

An Employer's Guide for Welcoming Pet Owners Back to the Office



What employers should keep in mind when asking pet parents to return to the office

Millions of people welcomed pets into their home during the pandemic, and pet owners – new and old – spent more time than ever with their pets as they worked from home. Now, many are wondering what the post-COVID working world means for their fur baby. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when asking these employees to return to the office:



Communicate your in-office pet policies clearly

- If pets are allowed, **make it known which supplies will be readily available** to pet owners in the office – like food bowls, treats, and toys – and which they should plan to bring with them from home.
- Carefully **outline the dos and don'ts of pets in the office:** Are leashes a must? Can pet owners take walk breaks? What if a pet is distracting others?
- Consider the **legal responsibilities for any in-office incidents**, and make sure to vocalize this with staff before the official first day back.
- Let employees know well in advance if their pets will be **required to obtain certain vaccinations** before they enter the office.



Consider offering additional support for pet parents, such as

- Flexible work hours/schedules** to allow employees time off for walks and trips to the vet, or reduce the amount of days pet parents need to schedule and pay for care
- Stipends** for everyday pet expenses that can pile up for employees, like toys, snacks, and grooming
- In-office dog walkers** to help employees who are bringing their pets into the office focus on their work and save on the cost of pet care
- Pet insurance** to offer financial assistance in the event of the unexpected, especially as pet parents return to offices and pets are left home ⁴

How to support pet parents' financial and mental health

Financial Health

- Offering employees financial tools like pet insurance, 401(k)/retirement savings plans, etc. can help alleviate employees' financial stress around pet care.
- Especially since 2 in 3 employees say they primarily pay out-of-pocket or with cash for vet expenses, compared to just 3 percent who use pet insurance.¹

Mental Health

- In today's changing landscape, it's important that employees are not only physically and financially well, but also are actively improving their mental wellbeing.
- Employees transition away from spending so much time with their pets may be tough, and savvy employers will keep that in mind when considering return-to-work opportunities and mental health benefits such as EAPs.³



Sources: ¹ August 2020 MetLife x Civic Science survey, ² MetLife Pet Parent Pulse Survey, 2021, ³ December 2020 MetLife x Civic Science survey

⁴Pet Insurance offered by MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC is underwritten by Independence American Insurance Company ("IAIC"), a Delaware insurance company, headquartered at 485 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10022, and Metropolitan General Insurance Company ("MetGen"), a Rhode Island insurance company, headquartered at 700 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI 02886, in those states where MetGen's policies are available. Application is subject to underwriting review and approval. Like most insurance policies, insurance policies issued by IAIC and MetGen contain certain deductibles, co-insurance, exclusions, exceptions, reductions, limitations, and terms for keeping them in force. For costs, complete details of coverage and exclusions, and a listing of approved states, please contact MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC. MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC is the policy administrator authorized by IAIC and MetGen to offer and administer pet insurance policies. MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC was previously known as PetFirst Healthcare, LLC and in some states continues to operate under that name pending approval of its application for a name change. The entity may operate under an alternate, assumed, and/or fictitious name in certain jurisdictions as approved, including MetLife Pet Insurance Services LLC (New York and Minnesota), MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions Agency LLC (Illinois), and such other alternate, assumed, or fictitious names approved by certain jurisdictions.