially if they rent. They may face pet breed or size bans, a lack of pet policies, or unreasonably high fees for pets. In fact, many shelters report that housing-related issues are a top reason people surrender their pets. In pet-friendly cities, there are pet-inclusive housing policies, welcoming places to live and support to succeed as renters with pets. This helps reduce pet homelessness and enable people to enjoy the many benefits of pets.

How a Pet-Friendly Housing Registry Helps

Access to a list of pet-friendly local housing options can be critical to keeping people and pets together when a move is required. A great example comes from the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana, which became a **Better Cities For Pets™** certified city in 2019.



Working with apartment complexes, landlords and property owners, the city compiled a list of pet-friendly local housing options to provide support to pet parents in need. The city's Animal Care & Control team uses the list as a resource when families are considering the difficult decision to surrender their pets.

The team explains, "This program has helped people by providing them a resource of housing options they previously were not aware of, and that keeps more pets out of the shelter and in their homes where they are already loved."

Learn more at BetterCitiesForPets.com/apartment-registry.



98 percent

That's how many **Better Cities For Pets™** Certified

Cities say having pet-friendly housing for all income levels is an important factor in reducing human and pet homelessness. The same percentage said pet-friendly housing makes a city more attractive for people considering moving there.

Source: Online survey of **Better Cities For Pets™** Certified Cities in January – March 2024.

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I make a great neighbor. When rental housing welcomes pets, they get loyal tenants who are grateful for the chance to live a great life with the pets they love.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make Pets Welcome at Home

- ☐ **Recognize that pets are family.** The American Pet Products Association estimates 82 million U.S. households have a pet, and numerous studies have shown that pet-related considerations play a role when they choose where to live. In fact, people in crisis may choose homelessness rather than choosing to part with a beloved pet.
- ☐ **Assess local needs.** Evaluate your ordinances to identify barriers to pet ownership in your community. Talk with developers and property managers to understand what their pet policies are and why. Consider a survey of local residents to understand the level of interest in pet-friendly housing. Can you show there's an unmet need?
- ☐ **Break stereotypes.** Add your voice to public dialogue about pets and their place in homes. You can write a letter to legislators, speak up on social media or send a letter to your local paper. There's little evidence of innately "aggressive" breeds or the value of requirements related to pet size.
- ☐ **Try training.** This can be a great way to evaluate pets without implementing more restrictive requirements. 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. Also, teach people, and especially children, how to recognize behavior cues and interact properly with pets.
- ☐ **Encourage pet resumes and interviews.** Rather than restricting pets arbitrarily, progressive property owners are evaluating pets on an individual basis. This can be done by property managers as part of the application process, or through a partnership with a local shelter, animal welfare organization or pet trainer.
- ☐ **Educate about pet owner responsibilities.** People should be able to enjoy life with a pet, but pet ownership brings responsibilities too. Housing owners and managers can and should be clear about expectations for pet owners, such as ensuring their pet's behavior doesn't interfere with other tenants, cleaning up after their pet immediately in common areas, and being 100% responsible for their pet's behavior, well-being and hygiene at all times.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to help encourage and support pet-friendly housing.

FOR CITIES

- ☐ Model Ordinance for Pet-Friendly Low-Income Housing
- ☐ Model Ordinance for Ending Breed-Based Pet Restrictions
- ☐ How a Pet-Friendly Apartment Registry Helps People and Pets

FOR BUSINESSES

- ☐ Facilities Considerations for Pet-Friendly Housing
- ☐ Safety Considerations for Pet-Friendly Housing
- ☐ Sample Pet Interview: How to Evaluate Pets for Your Property
- ☐ Sample Pet Agreement for Rental Properties
- ☐ Sample Signage: Responsible Pet Ownership Tips

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ Tips to be Successful Renting with Pets
- ☐ Sample Pet Resume for Applying for an Apartment





TRAIT 5

In Tough Times, Support Exists to
Help Keep Pets in Homes

WHAT'S AT STAKE

When pets end up homeless, often the reason has nothing to do with them, but rather with their owner. A financial issue might mean they can't afford pet supplies and food. A health change might mean they can't care for their pet. An emergency might require evacuating without pets if shelters won't accept them. Or, sometimes it's a behavior issue that can be corrected, but the pet parent doesn't know how. In pet-friendly cities, safety net programs offer temporary support to keep pets in homes with the people who love them.

Cities are Innovating to Keep People with their Pets

Through our **Better Cities For Pets™** city grants, we've been thrilled to assist cities with innovative programs that aim to help people keep their pets in times of crisis. For example, **Spokane, Washington** added a pet liaison to its homeless shelter team to assist with pet-related needs while in and transitioning from the shelter.

Similarly, **Las Vegas, Nevada** provides assistance to help pet parents bring pets to its shelter and secure pet-friendly housing, while **Phoenix, Arizona** used its grant to hire a Homeless Community Counselor that goes into the community to help unhoused pet parents find housing, temporary boarding, pet supplies and other support.

Schenectady, New York established a Pets Are Family Too assistance program providing food and support to help families keep their pets in times of crisis and homelessness. In **Key West, Florida**, our grant supported the Pet Safety Net program to help people find and keep pet-friendly rental homes.

See more about how our grants are helping cities help pet parents at BetterCitiesForPets.com/grants.

96 percent

That's how many respondents to our Certified Cities survey said the pet-focused initiative their city needs most is safety net support to help people keep their pets in times of crisis. Also, 97% ranked it the top pet-friendly housing-related need.

Source: Online survey of **Better Cities For Pets™** Certified Cities in January – March 2024.

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I want to stay with my family! We just need a little extra support for a time so we can be together.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help Pet Parents Keep Their Pets

- ☐ **Gather data.** To understand what makes people surrender pets in your community, you'll need data from local shelters and rescues about their animal intakes. Ask pet parents what challenges they face. Once you know what the key drivers are, you can offer solutions to help.
- ☐ **Engage your coalition.** As described on page 12, it takes a community to keep people and pets together. One partner might offer a pet food pantry. Another might provide low-cost vet care to qualifying pet parents. Yet another might assist with training. With a public and private network that communicates often, it's easier to match solutions to issues.
- ☐ **Offer a safety net.** Often keeping a pet at home comes down to just a couple hundred dollars of support in a pet parent's time of greatest need. With safety net services from your city's network of providers, many pet parents can get through the toughest times without giving up their pet.
- ☐ **Make pets part of emergency planning.** Be sure your community has enough pet-friendly emergency shelters to house people and their pets in times of crisis. Emergency shelters should be equipped with pet-related items like leashes, carriers and food/water bowls. Plus, communications about potential disasters, such as impending storms or wildfires, should include recommendations to help pet parents prepare.
- ☐ **Encourage fosters.** Sometimes pet parents need help for a short time, but desperately want to reclaim their pet. With short-term foster programs, pets can be cared for temporarily until they can be reunited with their owner. Having a wide network of fosters enables a community to collectively care for many more pets and people.
- ☐ **Help rehome.** For those who still can't keep their pets, you can help keep them out of shelters by supporting responsible rehoming. Set up a local network to support the process or encourage use of services like [Rehome.AdoptAPet.com](https://www.Rehome.AdoptAPet.com).



HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out the Pet-Friendly Housing and Helping Homeless Pets toolkits at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) for these and other resources.

