

ANNUAL RESEARCH REPORT

# 2020

What Makes a Pet  
Owner License?



**DocuPet**  
A safe and happy home for every pet



# Helping you do what you do best

*Finding safe and happy homes for every pet*

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DocuPet's mission is to help provide a safe and happy home to every pet in North America. We do this by providing communities and shelters with innovative pet licensing solutions, and by ensuring that pet owners find licenses to be as valuable as their local animal welfare providers do. To achieve our collective mission, and to ensure we are always listening, learning and sharing, we collect new data, synthesize it into actionable insights and make it available to all animal welfare and care providers.

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BY DOCUPET**



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*We are on a multi-year mission to boost pet license compliance rates for the betterment of local animal care and control.*

*In this year's report we sought to better understand our collective customers (licensees) and to unearth new insights that would help us attract more pet owners to licensing programs.*

*I hope you find this report useful and I look forward to discussing our findings with you - our colleagues in arms with whom we share our mission.*

**Grant Goodwin**  
Chief Executive Officer



**DocuPet**<sup>®</sup>

A Safe and Happy Home for every pet

# About This Report

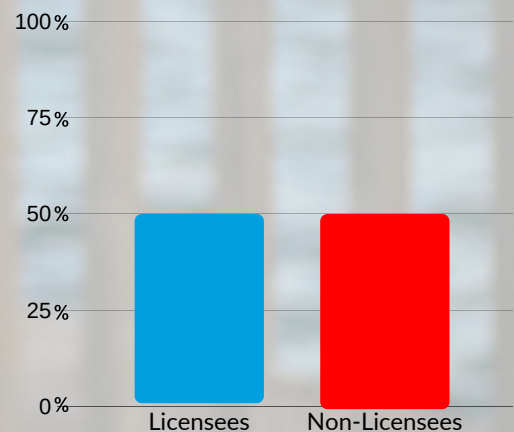
This is our third annual Pet Licensing Industry Research Report. In 2018 we assessed the standard rates and commonalities between pet licensing programs across North America. We discovered that, on average, just 13% of pets were licensed. In 2019 we focused on analyzing the best practices and policies of varying programs in order to determine how to implement successful programs that would increase compliance. This year we took a new approach, hoping to gain insight into one of the big mysteries of our industry:

## ***What's the difference between those who license their pets and those who do not?***

To prepare this report we worked with Idaho-based research firm, Marketspark, to develop and deploy a customized survey to more than 350 pet owners across the United States and Canada.

We studied pet owners' demographics, the nature of their relationships with their dogs, their behaviors and attitudes regarding pet tags and licensing, and their overall perception of local animal welfare organizations in order to better understand how those who license are similar to those who do not, and, perhaps more importantly, what makes them different.

We have laid out the following report to graphically display these differences, displaying licensees' data in blue, and non-licensees' in red. Note that these population sizes differ greatly, with non-licensees far outnumbering those who license. This report is intended as a direct comparison of the characteristics of the two groups.



# Are They From Different Demographic Profiles?

## Age and Gender

To learn if those who license their pets are, in fact, different types of people, we compared age, gender, income, location and dog ownership.

*“Which age category do you belong to?”*

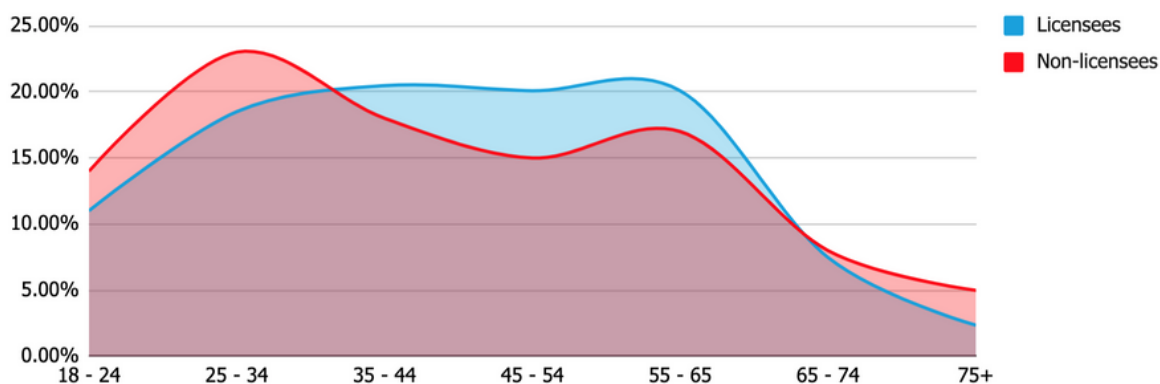


Figure 1: Our survey responses show that on average, individuals who license are more frequently between the ages of 35-64, with both younger (18-34) and older (65+) ages licensing less frequently.

