

How to Help a Pet Owner Find Their Dream Home

A REAL ESTATE EBOOK FROM





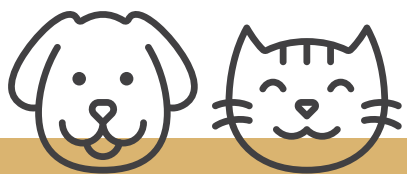
Introduction

For the tens of millions of American households with pets, buying a home means searching for a property that satisfies their priorities and the needs of their four-legged family member.

[The U.S. Census Bureau says](#) that half — or about **60 million — of American households own pets.** (Other estimates place the figure even higher.) And the amount of money they spend on their pets has increased dramatically in recent decades. Over the decade ending in 2017, sales of pet care services doubled, totaling \$5.8 billion.

Many Americans are incredibly dedicated to their pets. Some will even make important decisions — like choosing which home to buy — with their pet in mind. As a real estate agent, how can you help your pet-loving clients find their dream home?





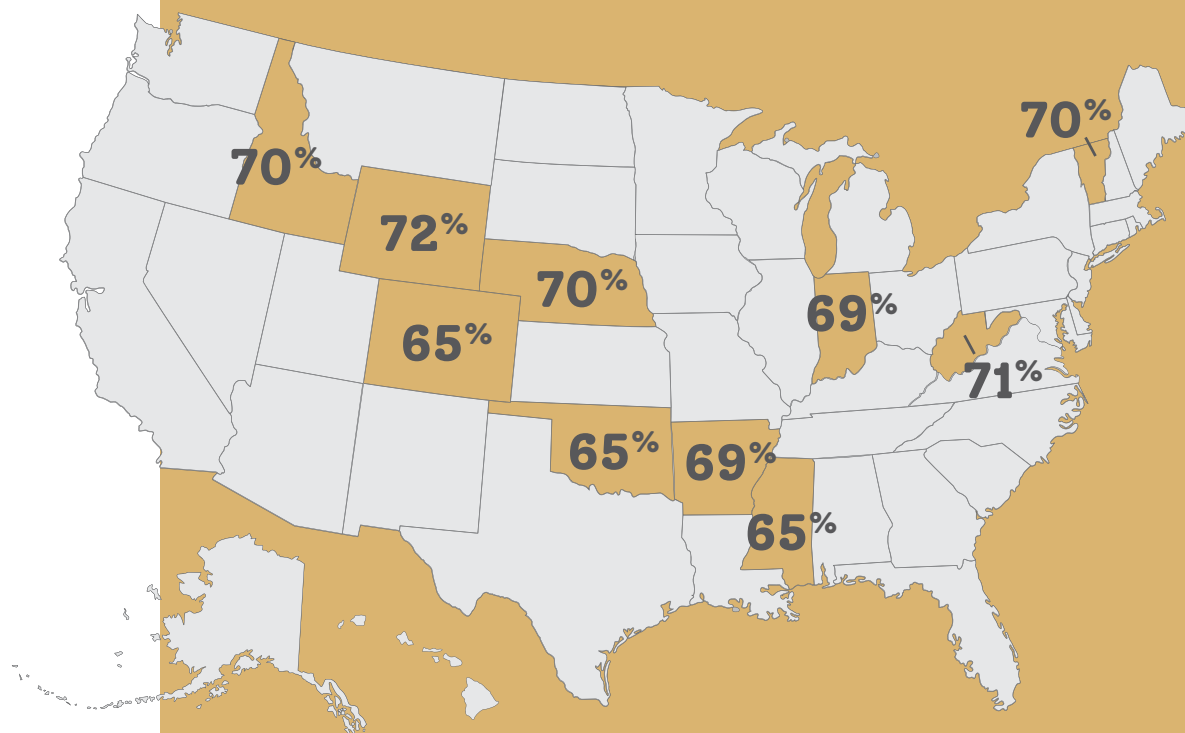
State by State

Dogs and cats are by far the most popular pets in the United States, [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AMVA\) data shows](#). About 38% of households have at least one dog — the highest estimated rate of dog ownership since the AVMA began measuring it in 1982 — and about 25% of households have at least one cat.

