

# Steps to a Successful Search



"An animal's  
eyes have  
the power  
to speak a  
great language."

-Martin Buber

For a pet owner who's trying to find rental housing or buy a condominium, the challenge of finding pet-friendly housing can be great!

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Consider the following suggestions for making your search a success:

## Step 1

Allow enough time. Nobody likes the hassles involved with moving! As a pet owner, you have the added responsibility of moving your pet, too. If you're renting now, give yourself at least eight weeks before your lease expires to check ads and contact realtors and rental agencies. If you're trying to buy a condominium, a minimum of four to six months should be allowed for your search.

## Step 2

Make use of available resources. The Denver Dumb Friends League's Pets Are Welcome Program can provide you with a list of rental properties that allow pets. Ask friends for references for pet-friendly realtors, rental agents or management companies. There is no substitute for making a professional connection with someone who understands how important it is to stay united with your pet. There are many free rental referral services throughout the Denver metro area; some of them offer referrals to houses, townhomes and condominiums, in addition to apartments. If you have computer access to the internet, there are many online rental resources as well. Pick up current copies of the apartment rental magazines available at grocery and convenience stores. And don't forget the newspaper classifieds!

## Step 3

Have your pet's papers in order. Ask for a letter from your current property owner/manager or condominium association verifying that you're a responsible pet owner. Get a similar letter from your veterinarian stating that you have been diligent in your pet's medical care. We also suggest you provide documentation that your pet has been spayed or neutered. An altered pet is far less likely to be a nuisance to neighbors. If you and your dog have taken any training classes, provide a copy of any awards or certificates your dog may have received. The more proof you can provide attesting to your conscientiousness as a pet owner, the more convincing your appeal will be.

## Step 4

Be honest! Don't try to sneak your pet in. Keeping an animal in violation of a "no-pets" policy contributes to the general disinclination of property owners/managers to rent to pet owners, and could subject you to eviction or other legal action. You could be forced to give up



your pet in order to remain in your current home. Most buildings have pet policies that allow pets only with prior approval from management. You're more likely to win this approval by being honest up front!

### Step 5

Sell yourself and your pet! Responsible pet owners make excellent residents. Because they must search harder for a place to live, pet owners must be particularly cooperative and committed renters. Once the right home is found, pet owners are more apt to stay put, and lower vacancy rates mean lower costs and fewer headaches for property owners/managers and real estate agents. Communicate your understanding that living with a companion animal is a privilege, not a right. Offer to pay an additional pet damage deposit, before you're asked. By accepting full financial responsibility for the actions of your pet, you demonstrate the qualities of a responsible pet owner and a desirable resident.

Offer to bring your pet to meet the property owner/manager. A freshly groomed, well-behaved pet will speak much louder than words. Emphasize that the same pride you take in caring for your pet extends to taking responsible care of the property. You may also want to create a pet resume for your cat or dog. For suggestions, see the Sample Pet Resumes enclosed.

### Step 6

Get it in writing. Once you have permission to have a pet, be sure to get it in writing. A "Pet Addendum" to your rental agreement should be discussed and signed by you and your new property owner/manager. If your lease has a "no-pets" clause in it, simply getting verbal approval is not enough. The "no-pets" clause should be crossed out and initialed by the property owner/manager before you sign it, and be sure it's crossed out on their copy, as well!

Good luck!



**DENVER DUMB FRIENDS LEAGUE**

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