Younger and older generations are less likely to license their dogs. This might be an indicator of less awareness among those who may be newer to dog ownership. It could also be related to the reduced income levels typically associated with these age groups.

*“What is your gender?”*

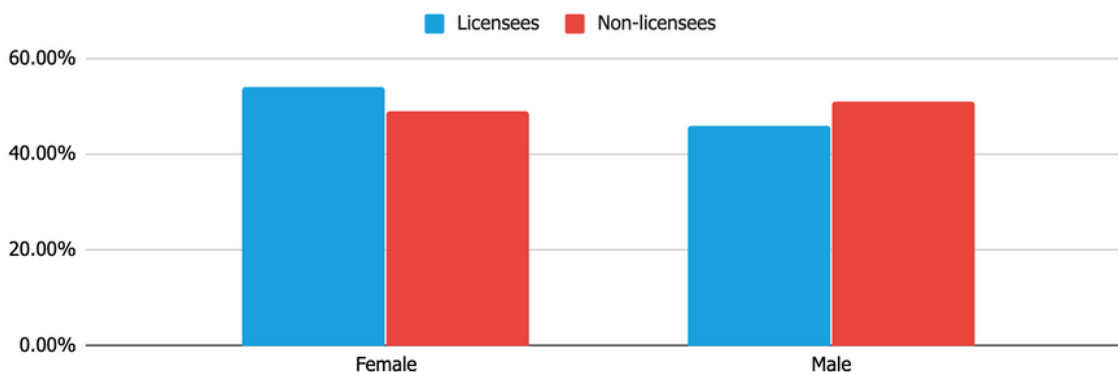
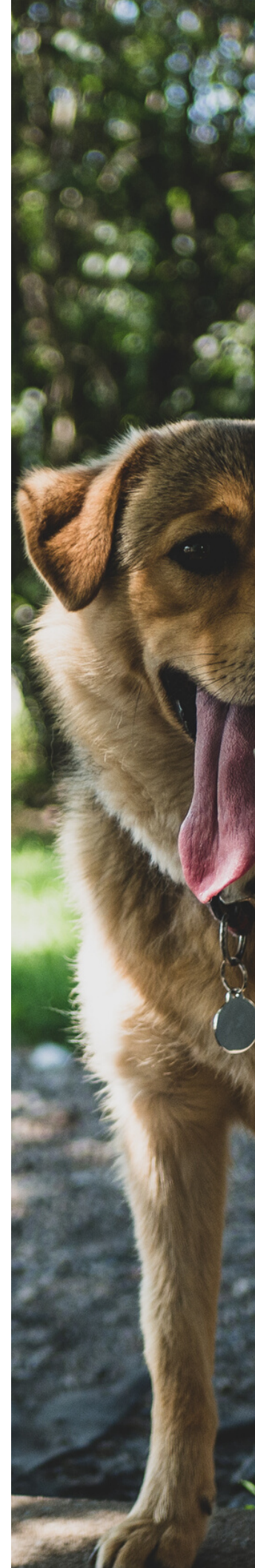


Figure 2: 54% of the licensees were female compared to 46% for males.

Gender seems to have little effect on licensing frequency. Our findings show that females are slightly more likely to license than their male counterparts.