FOR CITIES

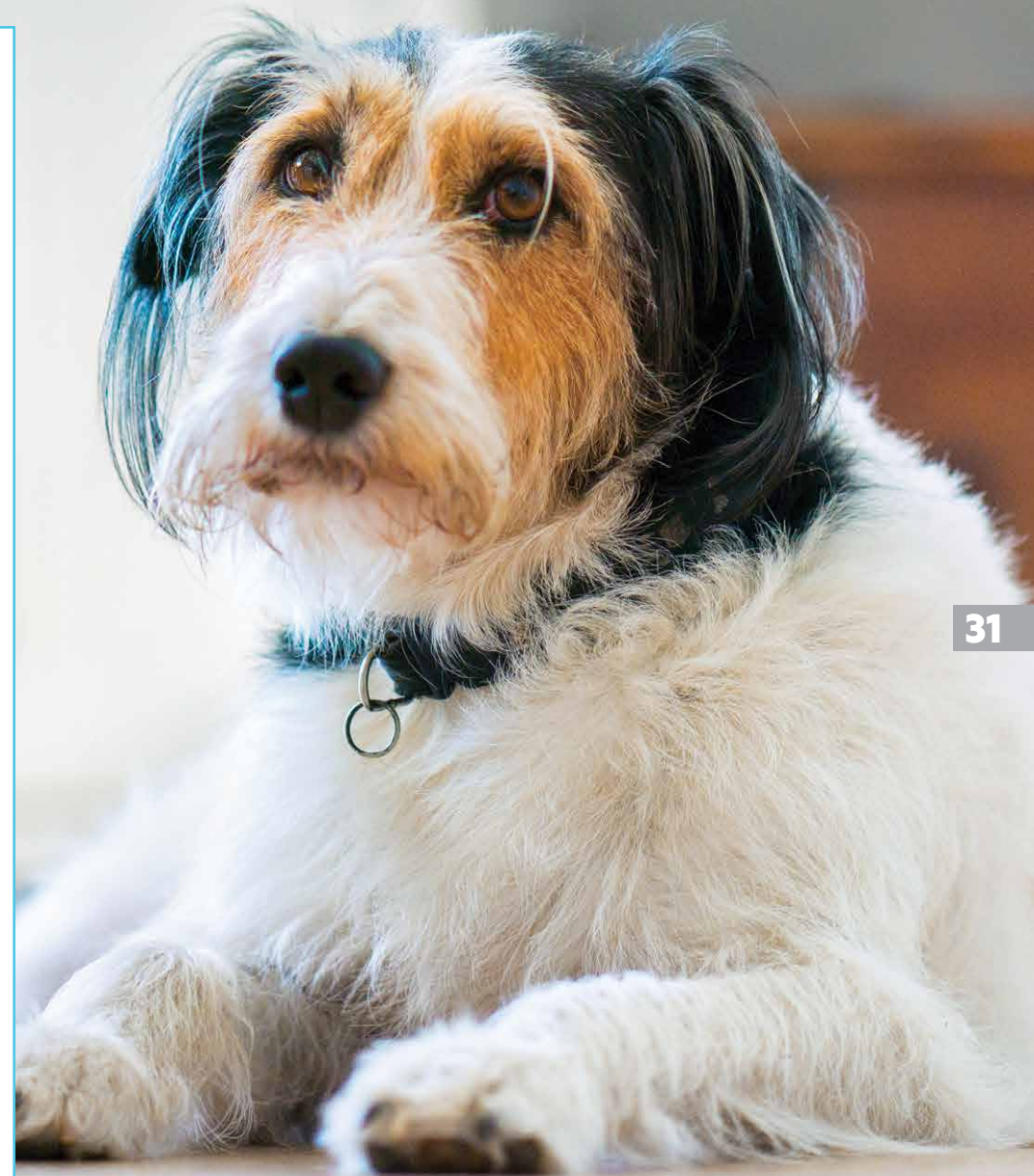
- ☐ Do's and Don'ts for Creating a Pet-Friendly Coalition in Your City
 - ☐ How a Pet-Friendly Apartment Registry Helps
 - ☐ Model Ordinance for Shelter Reunification
 - ☐ Helping Citizens Be Ready for Emergencies with Pets
-

FOR SHELTERS

- ☐ Virtual Foster Program Handbook from PEDIGREE Foundation and Austin Pets Alive!
 - ☐ Keeping Families Together Safety Net Toolkit from PEDIGREE Foundation, Austin Pets Alive! and HASS
-

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ Rehome Tool from AdoptAPet.com
- ☐ In Case of Emergency, Who Cares for Your Pet?



TRAIT 6

Pet Owners Have Support to Make

Responsible Choices for Their Pets

WHAT'S AT STAKE

When pet owners are responsible, pets can enjoy a great life that gives pet owners companionship and helps strengthen ties within their community. Yet some people may not be aware of the steps needed to keep their pets happy, healthy and well-behaved, or they may not consider how their pets affect non-pet owners around them. In pet-friendly cities, the city helps educate about responsible pet ownership and supports local programs and businesses that enable pet owners to make positive choices for their pets.

Inspiring Pet Owner Responsibility



One of the key pet-related challenges cities face is getting pet owners to clean up pet waste when walking their dogs or visiting public spaces. Since 2018, Washington, D.C., has managed this challenge with a creative program that provides education and support.

Working with Humane Rescue Alliance and with support from Mars Petcare, the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs launched educational signs around the city to encourage pet owners to pick up pet waste.

They have also supported this positive behavior by installing free pet waste bag dispensers in strategic locations around the city, making it even easier for people to make the right choice and pick up after their pets.



90 percent

That's the percentage of respondents to our Certified Cities survey that named as a high or emerging need support for responsible pet ownership, such as low-cost spay/neuter and microchipping, dog bite prevention education and amenities like waste bag dispensers.

Source: Online survey of **Better Cities For Pets**™ Certified Cities in January – March 2024.

I need nutrition, health care, training, love and protection. Responsible pet ownership means knowing and meeting those needs.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Educate and Support

- ☐ **Promote pet-friendly policies.** Local legislation about responsible choices, like microchipping and not leaving pets in hot cars, can help educate and increase compliance with actions that help keep pets safe and with their families.
- ☐ **Welcome pet businesses.** By encouraging the success of local pet-related businesses, cities enable pet owners to get the support they need — such as healthy nutrition, veterinary care and training — within their community.
- ☐ **Plan for when pets have to go.** Pet-friendly public spaces need to plan for pet waste. Support pet owner responsibility by providing pet relief areas with grass, waste bags and a regularly emptied trash receptacle. Be sure to include signage that makes rules and expectations clear.
- ☐ **Support good health.** Pets need more water than people do. Install ground-based water fountains for pet hydration and encourage local businesses to provide individual water bowls that are regularly refilled and cleaned after use.
- ☐ **Consider ways to support.** Sometimes pet owners want to do the right thing but it's out of reach. Explore whether the city can sponsor annual low-cost microchipping, vaccine or other events to help pet owners in need.
- ☐ **Provide space to play.** Green space where dogs can interact on- or off-leash supports health and good behavior. It also enables social engagement within the community, since pet parents often gather where their pets do.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to help pet owners make responsible choices

FOR CITIES

- ☐ Responsible Pet Ownership Communication Toolkit
- ☐ How to Plan a Year of Responsible Pet Ownership Content
- ☐ Ways to Spotlight Local Pet Ordinances
- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Places Toolkit
- ☐ Best Practices for Pet Relief Areas
- ☐ How to Help Pet Owners Prepare for Emergencies

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ Happy Pet Handbook
- ☐ How to Be a Good Pet Neighbor
- ☐ Keep Track of Your Pet and Avoid Pet Homelessness
- ☐ Plus, visit [Waltham.com](https://www.waltham.com) to download the WALTHAM™ Pocket Book of Responsible Pet Ownership





12 Traits of Pet-Friendly Cities: PARKS

The next three traits of the **Better Cities For Pets™** model target the importance of parks for people and pets, and the need to include pets in planning for public spaces and green space. This includes helping pet owners act responsibly so their pets are welcome.



