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## **Animal Welfare Association's Pet Rehoming Resources Helps Keep Pandemic Pets out of Shelters**

AWA's Pet Rehoming Resources are helping those who can no longer care for their pet without having to surrender them to a shelter

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Voorhees, NJ – As COVID-19 restrictions eased and pet owners returned to in-person work, shelters across the United States anticipated an increase in surrendered animals adopted during the pandemic. Fortunately, Animal Welfare Association (AWA) has not experienced an influx of surrendered animals largely due to the success of its rehoming support services.

Compared to pre-pandemic numbers, AWA has not seen an increase in the percentage of surrendered animals. The top reason for dog surrenders in 2019 was the dog becoming too much for owners to handle – the same reason for most surrenders in 2021. For cats, the top reason for surrender in 2019 was too many animals in the home. Most cat surrenders in 2021 result from cats giving birth to litters.

"Many clients will opt to rehome which is a successful way of placing their companion animal instead of placing them in a shelter environment," says Christian Snyder, intake and rehoming specialist at Animal Welfare Association.

Snyder helps clients find solutions to rehoming their pets by providing a safer, more effective platform to rehome their companion animals. Whether the animal is placed through AWA or an outside resource, Snyder guides owners through the difficult process of finding their pet a new home.

Snyder provides several tips on pet rehoming in order to make it a safe and smooth transition for you and your pet.

1). While we encourage pet parents to rehome their companion animals if they can no longer care for them, ALWAYS post on sites that are safe. For an example, our pets looking for people listings on our website: <https://support.awanj.org/pets-looking-for-people>. Unsafe sites to post about rehoming pets, like Craigslist, can be dangerous and have come with many horror stories.

2). "FREE TO A GOOD HOME" is not realistic and should not be used when rehoming pets. This term has a negative connotation and even though currency may not be exchanged, "free" is never truly that. This is also a term that those wanting to commit cruelty look for because they will pay nothing to abuse your companion animal.

3). If you adopted or rescued your companion animal from a particular animal shelter or organization, usually those shelters and organizations have in their contracts that you should first contact them to surrender your companion animal back to them.

4). Once you have a prospective adopter that is expressing interest, this is where you have to ask as many questions as possible. During a meet, see how the adopter is connecting with your companion animal. Are they connecting? Are they expressing interest to each other?

5). Consider your safety as well when meeting strangers. Make sure you do meetings in public places and in well-lit areas during the day. Never in your own home or theirs. Also have a friend or relative with you for your safety and the safety of your companion animal.

AWA can also suggest training options, offer behavioral advice or provide options for pet-friendly housing to help pets and their owners stay together.

If you are considering surrendering a pet, please visit our Pet Rehoming Resources at <https://www.awanj.org/> or contact our shelter to speak with AWA's rehoming specialist.

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**Animal Welfare Association**, a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the wellbeing of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education. AWA is South Jersey's leader in progressive companion animal care.