# Employment and Income

*“What is your family’s annual household income?”*

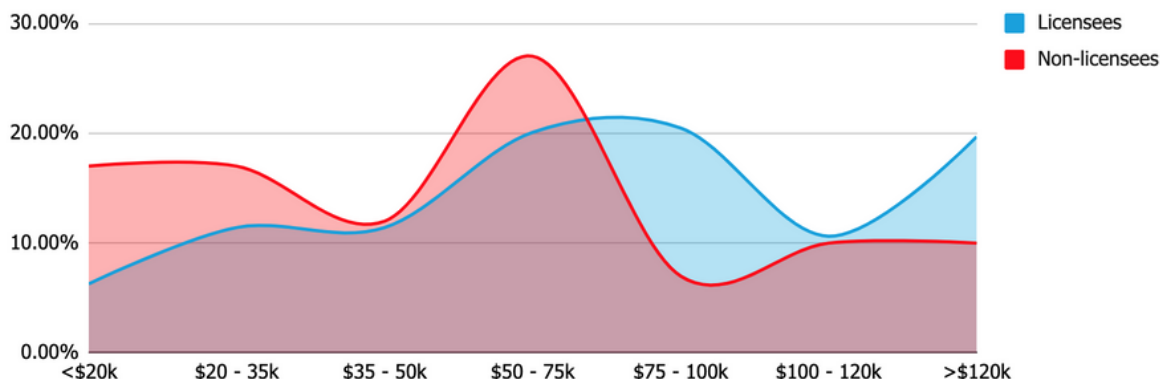


Figure 3: On average, licensees’ household income is significantly higher than non-licensees, with those who license more frequently earning between \$75,000-\$120,000+ and non-licensees more frequently earning below \$75,000 annually.

*“Which of the following best describes your employment status?”*

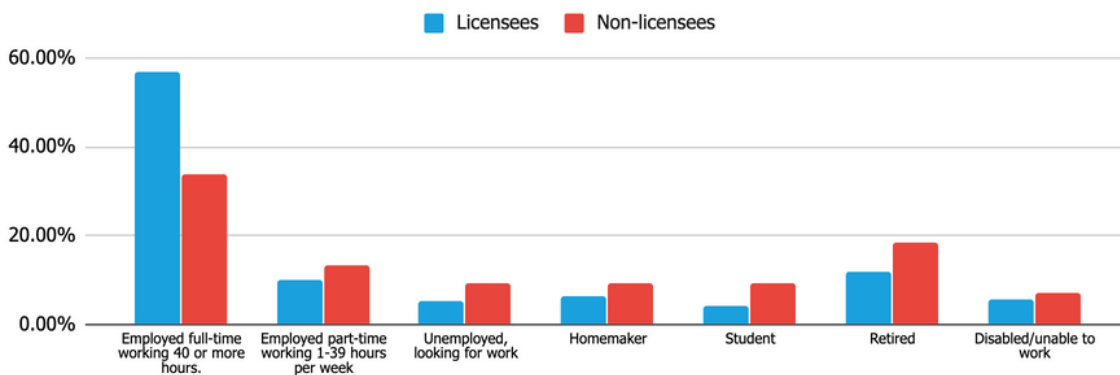


Figure 4: Individuals who license are 69% more likely to be employed full-time, working 40 hours or more per week, while those who do not license are more likely to fall into other categories.

Licensing prevalence is strongly correlated with income and employment. Logically, those with higher household income and more stable employment would be more willing and able to pay for a dog license. This is demonstrated by our insights from analyzing age demographics, it seems likely that younger and older pet owners, who are more likely to feel financially constrained, opt not to pay for dog licenses - which may be seen as a discretionary expense.

## Location and Home Dynamic

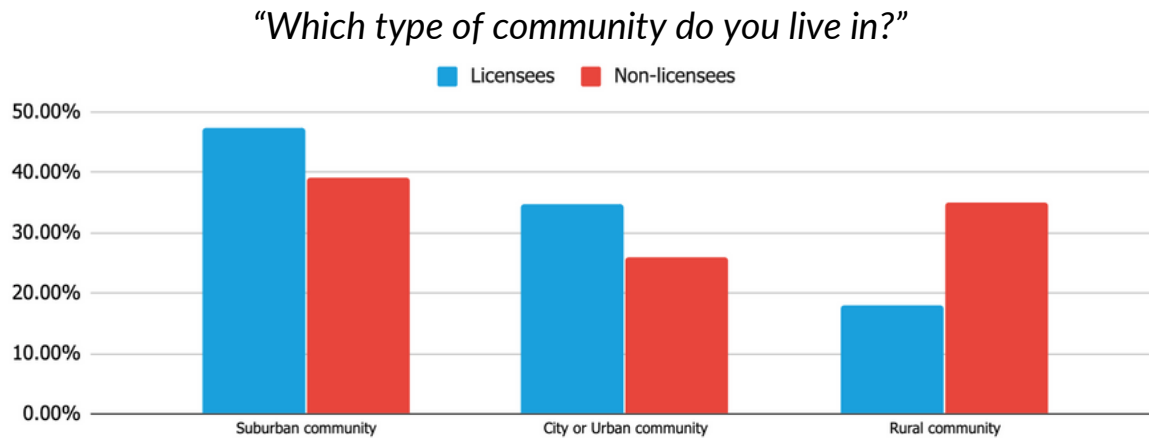


Figure 5: Licensees are far more likely to live in urban or suburban communities. Non-licensees are much more likely to live in less densely populated areas than licensees, with 35% of participants who don't license stating that they live in rural communities.