TRAIT 7

Pet Needs are Included
in City, Park and Green Space Planning

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Pets provide companionship and keep us moving for good health, yet people often choose not to have pets because of where they live. They might not have a pet relief area in close walking distance, or might lack safe sidewalks or open green spaces for dogs to get the exercise needed for health and good behavior. In pet-friendly cities, there are parks, trails and other public spaces that welcome pets, providing room for healthy outdoor activity and opportunities for pet parents to connect. Pets are an important part of the social capital that binds a community together — yet another reason they should be considered in city and neighborhood planning conversations.

Creating Green Spaces

Many downtown cores struggle to provide green spaces for pets. But in Nashville, an innovative solution created a free off-leash dog park for the more than 5,000 pups who live in the area.

Taking advantage of unused space near Bridgestone Arena, the Nashville Predators teamed up with Mars Petcare and the city of Nashville to create the PupsNPlay dog park, the first ever dog park outside an NHL arena.

Opened in 2022, the park features a double gate system for safety, signage about rules and responsible pet ownership, waste stations, a water fountain for dogs, and benches where people can watch their dogs run and play while interacting with other pet parents.

It's estimated that the dog park receives over 35,000 visits per year by dogs in the community.



See a video showing the creation of the park at bit.ly/pupsnplay.



91 percent

That's the percentage of Americans who believe dog parks provide benefits to their communities, with the top three benefits including giving dogs a safe space to exercise and roam freely, allowing dogs to socialize with other dogs, and allowing owners a chance to be active with their pet.

Source: National Recreation and Park Association 2018 survey conducted by Wakefield Research among 1,002 U.S. adults between September 11 and 18, 2018. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/november/nrpa-park-pulse-americans-agree-dog-parks-benefit-local-communities/>

**Gimme space!
I'll get exercise and you
might meet some new
friends, too.**

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make Public and Green Spaces Pet Friendly

40



- ☐ **Understand the current landscape.** Walk the community to see where dog parks are and how easy they are to find. Assess local parks and trails to understand how many are pet friendly. Survey residents to find out where they think more green space is needed for them and their pets.
- ☐ **Be inclusive.** Research from the National Recreation and Park Association found that 88% of U.S. adults agree it's vital for local park and recreation agencies to engage with every member of their communities to ensure offerings meet their needs.
- ☐ **Involve the right people.** Successfully adding or expanding pet-friendly public spaces may require many steps and numerous partners. A city Chief Pet Officer role can ensure pets are always on the agenda. Plan to talk with multiple city departments. Engage your mayor to advocate for funding and pet-friendly ordinances.
- ☐ **Be creative.** Public/private partnership can be a great way to make progress on public spaces faster than going it alone as a city or neighborhood — particularly if you can identify partners that may be able to donate land or financial support. Look for local businesses to be sponsors and advocates.
- ☐ **Think small, too.** Consider transforming underutilized green spaces, even of small sizes, to turn concrete into pet-friendly turfed or “parklet” patio opportunities for temporary “test and learns” or permanent installation.
- ☐ **Highlight the benefits.** When advocating for pet-friendly parks and public spaces, it helps to share data about benefits for the community. Use community surveys to gather facts about what features people want most and why, and which areas of your city have the greatest need.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to help with planning parks, trails and other public spaces in your community.

FOR CITIES

- ☐ Sample Designs for Parks and Parklets
- ☐ Key Features of a Successful Dog Park
- ☐ Urban Dog Park of the Future White Paper
- ☐ Best Practices for Pet Relief Areas
- ☐ Pet Amenities Enable Outdoor Fun Together
- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Places Toolkit
- ☐ Sample Dog Park Messages for Responsible Pet Ownership
- ☐ Sample Trail Messages

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ Keep Track of Your Pet and Avoid Pet Homelessness
- ☐ 8 Things to Know about Dog Bites and Dog Bite Prevention





TRAIT 8

Public Pet Amenities

Support Good Health for All

WHAT'S AT STAKE

To live a healthy, hygienic life with a pet, people need access to basic amenities including pet relief areas and fresh water. Free waste bags and nearby trash receptacles help when pet parents forget to bring a bag from home. Water fountains at dog height support hydration, which is especially important in warmer climates and seasons. In pet-friendly cities, people can be out with their pets and know they'll be able to find needed amenities like these. This supports pet health as well as responsible pet ownership, for example enabling pet parents to clean up pet waste.

Finding Out What Your City Needs



Public input is a vital part of city and neighborhood planning, including when it comes to pets. Hosting input sessions at public events and local parks can help determine where amenities such as pet waste bag dispensers and dog-friendly drinking fountains are needed.

Many cities have limited pet amenities within their urban core. For example, Nashville had few pet waste bag dispensers near their green spaces.

Together with Civic Design Center and Mars Petcare, the city gathered public input and created a plan to add 17 new waste stations to make it easier for those living downtown to be out with their pets.

Learn more at CivicDesignCenter.org/all-projects-blog/transforming-downtowns-for-pets.

88 percent

That's how many pet parents said they want more pet-friendly places in their neighborhood to connect with other pet lovers. Nine in 10 pet parents also say pets contribute to a stronger sense of community. With amenities for pets, cities can enable pet ownership and encourage neighborly connections.

Source: KRC Research online surveys of 1,000 pet parents each from the U.S. and Canada from October 30 – November 6, 2023.

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Um, excuse me....
I need to go.
Hope there's a
pet relief area nearby!

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Add More Amenities



Hydration Considerations

- ☐ Plumbed water fountains can be expensive. To get the most value, consider fountains that serve both people and pets.
- ☐ Engage private businesses during their construction projects. If they are breaking concrete to get to water lines, that's a prime opportunity to install a hydration station.
- ☐ Have signage indicating who to call with issues, which gives the public a sense of ownership and helps avoid issues due to lack of reporting.

Waste Considerations

- ☐ Place bag dispensers on existing sign poles to lessen the need to install more in congested areas. Work with public and private partners to add to what already exists.
- ☐ Install waste bag dispensers that include or are near trash receptacles, and place them in shaded areas away from restaurants and food vendors, to mitigate concerns related to odors.
- ☐ Have a process in place for how often and by whom attached or adjacent trash receptacles are emptied, and provide information about where to report issues or concerns.

Signage Considerations

- ☐ Incorporate directions to pet hydration and waste stations into existing wayfinding in the community.
- ☐ Be considerate of city, historic or other style guidelines — you'll want pet amenity signs to stand out and be noticeable, but also be appropriate to their surroundings.
- ☐ Keep in mind that pet owners looking for amenities may be looking from as far as a block or two away — keep signage high so it can be seen.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to help with planning pet-friendly amenities in your city.

