

Why It's a Good Thing for Your Community to Go to the Dogs!

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The multifamily industry is going to the dogs – and the cats – and that's a good thing! When you make the pets at your community happy, their owners are delighted, too. Current residents and pet-loving people looking for a place to live both smile when they see you have a pet-friendly policy. But if you want to cash in on the booming pet industry, don't stop at a policy. Create a pet-friendly *community*!

Sixty-five percent of U.S. households (or 80 million homes) own pets.¹ Did you know that an even higher percentage (more than 70%) of apartment residents report owning pets?² And the people leading the fur-baby charge are Millennials. Young Americans are less likely to be parents or own cars or a home, but they are leading the pack concerning pet ownership. Three-fourths of Americans in their thirties report having a dog.³



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A white fluffy dog is running through a blue circular tunnel on a playground. The dog is in the center of the frame, looking directly at the camera with its mouth open. The tunnel is made of blue plastic and has several small holes along its length. The background shows a grassy area with trees and a wooden fence.

Pet-friendly amenities have the largest impact on rent increases.

Nine out of ten people with pets indicated that a community's pet policy played a significant role in where to live² so making sure you have a pet-friendly policy is a must-do. But too many communities stop there. To build an authentic pet-friendly community, put yourself in your residents' four paws! Is there a peaceful place for a walk with grass, trees and fresh smells? Are there areas where I can run and frolic off-leash with my puppy friends? What will happen when my mom or dad is stuck at work and can't let me out? Is there an easier,

quicker way to get my shots so I don't have to wait for an appointment and a ride to the vet? Once you start sniffing around, you'll discover that a dynamic pet-friendly community is not that hard to build, and it comes with numerous benefits — including increased ROI for your community. As a matter of fact, according to a 2018 NAA study, pet-friendly amenities have the largest impact on rent increases, offering a big bang for your buck.³ Can you imagine charging added rent for a resident with a child? After all, children have been known to



be loud and make a mess. But that is what you get to do in a pet-friendly community. People don't think of their pets as animals; they think of them as part of the family: their children or "fur babies." And pet parents spend \$86.7 billion – that's with a "B" – on their animals.⁴ You can get a bite of that bone with pet deposits and monthly fees, which your residents will be happy to pay *if* they feel you're offering a pet-friendly community that's worth a higher price.



dogs get to know each other better when not tethered by a leash. When feeling restricted, some dogs lash out! But when dogs are off-leash, they meet, greet or run away on their own terms – which usually leads to dogs getting to know each other better and more naturally. Off-leash dog parks also give dogs the ability to run wild and free which helps provide the mental and physical exercise they need. That activity makes them better behaved – and better neighbors.



Valet Living's durable, attractive and environmentally-friendly pet waste receptacles and bag dispensers also have easy-to-read instructions and pet policy reminders so on-site management doesn't need to worry about policing residents. The result is a clean, welcoming environment that all residents – and their fur babies – can be proud of.

The most-successful multifamily communities are those that continuously adapt to the ever-changing marketplace. Amenities that might not get the use they once did, like tennis courts, putting greens or even unused parking areas, are the perfect places to replace with dog parks. But don't take our words for it. Just walk outside, ask your nearest resident with a pet, then visit ValetLiving.com/Pet/

When dogs become pack mates, their people become friends as well.

Once dogs get to know each other, their people aren't far behind. When residents in your community become better acquainted and make friends, they're more likely to enjoy their homes and renew their leases.⁵ The best place to facilitate this comradery is off-leash at the dog park... but not just any old dog park – one that you customize for your apartment community.

The reason dog parks are so critical, compared to the sidewalks and lawns around your building(s), is that most

And what makes better neighborhoods are clean community grounds – especially those that are free from pet waste. Did you know Valet Living Pet offers not just waste stations that provide bags and receptacles to dispose of pet waste but also porter hours to service your waste stations and keep your common areas meticulously clean? You get to build your pet-friendly community, and we help minimize the time and effort your staff needs to devote to pet-related cleanup.

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1. American Pet Products Association
 2. Apartments.com
 3. NAA 2018 Amenity Report
 4. Mintel
 5. "Getting Residents to Mix and Mingle: Why You Should Care," NAAHQ.org, April 17, 2017