*“Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?”*

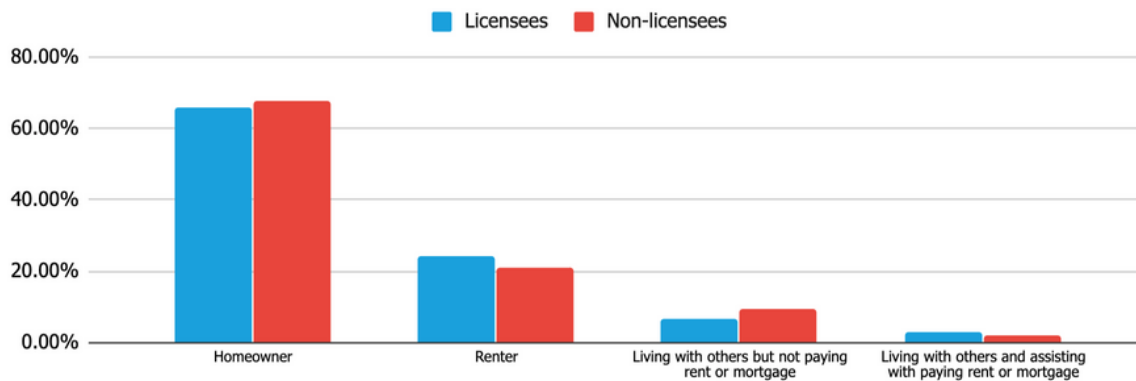


Figure 6: Within the statistical margin of error for this study, it seems that housing circumstances have little or no effect on the likelihood of dog licensing.

Those who live in urban and suburban areas are more likely to license their dogs. This may be due to their proximity to animal shelters, municipal offices, and enforcement officers. Increased awareness programs, belief that their community may be more involved in finding and returning lost pets, and more active involvement in their municipal government may also be factors leading to higher licensing tendencies in more populated communities.



## Dog Ownership

“How many dogs do you own?”

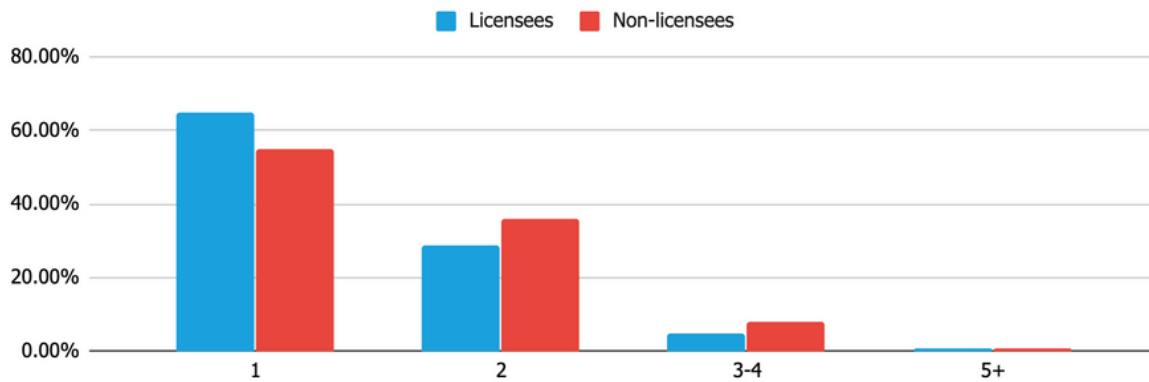


Figure 7: Our data indicates that licensees typically own fewer dogs than those who do not license, with non-licensees more frequently owning 2 or more dogs.

Owning two dogs means, of course, double the dog ownership costs including those associated with municipal registrations. We found that households with 2 - 4 dogs were significantly less likely to purchase licenses than households with just one.