FOR CITIES

- ☐ Best Practices for Pet Relief Areas
- ☐ Sample Designs for Parks and Parklets
- ☐ Pet Amenities Enable Outdoor Fun Together
- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Places Toolkit
- ☐ Sample Pet Hydration Messages
- ☐ Sample Pet Waste Messages
- ☐ Sample Responsible Pet Ownership Messages
- ☐ Responsible Pet Ownership Communication Toolkit





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TRAIT 9

People Know the Expectations for
Pets in Public Places

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Being able to bring pets to public places gives pet owners companionship and helps encourage connection with others. But many people may not know the requirements for being out in public with a pet — like using a leash or picking up pet waste — or they may not consider how their pet affects others around them. In pet-friendly cities, signage and public education help make sure people understand what's expected of them and their pets. This helps pets, pet owners and non-pet owners all be more comfortable with pets around. Plus, it helps communities be more accepting of pets in public places, since everyone understands that responsible pet ownership is a must.

A Low-Cost Way to Educate Pet Owners



City signage is an important way to help pet owners understand expectations for them and their pets in public places. Signs can be added to existing sign poles, keeping costs down and putting responsible pet ownership messages right where pet owners need them most — the public places they're visiting.

However, when budget or other constraints mean signage can't be implemented as needed, there's a fast and low-cost way to reach out to pet owners about your city's expectations: social media.

Cities can plan a social media calendar that provides a steady drumbeat of content about topics like leash use, cleaning up pet waste and dog bite prevention.

Check out our sample calendar at BetterCitiesForPets.com/rpo-calendar.

89 percent

That's how many adults say pets are one of the easiest conversation starters, while 83% say pets cause interactions with people they wouldn't have connected with otherwise. But for pets to play their important role in helping communities connect, they need to be a positive part of public spaces.

Source: KRC Research online surveys of 1,000 pet parents each from the U.S. and Canada from October 30 – November 6, 2023.

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How can I behave if I don't know the rules? Signage and education help my pawrents help me.

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Get Smart about Signage

- ☐ **Be strategic.** Consider the biggest needs in your community related to responsible pet ownership and develop a targeted signage plan to address them. For example, picking up pet waste might be a priority in a park, while warnings about leaving pets in hot cars might be needed in a shopping area.
- ☐ **Get creative.** Think about what signage is in place in your pet-friendly spaces and how you can add pet owner education without added cost or infrastructure. For example, could brightly colored stickers add important messaging to existing signs?
- ☐ **Make it memorable.** Help communications make their mark by using large fonts, bright colors and happy pet faces. Consider speaking in the “voice” of a pet, as an added way to draw attention to your message.
- ☐ **Highlight the benefits.** Explain how responsible pet owner behaviors, such as using a leash or picking up pet waste, benefit individuals and the community as a whole. You are likely to get better results from encouraging than shaming.
- ☐ **Teach pet behaviors, too.** Often negative experiences with pets happen when people miss cues that signal an issue is escalating. Communications that help people interpret what dogs are saying can help them recognize and stop brewing issues.
- ☐ **Make it easy.** Consider using a QR code that goes directly to detailed information on your website, so your signage is simple but the information is thorough. Put it everywhere it might reach pet owners, from the dog park to animal welfare vehicles.
- ☐ **Seize opportunities.** Look at planned future upgrades for opportunities to add signage at parks, trails and other public spaces. Use the signs to make expectations clear and show what responsible pet ownership looks like.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

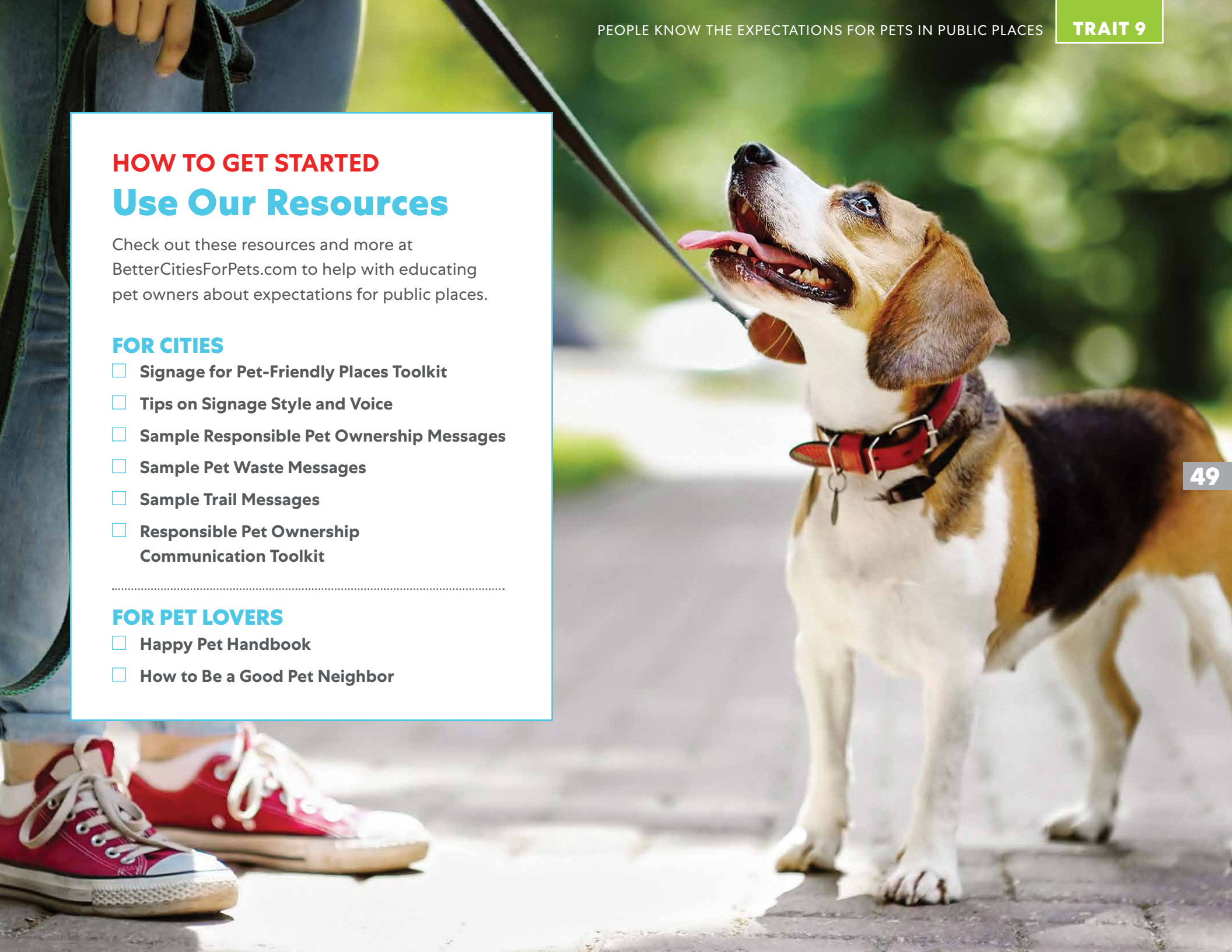
Check out these resources and more at BetterCitiesForPets.com to help with educating pet owners about expectations for public places.

