

# NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY

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Treasurer: Ed Scheideler  
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Resident Commissioner: Janice Bennett  
Executive Director: Cheryl Gosmon

## NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY POLICY REGARDING PETS IN ELDERLY, DISABLED AND FAMILY HOUSING

### I. BASIC POLICY

“Not to keep any pets or other animals and not to permit pets or other animals to be kept in the leased premises or elsewhere on the LHA property on a temporary or permanent basis, except reasonably quiet birds in cages or fish in tanks, WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE NHA in accordance with its rules or policies.” (NHA Lease, section IX, paragraph (0))

These rules do not apply to animals professionally trained to assist people with disabilities.

### II. DEFINITION OF ALLOWABLE PETS

Pets for the purpose of this policy shall be limited to caged birds, fish, caged small animals, domestic dogs, and litter box-trained cats.

### III. PET REQUIREMENTS

PRIOR TO ACCEPTANCE OF A PET FOR OCCUPANCY AT THE NHA PROPERTIES  
PETS MUST BE:

- Up to date on vaccinations required by local/state law
- Free of any communicable infections or any parasites such as fleas and ticks
- Clean and groomed
- House-trained
- No history of biting, excessive barking, chasing, or aggressive behavior
- Spayed or neutered
- Licensed if required by local ordinance

### IV. PET OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Pet owners must agree to:

- Be 100% responsible for their pet’s behavior (if the pet should demonstrate aggressive tendencies), well-being, regular feeding, grooming, hygiene, and vet care.
- Manage their unit to ensure it is “pet-proofed” and safe for their pet.
- Ensure that their pet’s behavior does not interfere with other residents.
- Pets cannot run loose outside their owner’s dwelling unit. Dogs must be leashed at all times.
- Ensure their pet is not left unattended for extended periods of time, which can cause it to become stressed and/or develop behavioral issues.
- Every dog and cat must wear a tag bearing the owner’s name, address, and telephone number.
- Clean up after their pet immediately. In particular, when walking a dog, poop must be picked up immediately and deposited in the resident’s or pet owner’s toilet/
- Pet food and water may not be left outside a dwelling unit at any time.

- All dogs are to be licensed by the Town of Needham before move-in and annually thereafter.
- If your dog bites another person on NHA property, permission for your pet is immediately revoked, and the dog must be promptly removed from the property.
- No more than one dog or cat per unit. Fish would be limited to one fish tank, and birds would be limited to one bird cage. Aquariums shall be limited to a capacity of twenty (20) gallons. Bird cages shall be limited to eight (8) cubic feet.
- Pets shall not be brought into the public lobbies, laundry rooms, or other public gathering spaces except as necessary to enter/exit the building or to attend an activity at which a pet's presence is specifically intended.
- A fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be charged to any pet owner each time the pet owner fails to clean up after his/her animal.
- Pet owners shall be responsible for paying for all damage done to his/her unit and NHA property by the pet.
- Residents will also be liable for all damages resulting from any injury to a person or property of others caused by a resident's pet.
- Any damage is to be repaired immediately if requested by management or at any other time as directed by management. If repair is executed by management, the pet owner will be charged for the repair cost. Any payment required shall be made within thirty (30) days following notification from management of the amount due.
- Prior to vacating the dwelling unit, the resident shall be responsible for cleaning, defleaing, and deodorizing the unit, or they will be charged for management's costs to prepare the unit for reoccupation.

## V. PROCEDURES PRIOR TO MOVE-IN

Prior to acceptance of a pet for occupancy in a Needham Housing Authority, the following procedure must be followed:

- a. Residents must submit an “**Application for Pet Ownership**” form.
- b. Photos of pet(s).
- c. Pet documentation (i.e., height, weight, color, species, breed, age).
- d. Pet owners must provide a copy of an affidavit from the persons who have agreed to assume immediate responsibility for their pet in case of emergency or inability on the part of the pet owner to maintain their pet; said pet to be removed from the unit upon notice from management and to be maintained at pet owner's expense until pet owner is in a position to be able to care for the pet independently.
- e. In an emergency where, despite reasonable effort, housing managers cannot reach the pet caretaker, the pet owner agrees to allow management to have the pet removed by the animal control officer, MSPCA, or other public or quasi-public authority. The pet owner shall bear all fees and costs. If the resident has made arrangements with a boarding kennel and provided management with this information, management will try to relocate the pet to the boarding kennel.
- f. (The pet owner must secure and keep in force personal liability or other insurance and indemnity Needham Housing Authority against pet-related litigation or attorney's fees as a condition of pet ownership.) A Waiver may supersede this.

## VI. MANAGING ISSUES

Management may revoke approval of any given pet should the animal have created a disturbance or be guilty of interrupting other residents' quiet enjoyment and comfort. Such a pet may no longer live in a Needham Housing Authority unit. If the pet owner does not comply with management's directive to remove the pet permanently from the premises, the pet owner will be in violation of their lease if the pet remains in the unit.

Sick or injured animals must be taken immediately for veterinarian care at the pet owner's expense. No sick or injured pet will be accepted for occupancy without consultation and written acknowledgment from a veterinarian as to the condition of the pet and its ability to live in an apartment. Regardless of documentation and consultation, acceptance is at management's discretion.

#### **VII. INSPECTION/ENTRY OF PET OWNER'S UNIT**

Management reserves the right to inspect all pet-occupied units periodically to ensure compliance with NHA rules, regulations, and policies. Pet owners will receive advance notice of such inspections.

Management reserves the right to prohibit entry into its buildings if pets do not comply with the above policies, rules, and regulations or any such policies, rules, and regulations promulgated in the future.

Management will consider any violation of Needham Housing Authority Pet Policies to be a reason for eviction.

#### **VIII. RULE ENFORCEMENT**

Management shall make every effort to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations set forth in this policy statement. To that end, management will contact the resident pet owner at the first sign of a problem or concern.

Failure on the part of the resident pet owner and his agent to take necessary and immediate steps to correct any problem involving the pet shall be considered a breach of the pet lease rider and grounds for removal of the pet.

These rules and regulations pertain only to approved resident pet owners. They should not be construed as changing the longstanding policy of "no visiting animals allowed." Residents shall remain responsible for their guests' actions and not permit them to bring animals onto Needham Housing Authority property.

#### **IX. PET DEPOSIT AND FEES**

Each pet owner shall require a pet deposit of one hundred dollars (\$100) and a fifty-dollar pet fee. The deposit may be paid over a period determined by the Executive Director. The deposit will be handled as a security deposit. The deposit will be refunded when the tenant vacates or no longer has ownership of the pet, provided that no pet-related damage has been done to the property. The sums necessary to repair such damage will be deducted from the deposit.

#### **X. PET ADDENDUM TO NHA LEASE AGREEMENT**

As provided by management, a pet addendum to the lease must be executed by the resident pet owner (all resident signers of the lease for the unit where the pet is to live).

Date Approved by NHA Commissioners 1/16/2025

Signature of Chair \_\_\_\_\_