***So, what are the differences between a dog owner who licenses and one who does not?***

### Licensee

- More likely to be middle-aged
- More likely to be female
- More likely to have a household income above \$75,000
- More likely to work full-time
- More likely to live in urban/suburban communities
- More likely to own just one dog

### Non-Licensee

- More likely to be older, or younger
- More likely to be male
- More likely to have a household income below \$75,000
- More likely to work part-time, be unemployed, a homemaker, student, retired or disabled/unable to work
- More likely to live in rural communities
- More likely to own two or more dogs

# Do They Feel Differently About Their Pets?

We wanted to explore the attitudes of dog owners toward their pets to see if licensing behavior differed based on these perceptions. We asked respondents to rank where their pet falls within a variety of roles in order to determine whether those roles have an effect on pet licensing.

## Priority Ranking

*“My Dog is a top priority. I try to do as much as I can to meet his/her needs, even if it inconveniences me or means making some sacrifices.”*

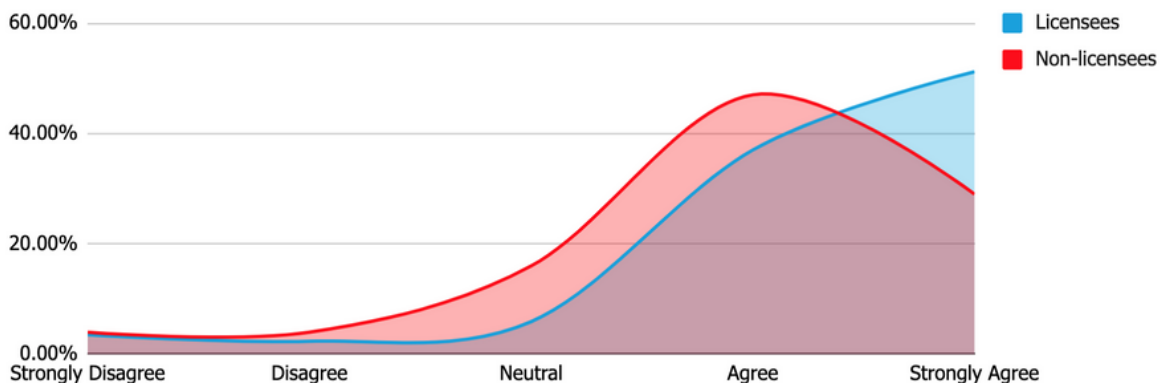


Figure 8: When asked if their dog is a pet owner’s top priority we see a noticeable difference in licensees versus non-licensees, particularly when analyzing those who strongly agree with the survey statement. 51% of licensees strongly agree that they will be inconvenienced or make small sacrifices for their dog, compared to only 29% of non-licensees.

We’ve learned that although both licensees and non-licensees believe that their dog is a top priority in their lives, there is a prominent difference in the depth at which individuals who license make their dog a top priority. With a 76% higher rate of licensees strongly agreeing that their pet is a top priority versus non-licensees, it is clear that licensees feel much more passionately about making their dog a top priority and, therefore, are more likely to do everything they can to protect their pups, including licensing.

## Defined Roles

*"To what extent does your dog play the following roles in your life?"  
(1 = not at all, 5 = very much so)*

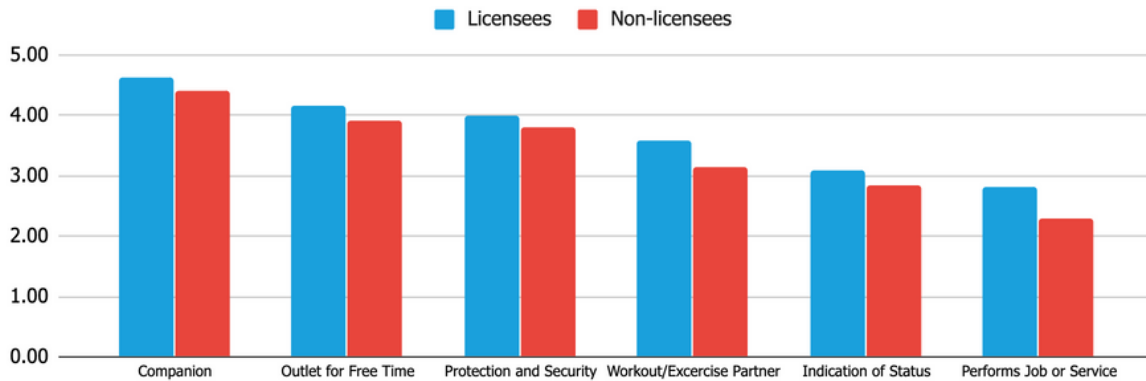


Figure 9: In every category offered, licensees were more likely to define their pet within a role than their non-licensee counterparts.