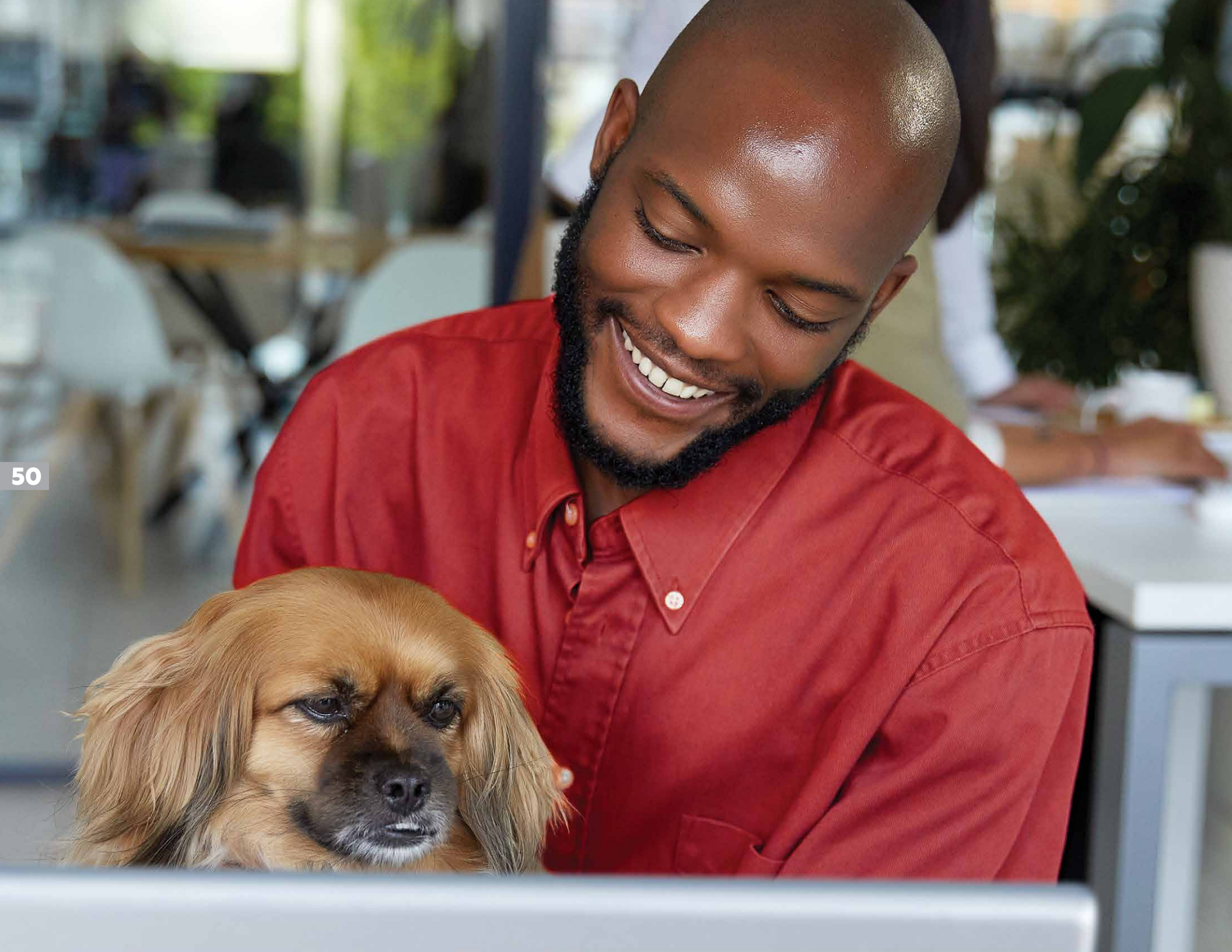
FOR CITIES

- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Places Toolkit
- ☐ Tips on Signage Style and Voice
- ☐ Sample Responsible Pet Ownership Messages
- ☐ Sample Pet Waste Messages
- ☐ Sample Trail Messages
- ☐ Responsible Pet Ownership Communication Toolkit

FOR PET LOVERS

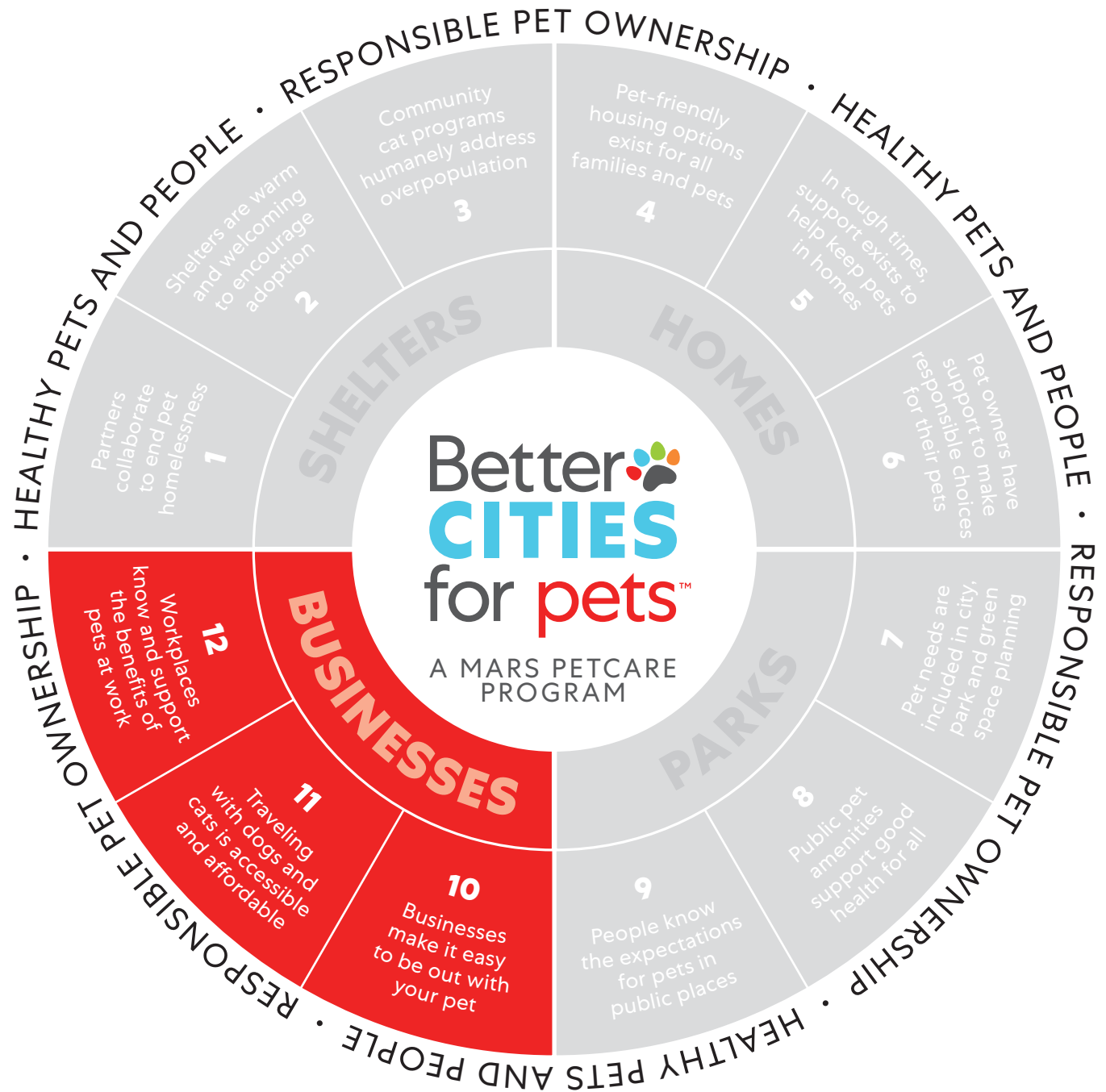
- ☐ Happy Pet Handbook
- ☐ How to Be a Good Pet Neighbor





12 Traits of Pet-Friendly Cities: **BUSINESSES**

The last three traits of the **Better Cities For Pets™** model target making pets welcome in businesses so it's easier for people to be out with their pets. This includes pet-friendly workplace programs, which bring benefits in employee loyalty and work-life balance.



