

Austin Pet Month is a celebration of the benefits that pets bring to people's lives - and vice versa. It is observed annually in the United States in May

- **Promote the benefits of pet ownership**
- **Support pet adoption**
- **Make people aware of the benefits of pets for people and people for pets**
- **Increase public awareness of services available from professionals who work with animals**
- **Raise awareness of the role, value and contribution to society of working companion animals**

Current Community Support...

- **Austin Animal Center**
- **Austin Pets Alive**
- **Emancipet**
- **Humane Society**
- **Austin Apartment Association**
- **KXAN - TV**
- **Deirdre Franklin: President & CEO Pinups for Pitbulls**

Discussed Ideas for Austin Pet Month...

- **Rabies Clinics**
- **Wellness Clinics**
- **Community Adoption Events**
- **Community Wellness Education**
- **Positive Dog Training**
- **Awareness to a Great Dog Advocate for Your Dog and the Community**
- **Education on History & Current BSL (Breed Specific Legislation) in Tx. & US**
- **Education on how Pit Bulls went from a war hero to a perceived nuisance**
- **Fund Raising Opportunities**



December 8, 2015

More than 1 Million Households Forced to Give up Their Beloved Pet Each Year, ASPCA Research Reveals

Lack of access to both affordable veterinary care and pet-friendly housing among reasons cited by pet owners

NEW YORK, NY—The ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) today released results of a published research study addressing the re-homing of cats and dogs in the United States, as well as the reasons behind why many pet owners feel they have no other choice but to re-home their pets.

The study, published in the peer-reviewed *Open Journal of Animal Sciences*, reveals that an estimated 6.12 million households are re-homing, or surrendering, their pets every five years – meaning that more than 1 million households are re-homing their pets each year. The study aimed to uncover how and why these pet owners are re-homing their pets.

“While some of the reasons people re-home their pets are quite complex and difficult to change, many reasons given by the respondents in this study might have been easily resolved through affordable, accessible veterinary care, pet-friendly housing and access to other supplies and resources,” said Dr. Emily Weiss, vice president of research and development for the ASPCA. “Knowing that many pet owners would’ve opted to keep their pet with them if they’d had access to such critical services illustrates the need for programs and services that intervene and reach these pet owners before they’re forced to make this difficult decision. This is especially crucial in underserved communities where poverty rates are high and access to resources is limited.”

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.**

One of the most powerful findings in the study was the stark difference in responses between those with a household income below \$50,000 and those with a household income above \$50,000. Those with income below \$50,000 were significantly more likely to re-home due to cost and housing issues as opposed to pet-related issues. They were also more likely to re-home all pets in the household at once.

“Efforts to address animal homelessness often focus on helping animals in shelters, but this research and our own community-focused programs show we need to focus just as much on keeping pets from entering shelters in the first place, specifically by helping owners access critical resources,” said Matt Bershadker, president and CEO of the ASPCA. “When pets are kept out of shelters, it not only protects those animals, but keeps families together, and frees up critical shelter space and supplies for other animals in need.”

The ASPCA has seen firsthand how providing access to resources can help pets at risk. In June 2014, the ASPCA launched a “safety net” program at two of the highest intake Los Angeles County shelters. Since its launch, the program has assisted over 4,100 animals who were at risk of entering the shelter system. Early follow-up with a small sample of clients has reported that over 80% of these pets still remain in their homes. Over the past five years, the ASPCA has distributed nearly \$4 million in grants to over 300 organizations in 46 states to support safety net programs.

The ASPCA estimates that of the approximately 7.6 million pets who enter animal shelters each year, approximately 2.7 million are euthanized.

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About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first animal welfare organization in North America and serves as the nation’s leading voice for animals. More than two million supporters strong, the ASPCA’s mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. For more information, please visit www.ASPCA.org, and be sure to follow the ASPCA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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