

ASPCA Urges Owners Not to Leave Pets Behind

Animal group says options for cat, dog care exist despite tough economy.

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The ASPCA urges pet owners to check with family and friends about temporary care during an economic crisis. The news of thousands of job cuts across the nation prompted the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to urge families experiencing economic woes to weigh all their options before considering leaving pets behind.

Reports about cats and dogs being abandoned in foreclosed homes and animal shelters during the tough economic times are widespread, and the ASPCA responded by reminding pet owners that they have various resources available.

"The ASPCA wants to remind pet owners that planning ahead is the best way to make an informed decision," said Ed Sayres, ASPCA president and CEO. "Even though options in these cases may be less than ideal, it will be much better than simply leaving the pet behind in an abandoned home."

While it is difficult to lose a pet as a result of economic hardship, Sayres said, pet parents may take comfort in knowing that their pet will be better off if they plan ahead and keep their cat or dog's safety in mind.

The organization offers the following tips for people who are faced with the loss of their pets: Check with friends, family and neighbors to see if someone can provide temporary foster care for a pet. Agree to a specific time frame, and check on the pet regularly.

If moving into a rental property, make sure pets are allowed and get permission in advance, and in writing.

Contact the local animal shelter, humane society or rescue group, in advance of a move, since many shelters limit their admissions to the number of animals they can adequately care for. If a shelter agrees to take in a pet, provide medical records, behavior information and anything else that might assist shelter workers in finding the pet a new home.