TRAIT 10

Businesses Make it Easy to
Be Out with Your Pet

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Many people want to have pets with them throughout the day as they run errands, stop for meals and go to work. When businesses aren't pet friendly, people miss out on the benefits of pets' companionship and pets have to endure long periods of time alone. Businesses miss out too, since a customer who isn't rushing home to a pet may stay longer and spend more money. In pet-friendly cities, local ordinances and clear guidelines help businesses make pets welcome. Local business associations may even bond together to create a pet-friendly business district.

A Model for Making Pets Welcome

In June 2017, Franklin, Tennessee, became the first community to launch Mars Petcare's Pets Welcome toolkit as part of our **Better Cities For Pets™** program. The idea was to implement a coordinated, community-wide slate of pet-friendly business practices. We started with local survey research to understand perceptions and requirements to make the program work.



At launch, more than 90 businesses agreed to participate, with a shared pet code of conduct, consistent signage, materials for in-store education and a kick-off event that brought the community together in celebration of pets.

Learnings from the Franklin launch helped us continue to refine our Pets Welcome toolkit to help cities across North America enjoy the many benefits that being pet friendly brings to their customers and their business.



98 percent

That's the percentage of respondents to our Certified Cities survey that said being a pet-friendly city is an important factor in the future health and growth of their city. 74% named pet-friendly businesses as a high or emerging need in their city so people can bring pets with them to more places throughout the day.

Source: Online survey of **Better Cities For Pets™** Certified Cities in January – March 2024.

Rules make it work!
Having clear guidelines helps pet-friendly businesses succeed with pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Organize a Pets Welcome Pilot

- ☐ **Assess local interest.** Survey pet owners to help make the case for the benefits of welcoming pets — is the local pet population significant? Do residents indicate a desire for more pet-friendly places? Do they say they would stay longer or spend more if pets were welcome in businesses?
- ☐ **Consider local ordinances.** Review your local legislation to ensure businesses are able to make pets welcome. For example, consider a “pets on patios” policy that allows restaurants to welcome pets for outdoor dining. The FDA Food Code now provides a model you can find at [BetterCitiesForPets.com/petsonpatios](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com/petsonpatios).
- ☐ **Involve merchants, tourism and government.** Get the right people together, including your local government, Main Street program, Chamber of Commerce, other business associations and visitor’s bureau. You’ll be able to move faster if you have all the right players working together.
- ☐ **Create a shared code of conduct.** To succeed, a pet-friendly business program needs rules that everyone understands and follows. By creating a shared code of conduct for the entire community, you make it easier for both business owners and pet owners to know and uphold key expectations.
- ☐ **Give merchants a toolkit.** We’ve found that the biggest concern from merchants is often how to handle customer concerns and issues. A toolkit with Q&As, animal behavior tips and communication samples can help increase acceptance of the program and ensure consistent implementation. See ours at [BetterCitiesForPets.com/petswelcome](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com/petswelcome).
- ☐ **Remember amenities.** To truly make pets welcome, pet owners need access to amenities like fresh drinking water and a pet relief area. A great option for a pet-friendly business district is a larger space shared by all in the community. This enables cost-sharing for setup, maintenance and signage.



HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to create a pet-friendly business area in your community.

FOR CITIES

- ☐ Pets Welcome Toolkit
- ☐ Model Ordinance for Pets in Outdoor Dining Areas
- ☐ Best Practices for Pet Relief Areas

FOR BUSINESSES

- ☐ Pets Welcome Toolkit
- ☐ Pets on Patios Toolkit
- ☐ Pet Behavior 101 for Businesses
- ☐ Pet Safety Considerations for Businesses
- ☐ Sample Pet Code of Conduct
- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Places Toolkit





TRAIT 11

Traveling with Dogs and Cats is
Accessible and Affordable

WHAT'S AT STAKE

People want to be able to bring pets with them when traveling — both in their own city and out of town. Yet from city transit to rental cars to lodging, many service providers choose not to allow pets. This makes it hard for pet owners to spend time with pets and enjoy the benefits they bring. Even more concerning, for those without a car, it can mean reduced access to green space, veterinary care and other needed services. In pet-friendly cities, people can get around with their pets without excessive restrictions or requirements, and it's easy for visitors to find pet-friendly accommodations, transportation and activities.

Supporting Pet-Friendly Air Travel

In 2021, Mars Petcare launched airport certification through the **Better Cities For Pets™** program, recognizing airports that are working toward easier, more responsible and safer pet travel experiences.

This includes accommodating pet needs, having processes for pet-related incidents and ensuring a positive experience for all travelers, with or without pets.

We kicked off the certification with a celebration of Nashville International Airport, which prioritizes the safety and ease of traveling with pets and service animals with features including a dedicated dog park, curbside relief areas, an indoor relief area and enhanced wayfinding to make locating pet amenities easier for travelers.

Learn more at BetterCitiesForPets.com/airporttoolkit.



19 million

That's how many times "pet travel" is searched on Google annually in the U.S. alone. Recent research also found that pet parents only take a vacation "once every few years" or less because of pets, and 33% of pet parents have altered plans because of difficulty traveling with them.

Source: Infogroup, Google search data 2023, OnePoll; see <https://www.mars.com/news-and-stories/press-releases-statements/mars-announces-partnership-tripadvisor-pet-parents-better-travel-experiences>.

**I want to come with you!
When travel is pet friendly,
we can have a great time
and make even more
memories together.**

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make it Easy to Get Around

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- ☐ **Include the right players.** Pet-friendly transportation requires input from a lot of people, including your local transit authority, taxi companies, bus companies and others. You may need your mayor's office if ordinances need to be changed. Engage animal welfare experts too, for input on guidelines to keep pets safe.
- ☐ **Start with transit.** Whether the focus is city residents or out-of-town visitors, everyone needs to be able to get around. Making pet-friendly transportation a priority makes life easier for pet owners and also encourages use of public transportation. Consider how to find the balance between pets and pet owners, and those who prefer not to be near pets on busy city transit.
- ☐ **Consider restrictions carefully.** Some cities allow pets on transit only if the pet fits in a carrier. But this can lead to people stuffing pets into carriers that are too small to be safe or comfortable. A pet on a leash can be controlled as well as one in a carrier — and in many cases may be quieter and more well behaved due to not feeling constrained.
- ☐ **Remember sidewalks.** Transit isn't just about motorized transportation. Think about how people get around in your city. Are sidewalks wide enough to accommodate people and their pets, including those using wheelchairs or other assistive devices who have pets or service animals by their side?
- ☐ **Encourage pet-friendly businesses.** For out-of-town visitors, pet-friendly travel goes beyond transportation and includes where they'll stay and what they'll do. Talk with local hotels and other businesses about making pets welcome. Share our toolkit: BetterCitiesForPets.com/petswelcome.
- ☐ **Communicate about pets.** Most cities have a convention and visitors bureau or other tourism team whose aim is to market the city to out-of-town visitors. Does yours focus enough on the pet-friendly benefits your city has to offer?

HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to support pet-friendly travel and transit in your city.