Pet ownership also seemed to increase in 2021. Shelters across the country reported high adoption rates while people were stuck at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and [11.3 million Americans found a new furry friend during lockdown](#).

In general, pet ownership is higher in rural states and less-dense regions, the AVMA data shows. Wyoming has the highest percentage of pet-owning households, followed closely by West Virginia.

10 States With Highest Rates of Pet Ownership



WYOMING:	72%	ARKANSAS:	69%
WEST VIRGINIA:	71%	INDIANA:	69%
IDAHO:	70%	COLORADO:	65%
NEBRASKA:	70%	MISSISSIPPI:	65%
VERMONT:	70%	OKLAHOMA:	65%



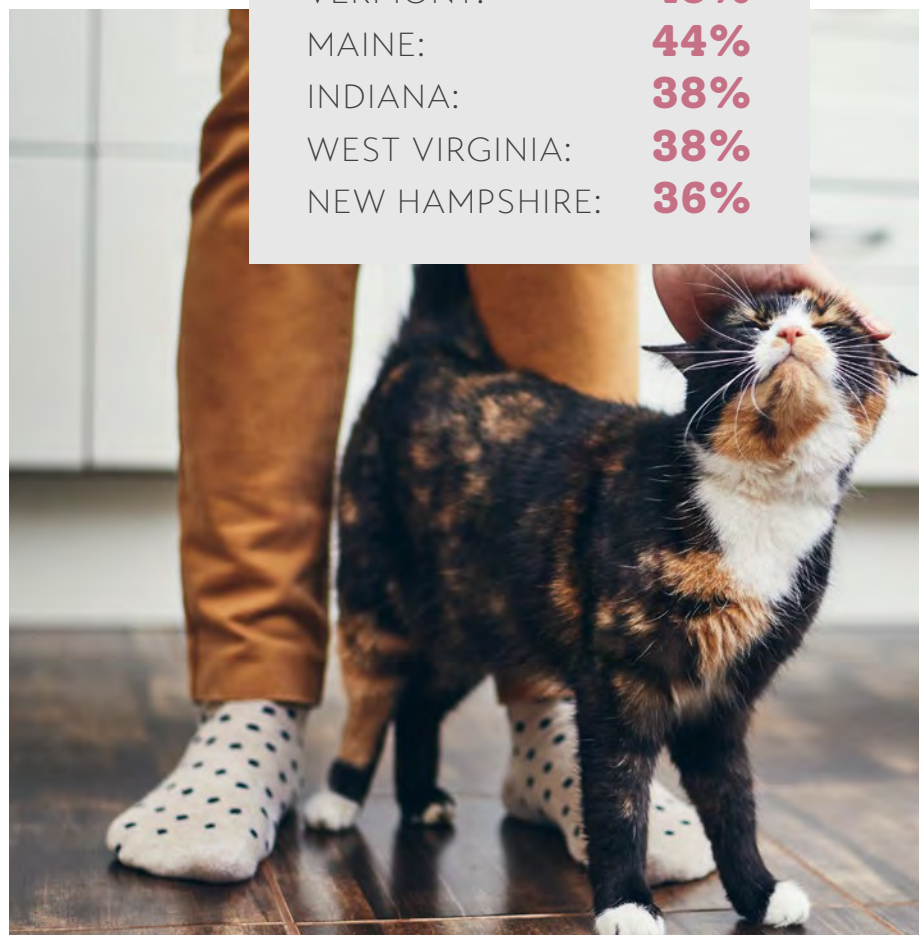
Top 5 States for Dog Ownership

IDAHO:	58%
ARKANSAS:	52%
MONTANA:	52%
MISSISSIPPI:	51%
WEST VIRGINIA:	50%



Top 5 States for Cat Ownership

VERMONT:	45%
MAINE:	44%
INDIANA:	38%
WEST VIRGINIA:	38%
NEW HAMPSHIRE:	36%





Larger Homes, Higher Incomes...More Pets?