It is clear that dogs fill many roles within their owners' lives, and that both licensees and non-licensees feel their pets are very important. However, the extent to which licensees prioritize their dogs, and the level of importance of the roles they play in their lives are consistently higher than non-licensees. It can be inferred that individuals who have a higher connection with their dog(s) may be more likely to consider purchasing a dog license as part of their care for their pet.

### *So do licensees and non-licensees feel differently about their pets?*

*Overall, licensees seem to care more deeply about their dogs and consider their pets to play more significant roles in their lives.*

#### **Licensee**

- More likely to view their dog(s) as a top priority
- More likely to involve their dog(s) in various aspects of their life

#### **Non-Licensee**

- Less likely to view their dog(s) as a top priority
- Less likely to involve their dog(s) in various aspects of their life

# Is Licensing About The Function of a Tag?

A license is often touted as an effective measure for assisting in the safe return of a lost dog. So, are dog owners even worried about their pet getting lost? What measures are being taken to help get wandering dogs home? We explored attitudes and desires related to fears and solutions for lost dogs.

## Fear and Frequency of Lost Dogs

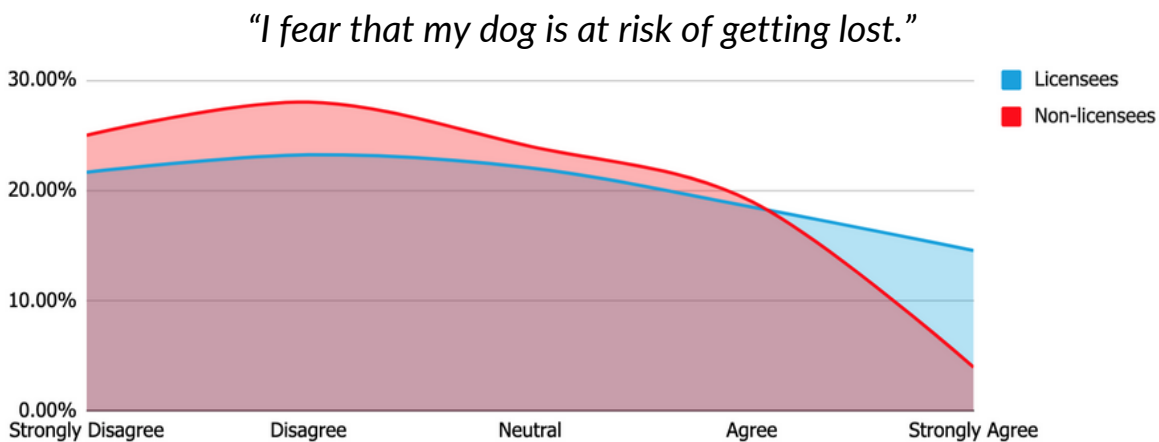


Figure 10: Dog owners, on average, are not concerned about their dog becoming lost. However, licensees were 260% more likely to strongly agree that they fear their dog being lost as compared to non-licensees.

