

# Keeping your Pet with You During the Coronavirus Crisis Authorities Warn Against Relinquishing Pets

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, March 17, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The global health crisis caused by the Coronavirus should not be allowed to trigger a wave of pet companion relinquishment, according to the Animal Wellness Foundation and Animal Wellness Action. Pet relinquishment is tied to economic security, but there are ways to prevent a rupture in the human-animal bond. The Animal Wellness Foundation is built around the idea of helping keep people and their companions together, offering medical services to animals in need.

"Just this weekend, a man who'd just lost his job relinquished his dog to us," noted Dr. Annie Harvilicz, the president and chief medical officer of the Animal Wellness Foundation. "We can interrupt the relinquishment process by helping with pet food and medical services, which are the key costs borne by pet owners." The AWF is announcing the creation of an Emergency Pet and Pet Owner Relief Fund to keep animals in the home.



Photo credit: Jennifer Skiff

Surrendering pets to veterinarians and animal shelters is not inevitable during a crisis like this," says Jennifer Skiff, director of International Programs for the Animal Wellness Foundation, "Pets are family and the best way to keep them safe is to keep them with you. While we are facing uncertain times, there are options for people who are temporarily unable to provide for their much-loved companions."

The most important thing to know is that your pets don't have to eat packaged dog and cat food to survive. According to veterinarian, Barbara Royal DVM, there are plenty of other options. "When done appropriately, feeding pets our leftovers is fine and can decrease costs. Dogs are omnivores and they can safely eat a variety of things to survive. Cats are obligate carnivores. They need taurine and many vitamins and minerals that are only found in organ meats. Their food should be high in protein and fat and low in carbs." You can find great recipes for pet food here: <http://balanceit.com/>

Other options include taking advantage of food pantries and assistance from animal shelters.

Jamie O'Keefe is president of the SPCA of Hancock County, in Maine. "We have a pet food pantry on site that's available to anyone in need. We've had this for years, to help those who are experiencing financial hardship. It's anonymous. They can walk in a side door and take what they want. These people love their pets and just need a little extra help."

Emergency measures include:

- Preparing home-made pet food
- Seeking temporary help from friends and family
- Collecting food from a pet food pantry or food bank
- Accepting assistance from your local animal shelter before surrendering your pet
- Accepting food assistance from your place of worship
- Asking pet stores if they have near-expiration food available at no-cost or a reduced price.

"This troubled time is not a good time to lose a healthy source of joy, or a creature who will decrease your anxiety. Don't give up on a beloved member of your family. Be creative, think outside the box, look for ideas and support where you can, and don't be ashamed to ask for help," says Dr. Royal.

Experts have advised pet owners that there is no scientific evidence that you can contract COVID-19 from a pet. "We understand that economic hardship can cause someone to think about relinquishing their companion," added Dr. Harvilicz. "But there's just no reason to relinquish an animal because you fear COVID-19. That's plainly wrong and not backed by sound science."

Are you shut-in and need food or pet supplies for yourself or those in your community who could use help? You can order on-line, including at <http://www.chewy.com>.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission



Photo Credit: Jennifer Skiff



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of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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