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## Local

Humane Society fights to stop owners from abandoning pets in foreclosed homes



(AP file photo)

Thousands of pets are being abandoned as homeowners are forced from their property by foreclosures.

Emily Campbell, The Examiner

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Imagine moving and leaving your dog or cat behind to fend for itself. That situation is the case for many pets across the nation, with the rise in foreclosed homes due to the real estate crisis.

The [Humane Society of the United States](#) is so concerned about the influx of reports of abandoned pets, it has launched a grant program to aid shelters and organizations dealing with the increase in animals.

"It's abandonment. It's cruel and, in most places, probably illegal," said [Nancy Peterson](#), issues specialist for the Humane Society. "What we're hoping is that people will really try and find a way to keep their pet responsibly, find a responsible home for them or take it to a local animal shelter."

The Humane Society's foreclosure fund will administer grants to animal shelters, rescue groups and animal control agencies to help establish and expand existing programs that assist families in caring for pets during economically tough times. Grants will range from \$500 to \$2,000.

"The fund was seeded with \$15,000 from the Humane Society, and we are hoping that private individuals, companies and organizations will donate so that we can continue to help," Peterson said.

[Aileen Gabbey](#), executive director of the [Maryland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#), said the society haven't seen an influx of abandoned pets lately but is prepared in case something like that does happen. "When the housing market was taking a turn for the worse, we were just starting our new re-homing program, which I think ended up being really good timing."

The [SPCA's](#) re-homing program offers training, behavioral advice and options for pet-friendly housing for owners who find themselves unable to care for their pets anymore.

"Most people get their pets from friends or family, so we hope that by guiding folks through the process, the pets find a good, new home," Gabbey said.

The Humane Society hopes that people considering getting a pet check their local shelters first. "With an increase of animals coming to the shelter, it's a great time to adopt," Peterson said. "If you've done your homework, if you are ready, if you have the finances and are able to care for a pet responsibly, then please adopt."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

>> [Humane Society of the United State's Foreclosure Fund](#)

>> [Maryland SPCA's re-homing program](#)

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