

**The San Francisco SPCA
Open Door Program**

A Tenant's Guide



SAN FRANCISCO
SPCA

Tenant's Guide

It's not easy to find pet friendly rental housing in San Francisco, so The San Francisco SPCA developed the Open Door Program to help. When looking for a place that will take your pets, remember the following:

- Be prepared to work hard and spend time.
- Find out what makes the landlord say yes to pets.
- Demonstrate you are a responsible pet guardian and a good tenant.
- Be a great representative for all tenants who are also pet guardians.

Tips for Tenants Seeking Housing

- Bring up the subject of pets in person with the property owner rather than on the phone, if possible. Personally presenting information about yourself and your pet may help convince the landlord to say yes.
- Prepare a dossier on your pet to present to the landlord. Include your pet's resume and references from former landlords, neighbors, obedience instructors, and veterinarians.
- Offer to sign a pet agreement and pay an additional deposit.
- Encourage the property owner to meet your freshly groomed, well-behaved pet.
- Share the information in the Open Door Property Owners Guide with prospective landlords, and let them know about the services we provide.
- Show that you are a member of The San Francisco SPCA and/or other humane organization and that you care about animal welfare and responsible pet guardianship.

A Responsible Pet Guardian

- **Creates a dossier about the pet(s),**
including such documents as proof of spay/neuter surgery, records of up-to-date vaccinations, indications of regular veterinary
- **Has written references**
from former landlords and neighbors, dog trainers, obedience class instructors, and veterinarians specifically discussing the pet.
- **Offers to pay an additional pet deposit**
and to cover any damages resulting from the pet's actions.
- **Offers to sign a pet agreement with the landlord.**
- **Encourages the potential landlord**
to meet the well-groomed, well-behaved pet.
- **Invites the landlord to see the animal**
in its current setting, and to check on the pet after move-in.
- **Always cleans up after his or her pet.**
- **Has the pet spayed or neutered.**
- **Provides appropriate exercise and attention**
for the pet daily, and makes suitable arrangements for the same when planning to be away.
- **Doesn't let the dog or cat roam the streets,**
and knows the health and safety benefits of keeping a cat indoors and a dog under control.

If you're a prospective tenant, impress upon your potential landlord your knowledge and practice of responsible pet guardianship. There is no one characteristic alone that demonstrates responsibility, but the qualities listed above can usually be found in responsible pet guardians. Many of the same characteristics are also found in good tenants.

The Open Door Program is supposed solely by the generosity of our contributors. Your donation to Open Door will allow us to help more people find "pet-friendly" rental housing.

Sample Pet Resumes

Bingo

(John & Jane Doe, guardians)
123 Magnolia Lane, Apt. 3
San Francisco, CA 94000
(415) 555-5555

Description

Bingo is a friendly, well-behaved dog that is accustomed to apartment life. He is a five-year-old medium-sized black Lab mix who is mature, calm, and easy-going. We have had Bingo for four years, and he is a cherished member of our family. If you have any questions about our dog, please ask.

Training

San Francisco SPCA Behavior and Training Classes, 200_
Bingo is fully housebroken, and obeys voice commands. He does not bark excessively, although he will give a short warning bark to alert us to strangers.

Activities

We walk Bingo twice a day, and go to one of the City's many off-leash areas for more vigorous exercise at least three times a week. Bingo's behavior on and off-leash is exemplary. He loves the beach, and friends often "borrow" him to go along with them. These activities satisfy Bingo's exercise requirements, and he is calm and contented relaxing indoors while we are away at work.

Health/Grooming

Bingo is neutered, which benefits both his behavior and his health. He is kept up-to-date on all vaccinations and receives regular health exams at The San Francisco SPCA Animal Hospital. We bathe and flea treat Bingo often, and he is professionally groomed once a month.

About Us

As dog guardians, we always try to act responsibly. We have taken a class on dog behavior, we always clean up after our dog, and we arrange for reliable pet care if we are going out of town. We are so sure Bingo will be a "good tenant," we are willing to put up an additional security deposit. We are members of The San Francisco SPCA, and are committed to responsible, caring, pet-guardianship.

References

Our current landlord can be contacted at (415) 555-0000. Please also see attached letters of recommendation and other documentation.

We would be happy for any potential landlord to meet Bingo, visit him in his current home, and/or check in to see how he is adjusting to his new surroundings after we move in.

Lucky

(John & Jane Doe, guardians)
123 Magnolia Lane, Apt. 3
San Francisco, CA 94000
(415) 555-5555

Description

Lucky is a friendly, well-behaved cat that is used to being indoors and is accustomed to apartment life. He is a five-year-old male tabby cat who enjoys sleeping in the sun and playing with his toys. He has a large scratching post that is the only thing he uses to sharpen his claws, and he is fully litter box trained. We have had Lucky for four years, and he is a cherished member of our family. If you have any questions about our cat, please ask.

Health/Grooming

Lucky is neutered, which benefits both his behavior and his health. Since he does not go outdoors, fleas are generally not a problem. We brush Lucky often, and have him professionally groomed at least once a year. He is also kept up-to-date on all vaccinations and receives regular health exams at The San Francisco SPCA Animal Hospital.

About Us

As cat guardians, we always try to act responsibly. We clean Lucky's litter box every day, and always dispose of litter in a sealed bag. We arrange for reliable pet care if we are going out of town. We are so sure Bingo will be a "good tenant," we are willing to put up an additional security deposit. We are members of The San Francisco SPCA, and are committed to responsible, caring, pet-guardianship.

References

Our current landlord can be contacted at (415) 555-0000. Please also see attached letters of recommendation and other documentation.

We would be happy for any potential landlord to meet Lucky, visit him in his current home, and/or check in to see how he is adjusting to his new surroundings after we move in.

Pet Resume Guide

A pet resume provides an opportunity to present potential landlords with a summary of your companion animal's best qualities and examples of your responsibility as a pet guardian. Try to address the following areas in your pet resume.

- Mention anything about your pet's age, activity level, and/or breed traits that help make your dog or cat a "good tenant." Emphasize characteristics that make your pet suited for city living. Tell the landlord something special about your companion animal's personality, and how much you care about your pet.
- Give examples of your pet's good behavior, and your responsibility. Has your dog been to obedience school or had special training? If your dog has lived in apartments before and is accustomed to it, be sure to say so. If you have more than one cat, let the landlord know how well your pets get along and keep each other company while you are away. If your cat uses a scratching post, say so and also note that your cat is litter box trained.
- There can be a big difference between a 10-year-old dog and a frisky puppy. If your pet is quiet, calm, and/or less active, point that out. If you have an active dog, explain how you fulfill his/her exercise requirements.
- Explain how you keep your pet clean and free of fleas.
- Let the landlord know your dog or cat is spayed or neutered and explain that this makes for a well behaved, healthier pet. Also note that your animal is up-to-date on his/her vaccinations, and mention the veterinarian you use for your pet.
- Describe your arrangements for your pet when you go to work or on vacation.
- If you are a member of The San Francisco SPCA or other animal protection organization, be sure to mention it in your pet resume.

In addition to your pet's resume, you may also want to attach reference letters from current and previous landlords and/or neighbors; certificates of completion of obedience/training classes; references from your pet's trainer or groomer; a health certificate from your vet; and if your pet is cute, a picture.