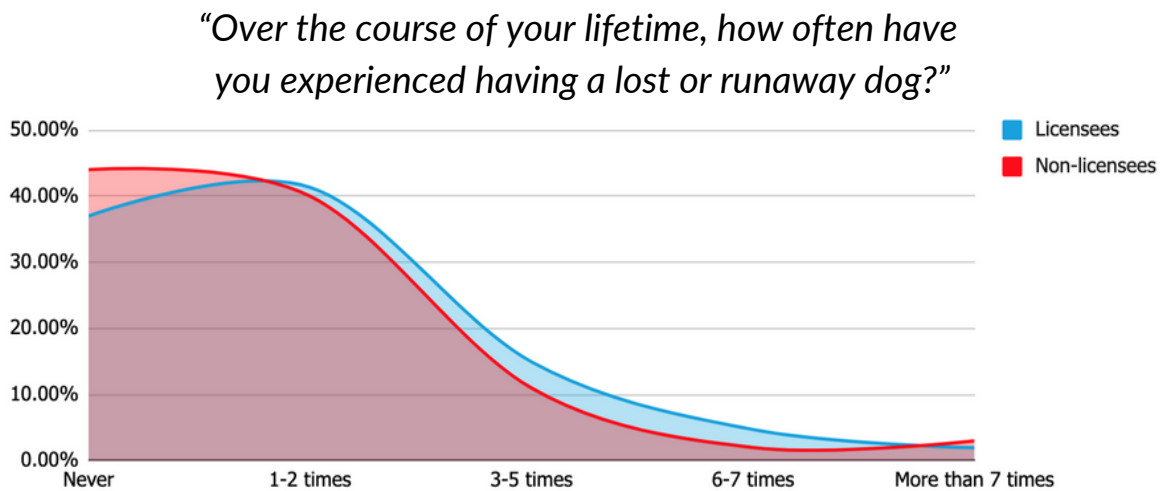


Figure 11: Despite the fact that the majority of dog owners were not worried that their dog was at risk of getting lost, over 60% of respondents stated that they had lost their dog at least once. Licensees were slightly more likely to have lost their dog(s) 2-7 times.

# How Many Pets Are Lost Annually?

According to the American Humane Association, approximately 10 million cats and dogs are lost or stolen in the United States each year, with more than 6 million of these animals winding up in the nation's animal shelters. Of the 6 million pets that enter the shelter, only 15.8% of dogs and 2% of cats are reunited with their owners.



It is clear through our research that, in general, licensees not only fear losing their dog more than non-licensees, but have actually experienced it more frequently. With many options on the market to protect against lost dogs, we wanted to see whether pet owners were using licensing to address this fear, and what the perceived effectiveness was in comparison to other available options.

*“Please rate the following resources on their effectiveness at reuniting lost dogs with their owners.”  
(1 = least effective, 5 = most effective)*

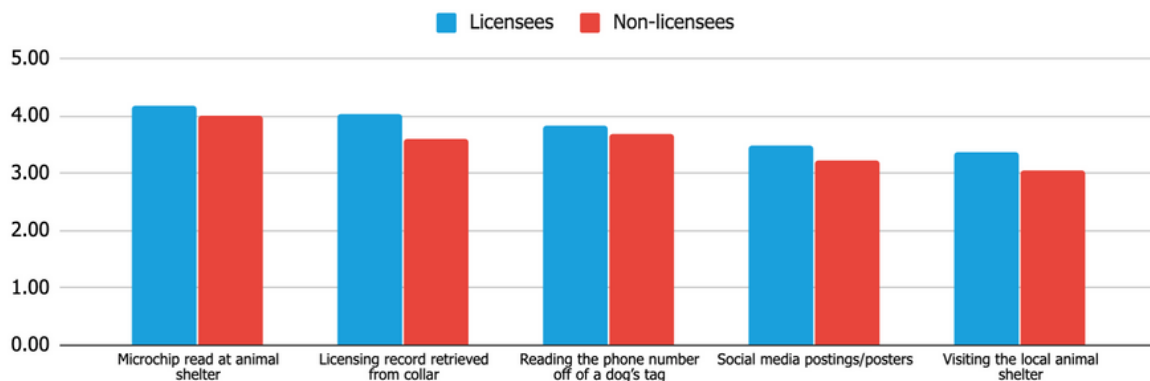


Figure 12: The perceived most effective resources at reuniting lost dogs with their owners from most to least effective were microchips, followed by licensing, reading a phone number off of a tag, social media postings, and owners checking the local shelter. Overall, individuals who license annually view every single resource as slightly more effective than those who do not license.

When analyzing measures taken to prevent lost dogs, licensing is seen as a very effective measure by licensees, but less so by non-licensees. With over 60% of pet owners having lost their dog at least once in their lifetime, nearly 93% of dog owners have implemented some form of protection against it happening again. It is clear that, despite the low fear surrounding lost dogs, even non-licensees still implement measures to combat the possibility of losing their dog.

## Pet Tag Utilization

So, what features should a license tag include to make it most valuable to dog owners?

*“Please order the following features of a dog tag from most to least important.”  
(1 = least important, 6 = most important)*