People with higher incomes and larger homes are also more likely to have pets, the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) found.



Nearly **60% of households with incomes of more than \$80,000 a year have pets**, compared to about 36% of households with incomes less than \$20,000.

Similarly, about 60% of homes with four or more bedrooms have a pet, while about 27% of people in one-bedroom homes have a pet.

But even some households with zero bedrooms — about 18% — make room for a pet, the data shows.



Asking the Right Questions

Finding a dream home for your pet-loving client can be all about helping them ask the right questions.

- 🐾 Does the property have a fenced-in yard?
- 🐾 Is there any nearby vegetation that could be toxic to pets?
- 🐾 Is there a park nearby, and is the neighborhood walkable?
- 🐾 How close by are the nearest neighbors, and do they have pets?
- 🐾 Is there a veterinarian nearby?
- 🐾 Does the city or neighborhood HOA have any restrictions on specific animals/breeds or limits on the number of pets allowed?
- 🐾 For dog owners, is there a good place to bathe the dog or wipe muddy paws with minimal mess?
- 🐾 For cat owners, is there a convenient place to keep litter boxes that limits odor and mess?
- 🐾 What are the floors made of? Are they pet-resistant?
- 🐾 If their pet likes sunbathing or looking outside, are there large windows with convenient perches?
- 🐾 Will they need to check on their pet during the day? If so, the home should be close to work, school, or other activities.

The Influence Of Pets On Real Estate



Pet ownership can have a tremendous influence on homebuying decisions, [according to a recent research study](#) from the National Association of REALTORS®, which found that **43% of U.S. households would be willing to move or change their living situation to accommodate their pet.**

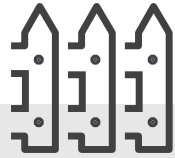
“A home purchase can be one of the largest a household makes,” the study says. “A number of factors must be considered throughout the home buying and selling process, including all members of the household, even pets.”

Some people do factor their pets in: 18% of recent homebuyers said it was very important that their new neighborhood be close to a veterinarian or outdoor space for their pets.

And some city or neighborhood policies — including pet fees — deter buyers or renters. 68% of REALTORS® said that community animal policies influenced their clients’ decision to rent or buy in a particular community.

“Given their prevalence, REALTORS® must be equipped to advise their clients regarding their pets throughout the buying and selling process,” the study says.





The most important pet-related features in a home, according to clients:

FENCED-IN YARD:	49%
LARGE ENOUGH HOME FOR THE HOUSEHOLD AND PET:	27%
FLOORING:	24%
MUDROOM/ANIMAL WASHING STATION:	3%
DOG DOOR:	3%
ANIMAL POOL/OUTDOOR WATER FEATURE:	2%
CAT LITTER CLOSET:	2%
BUILT-INS FOR FOOD DISHES OR ANIMAL BEDS:	1%





Moving With Pets

When a seller has pets, it's also important to recognize how the animals might hinder a sale, the National Association of REALTORS® study says.

The most common pet-related changes that REALTORS® recommend are:

- Removing the animal from the home during showings
- Replacing anything damaged by the pet
- Having the home professionally cleaned to remove any animal scent
- Removing any pet-related objects
- Replacing carpet or refinishing the floors



80% percent of REALTORS® recommend that their sellers **remove their pets from the home during showings.**



Pet-Inspired Closing Gifts

A pet-inspired closing gift could be the perfect way to thank a pet-loving client for their business. Odds are, they will remember your thoughtfulness in taking the time to recognize their pet.

Consider these ideas:

- A monogrammed pet bed
- A pet toy or treat subscription box
- A pet collar inspired by the state they're moving to
- A pass to local dog-friendly parks



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