

The Shocking Reason Why People Give Up Their Pets

Animal abandonment is huge issue across America. According to the [ASPCA](#), 7.6 million companion animals enter animal shelters nationwide every year. Of that number, 2.7 million animals are euthanized.

There have been so many times when we questioned, why would so many people give up their pets? Apparently, we aren't the only ones who thought this, and two recent studies, published in the journal *Animals* and the *Open Journal of Animal Sciences*, found the shocking reason.

The [studies](#) found that in many cases, people give up their animals because they can't afford their veterinary costs, or because they cannot afford/find affordably, pet-friendly housing.

The author of both studies, Emily Weiss told [The Huffington Post](#) that she is hoping that the results from the studies will lead to more efforts to be put towards pet-friendly housing and low-cost veterinary care. "One of the most direct ways to end homelessness of dogs and cats is to keep them at home in the first place. By keeping pets in their homes, we not only free up space at shelters for pets who really need it, but we also keep homes open for the truly homeless dogs and cats that just need an adopter," she said.

Of pet owners surveyed who reported having given up a pet within the last five years, the following trends were uncovered:

Re-homed pets were most often given to a friend or family member (37%), closely followed by being taken to a shelter (36%). Other re-homing options included being taken to a veterinarian (14%), being given to someone not previously known (11%) and being set free (1%).

The most common primary reasons for re-homing a pet were related to the pets themselves (46%), followed by family situations (27%) and housing issues (18%).

Among the 46% who responded that they gave up a pet due to a pet-related issue, 26% said they could not afford medical care for their pets' health problems.

When pet owners with incomes lower than \$50,000 were asked which service might have helped them the most, the majority indicated free or low cost veterinary care (40%). Other resources indicated were free or low-cost training or behavior help (34%), access to pet-friendly housing (33%), **free or low-cost spay/neuter services (30%), free or low cost pet food (30%),** free or low cost temporary pet care or boarding (30%) and assistance in paying pet deposits for housing (17%).

Of those who reported housing-related issues as their main reason for re-homing pets, 43% cited issues with their landlord, while 39% said that they did not have enough space. For respondents who rent instead of own, housing-related issues were the number one reason for re-homing.



Home Is Where Your Pets Are

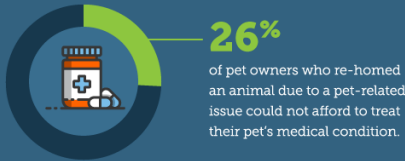
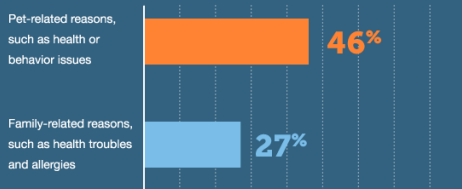
Resources can help keep families together.

Our pets are our family; 95% of pet parents agree. Despite this deep bond, more than 1 million households are forced to give up their dog or cat each year. It gets worse: An estimated 7 million pets enter shelters and approximately 2.7 million are euthanized annually. But, when pet parents are equipped with information and resources in times of need, they have a better chance of keeping their pets at home—and their families together.

When Times Get Tough

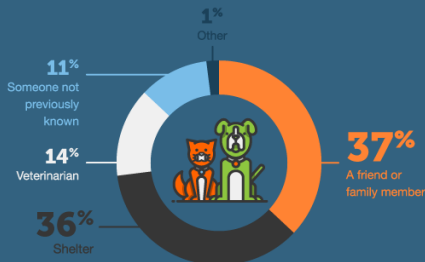
OWNERS ARE FORCED TO FIND NEW HOMES FOR THEIR PETS.

What are the top reasons pet owners give up their furry companions?



THE PET PARENT'S LAST RESORT

Where do re-homed pets go?



Low-Income Pet Owners Struggle the Most

Without the proper resources, some pet owners are left with no other choice but to re-home their pets. But many would keep their dog or cat if they could.



Pet owners with annual salaries less than \$50K are more likely to re-home their pets due to cost- and housing-related issues.

WHAT RESOURCES COULD HAVE HELPED THESE FAMILIES?

CHALLENGES	RESOURCES NEEDED	% OF PET OWNERS WHO WOULD HAVE KEPT THEIR PETS IF THEY HAD ACCESS TO RESOURCES
Vet Bills	Free or low-cost veterinary care	40%
	Free or low-cost spay/neuter services	30%
Behavior Issues	Free or low-cost pet training or behavior classes	33%
Basic Needs	Free or low-cost pet food	30%
Pet Care	Free or low-cost temporary pet care or boarding	30%
Financial	Assistance (e.g., pet deposits)	17%

Communities Can Help

Communities are beginning to establish programs for pet owners in need.



KEEPING PETS IN HOMES SAVES LIVES AND MONEY: DO THE MATH.



- Affordable Veterinary Services for Underserved Communities**
1,300 pets in Los Angeles County have received medical services since June 2014, thanks to a safety net program launched in partnership with the Department of Animal Care and Control and the Animal Care Foundation.
- Pet-Friendly Real Estate Agents and Housing Resources**
Animal welfare organizations are urging housing authorities in cities like Washington, DC, to create more pet-friendly housing options.
- Free or Low-Cost, High-Quality Spay/Neuter Programs**
The Humane Alliance in Asheville, NC, helps clinics in underserved communities across the country offer more accessible spay/neuter services.

Help keep pets and their people together.

During difficult times, pet parents should have access to alternatives. Encourage your community to set up a safety net program to assist those in need. To learn more about how ASPCA is involved in these safety net programs and others across the country, visit www.aspcas.org/safetynet.



SOURCES
 *Pets are Members of the Family: 2015, The Harris Poll #41.
 †Goodbye to a Good Friend: 2015, Open Journal of Animal Sciences