FOR CITIES AND BUSINESSES

- ☐ Pets Welcome Toolkit
- ☐ Pet-Friendly Airport Toolkit
- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Places Toolkit
- ☐ Responsible Pet Ownership Communication Toolkit

FOR PET LOVERS

- ☐ Make Your Trip Pawsitively Great: Travel Tips for Pet Parents





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TRAIT 12

Workplaces Know and Support the Benefits of Pets at Work

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Bringing pets to work means companionship, a social ice-breaker and a sense of community. Pets can boost morale and get people up for regular walking breaks, which is good for health and collaboration. Plus, when people bring pets to work, they don't have to worry about them being home alone. That means less anxiety during the workday and the commute home. In pet-friendly cities, workplaces welcome pets. Clear policies and guidelines make pets-at-work programs succeed and protect the well-being of pets, pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

Pet-Friendly Workplaces are the Future

As a long-time pet-friendly workplace, when Mars Petcare opened its new North America headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee in 2019, we aimed to model features that support a great space for pets and people. Our office includes pet-friendly elements like:



- Leash hooks located in work areas and public spaces so people can easily keep control of their pets while leaving their hands free for work
- An indoor dog play area staffed by full-time pet sitters so Associates having a busy day away from their desk can still bring their dog to work
- Built in amenities like pet drinking fountains and pet bed and toy storage space
- Wider furniture with pet-friendly fabric so Associates can sit with their furry friends
- Outdoor green space and walking paths designed with pet-friendly landscaping

Learn about pet-friendly design at BetterCitiesForPets.com/petsworkatwork.

89 percent

That's the percentage of pet parents who say it's important for them to continue spending time with pets during the workday. 37% of Gen Z dog owners said they'd consider taking a pay cut to work for a pet-friendly company, and 64% would change jobs or reduce hours to have more time with their pets.

Source: Online survey of 1,003 U.S. adult pet owners conducted by KRC Research between July 28 – August 8, 2021.

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**I'm a great coworker!
I'll break the ice and give people another reason to get up from their desks and interact with their team.**

READ ON ➔

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Launch a Workplace Program

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- ☐ **Build buy-in.** For a successful program, you'll need employees and leaders to get on board with pets at work. Communicate the expected benefits for the organization, employees, recruiting and reputation. Survey employees about their preferences and what rules they think are most important. Start with a pilot and gather feedback to incorporate into a larger program.
- ☐ **Consider legal and facilities needs.** You'll need permission from your landlord if you don't own your workspace, and you may need to change your insurance to accommodate pets. Be sure you have at least one onsite pet relief area with a pet waste station and trash receptacle that's emptied regularly.
- ☐ **Write a great pet policy.** You'll need a thorough pet policy created in partnership with Human Resources and your legal counsel. It should include who can participate, expectations for pet owners and pets, and an escalation process for issues that might occur. Also, have an agreed-to participant pledge that employees must sign to participate.
- ☐ **Make your office pet friendly.** Do a thoughtful walkthrough and consider your space from a pet's perspective. What unintentional hazards might pets find? What items might be too low or too high if pets are in the office? Research pet-friendly furniture, decor and plants to reduce issues and avoid hazards.
- ☐ **Add signage and educational materials.** Explain and reinforce your program's rules and encourage participation with clear communications and signage that indicates where pets can and cannot go, where to find the pet relief area, and ongoing expectations for pet owners.
- ☐ **Use our tools.** Check out the free PETS WORK AT WORK™ toolkit from Mars Petcare for tips from safety considerations, to design, to a sample workplace pet policy. Get it at BetterCitiesForPets.com/petsworkatwork.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Use Our Resources

Check out these resources and more at [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) to make pets welcome at work.

FOR CITIES AND BUSINESSES

- ☐ PETS WORK AT WORK™ Toolkit
- ☐ Facilities Considerations for Welcoming Pets at Work
- ☐ “Pupgrading” Your Office to be Pet Friendly
- ☐ Safety Considerations for Pet-Friendly Offices
- ☐ Signage for Pet-Friendly Offices
- ☐ Cleaning Considerations for Pet-Friendly Offices
- ☐ How to Create a Pet Policy for Your Workplace
- ☐ Sample Workplace Pet Policy
- ☐ Sample Participant Pledge for Pets at Work





Begin by Assessing Your City

The **Better Cities For Pets™** city assessment offers a way to consider the current pet-friendliness of your community. Designed by Civic Design Center, in partnership with Mars Petcare, it helps cities evaluate strengths to celebrate and opportunities for change.

The assessment also determines if a city is ready to be recognized as a **Better Cities For Pets™** Certified City.

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It includes demographics information about your city as well as an evaluation of your city's pet-friendly policies and programs based on the key traits explained in the **Better Cities For Pets™** model.

As a preview, the key traits evaluation is included on the following pages. You can also explore the assessment process and get tips at BetterCitiesForPets.com/assessment-tips.

There's no cost to complete the assessment, and all cities that complete it receive a report on strengths, opportunities and helpful resources.

Read on to start evaluating your city. ➡

Pet-Friendly Policies and Programs Evaluation

These questions are excerpted from the **Better Cities For Pets™** program's online city assessment. Take the full assessment at BetterCitiesForPets.com/assessment.

Shelters Evaluation

1. Partners collaborate to end pet homelessness

Public, nonprofit and private shelters in our city/county share data and information to help homeless pets and get pets adopted.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city/county-owned shelter partners with other organizations to help homeless pets and get pets adopted.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city/county-owned shelter partners with for-profit businesses to help homeless pets and get pets adopted.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city has at least one policy or program that encourages animal adoption, e.g. an official Pet Adoption Awareness Day.	☐ Yes	☐ No	

2. Shelters are warm and welcoming to encourage adoption

Our shelters are happy places that people want to visit.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Pets are comfortable at our city's shelters and have room to play.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Potential adopters can interact with pets and get information about them to choose the best fit for their family.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Shelter signage is welcoming and makes it easy to figure out where to go.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always

3. Community cat programs humanely address overpopulation

Our city has a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program through which cats are humanely trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated and returned to live out their lives in their home colony.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
TNR is accepted by the community for the benefits it provides.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Community cats are well cared for in our city.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city has one or more Working Cats programs where businesses adopt cats to help control rodent populations.	☐ Yes	☐ No	

Homes Evaluation

1. Pet-friendly housing options exist for all families and pets

City laws allow pet ownership without restrictions on pet breed.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Pets are welcome in most rentals, condos and neighborhoods, regardless of breed or size.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always
Rental housing pet deposits or fees are reasonable.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always
Housing developments and neighborhoods meet the needs of pet owners, e.g. having pet relief areas, green space within walking distance (1/4 mile) and other amenities.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always

2. Support exists to help keep pets in homes through tough times

Our local food banks or animal welfare organizations distribute pet food for families in need.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always
Our city's disaster relief plans include pets (e.g. temporary shelters allow pets).	☐ Yes	☐ No
Our city has at least one homeless shelter or domestic violence shelter that allows pets.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Our city has other publicly or privately funded programs to help pet owners keep pets during tough times (e.g. low-cost vet clinic, micro-loans for pet emergencies, etc.).	☐ Yes	☐ No

3. Pet owners have support to make responsible choices for their pets

Low cost local services like spay/neuter are available for pet owners.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always
Our city communicates the importance of microchipping to help lost pets be returned home.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always
Our city has enough veterinary options to ensure pet owners can get preventive and emergency care for their pets.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Our city has a program to educate pet owners about responsible pet ownership.	☐ Yes	☐ No



Parks Evaluation

1. Pet needs are included in city, park and green space planning

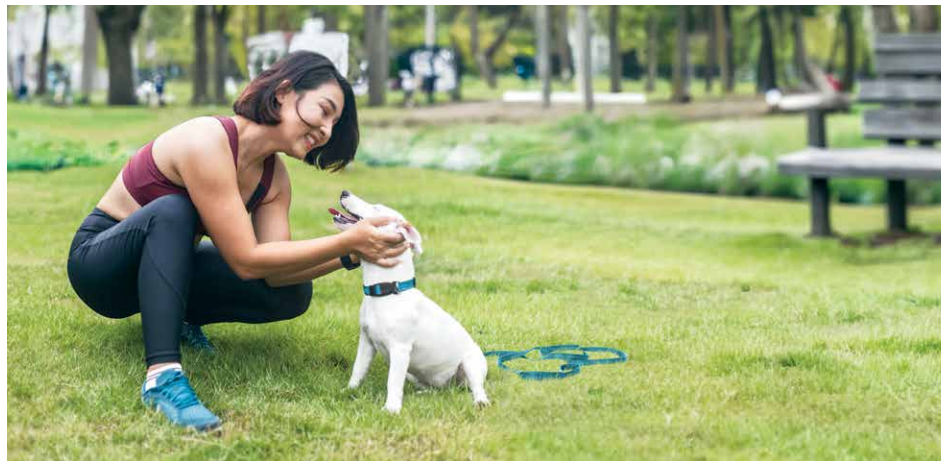
Pet-friendly parks and public spaces are located throughout our city.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Pet needs are considered in public event and festival spaces.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
More off-leash parks and pet-friendly spaces are planned in our city within the next five years.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Green space planning includes consideration for pets (e.g. on- or off-leash play areas and relief areas).	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always

2. Public pet amenities support good health for all

Our city's public spaces have easy-to-find pet relief areas with free waste bags and trash receptacles.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city has easy-to-find hydration options for pets, such as drinking fountains that are low to the ground and pet friendly.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city has signage that clearly identifies pet amenities.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city communicates about local pet amenities, programs and services (e.g. on city website, app, etc.).	☐ Yes	☐ No	

3. People know the expectations for pets in public places

Parks and public spaces in our city have signs about where pets are allowed or restricted.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Parks and public spaces post clear rules about pet owner responsibilities, where pets may be off-leash, etc.	☐ Rarely/Never	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often/Always
Our city has a program to encourage responsible clean-up of dog waste.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Our city has a program to educate about dog behavior and/or avoiding dog bites.	☐ Yes	☐ No	



Businesses Evaluation

1. Businesses make it easy to be out with your pet

Our city has laws or regulations that allow businesses to welcome pets (e.g. "pets on patios" legislation).

☐ Yes ☐ No

Businesses post clear signage indicating if or where pets are welcome.

☐ Rarely/Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always

Restaurants in our city welcome pets (inside or on patios).

☐ Rarely/Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always

Our city promotes itself as pet-friendly or has plans to do so in the near future.

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Traveling with pets is accessible, safe and affordable

The main streets in my city have wide, safe and accessible sidewalks to accommodate people with pets and service animals.

☐ Rarely/Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always

Our public transportation allows pets regardless of size or breed.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Our city's taxi and other fee-based car services allow pets.

☐ Rarely/Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always

Our nearest large airport has areas designated for pets and/or pet-friendly amenities.

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Workplaces know and support the benefits of pets at work

Our city has pet-friendly businesses that allow employees to bring their pets to work.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Businesses post clear signage indicating if they are a pet-friendly workplace.

☐ Rarely/Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often/Always

Our city is supportive of pet-friendly workplaces and encourages them in some way.

☐ Yes ☐ No

One or more departments of our city government allow employees to bring pets to work.

☐ Yes ☐ No



Quick-Start Ideas

To begin your city's pet-friendly journey, you need to understand its needs. Use the **Better Cities For Pets™** assessment to evaluate your city's strengths and opportunities so you have fact-based data to support future pet-friendly policies and programs. You can see a preview of key assessment questions on page 65.

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Also, visit the Tools page on BetterCitiesForPets.com to explore our toolkits and resources that help cities, shelters, businesses and pet lovers take action on topics from responsible pet ownership communication, to making pets welcome, to helping homeless pets.

The **Better Cities For Pets™** program also offers an annual grant program to help cities or their designated NGO/non-profit partners with programs that help keep people and pets together and make cities more pet friendly. Keep in touch with grant timing and other program news by signing up for our mailing list at BetterCitiesForPets.com or following @MarsPetcareUS on Facebook or Instagram.

Read on for ways to start making an impact quickly. ➡

If you're in government...

START BUILDING YOUR COALITION

Find advocates who share your passion for pets and begin to build a network in the community that can bring pet-related issues to the forefront. Promote public/private partnerships, which can have a significant impact.

SEIZE EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES

Look at initiatives that are already underway. Is your community looking at changes to parks, transportation or other services? Speak up to make pets part of the dialogue.

PUT PETS ON THE (FUTURE) AGENDA

Add a Chief Pet Officer role to your team. As planning and budgeting takes place for future fiscal years, look for opportunities to get input from pet owners and make pet-friendliness a priority.

If you're a shelter or animal welfare advocate...

GET CONNECTED

Build a network with public and private partners who want to support pets in your community. For the low cost of a meeting space, you can have a great starting dialogue to see where you might be able to collaborate on shared priorities and needs.

ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Take advantage of inexpensive opportunities, like social media posts, to engage people in the need for pet-friendly programs and policies.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

Talk with local businesses and other organizations about ways to work together to address local issues. For example, work with a craft or hardware store to host a community cat shelter building event.



If you're a business...

TAKE A STAND

Show your customers that you care about what they care about, by engaging in local pet-related causes. For example, sponsor adoptions at a local shelter, add a pet relief area to an unused corner of your property or parking lot, or help fund a dog park.

WELCOME PETS

Open your own business to pets and talk with your Chamber of Commerce or local business association about developing a community-wide Pets Welcome program for customers.

SEE HOW PETS WORK IN WORKPLACES

Launch a pets-at-work program to enable your own employees to have pets with them throughout the day. It's good for morale and retention! Visit [BetterCitiesForPets.com](https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com) and download our toolkit to help you get started.

If you're a pet-lover...

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Use your social media or write to local, state and national government leaders to advocate for pet-friendly policies and programs that help keep people and pets together.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Demonstrate responsible pet ownership — such as always using a leash and picking up pet waste — to help show that pets can be a welcome addition, not a nuisance, in public places.

LEND A HAND

Volunteer at a local animal shelter or rescue to help homeless pets. Not only will you make an impact for them, you'll get to know more about the issues that affect your community and cause people to make the tough decision to surrender their pets.







BetterCitiesForPets.com



MARS
Petcare

About Mars, Incorporated

Mars, Incorporated is driven by the belief that the world we want tomorrow starts with how we do business today. As a global, family-owned business, Mars is transforming, innovating, and evolving to make a positive impact on the world. Across our diverse and expanding portfolio of quality snacking, food, and pet care products and services, we employ 140,000+ dedicated Associates. With more than \$47 billion in annual sales, we produce some of the world's best-loved brands including Ben's Original™, CESAR®, CocoaVia®, DOVE®, EXTRA®, KIND®, M&M's®, SNICKERS®, PEDIGREE®, ROYAL CANIN®, and WHISKAS®. We are creating A Better World for Pets through our global network of pet hospitals and diagnostic services — including AniCura, Heska, BANFIELD™, BLUEPEARL™, Linnaeus and VCA™ — using cutting edge technology to develop breakthrough programs in genetic health screening and DNA testing.

For more information about Mars, please visit www.mars.com. Join us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.