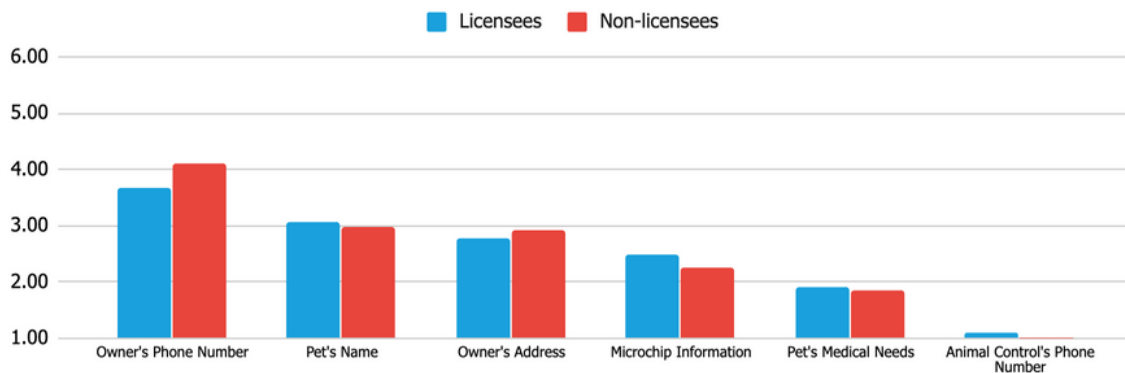


Figure 13: Overall, pet owners believe that having their phone number, pet's name and address are the most useful features of a pet tag. Both licensees and non-licensees agree that their phone number is the most important feature to include.

*“When considering the type of tag to purchase for your dog, how important is it that you personally find the overall design of the tag appealing?”*

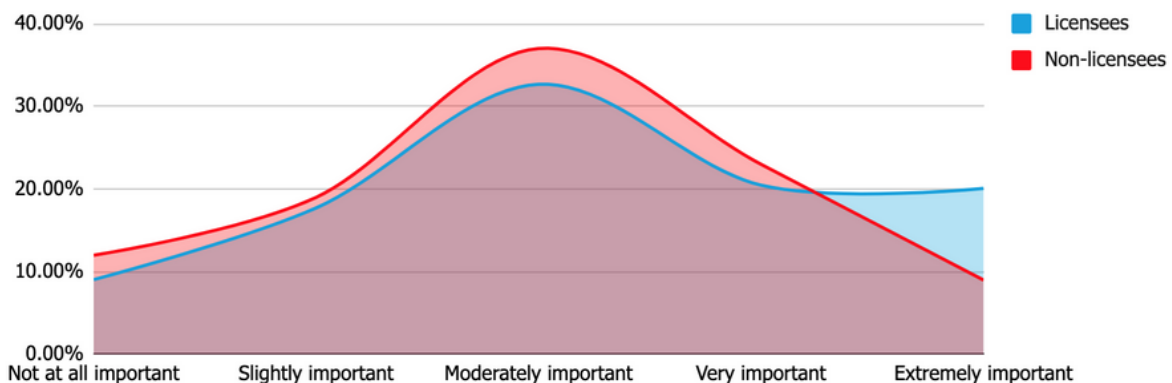


Figure 14: Almost 75% of dog owners find the design of their tag moderately to extremely important. However, more than twice as many of the licensees viewed the appearance of the dog tag to be "Extremely Important".

Although licensees already recognize the benefits of a standard license, further improvements could include the addition of a pet owner's phone number and pet's name, accompanying an overall appealing tag design. This is likely to increase current licensees' perceptions of licensing programs, and possibly attract non-licensees to reconsider the benefits licensing can provide.



*So, how do licensees feel about license tags as a means for seeing a lost dog returned?*

Licensees are more likely to have had their dog get away frequently in the past and fear that their dog will become lost again in the future. They see the license tag as being valuable in returning a lost dog to them, more so than non-licensees.

Even so, licensees feel that having their own phone number and pet's name on the tag is much more important for the safe return of a lost pet than that of the local Animal Control organization.

Licensees are more likely to care about the design of a pet tag than non-licensees, though both tend to care about tag aesthetics.

# Tags That Help All Pets

Pet licenses are really important. When lost pets end up in shelters, those with license tags are much more likely to be returned home. Our tags help lost pets get home safely. They also help fund local initiatives that find safe and happy homes for our most vulnerable animals.

## HomeSafe™

Each DocuPet tag has a unique HomeSafe™ code on the back. If a pet ever becomes lost, this code can be used by the pet's finder to file an online report letting the owner know that they have been found!

- ✓ Online pet & pet owner profiles including contact details, pet information and license status
- ✓ Lost and found pet reports that trigger emails to DocuPet's customer service team and local animal welfare organizations
- ✓ 24-7 dispatch on-call to aid in efforts to return lost and found pets to their owners



**DocuPet**



# Tags That Pet Owners Want

Pet owners want the best for their furry friends. That's why we allow licensees to choose a standard license tag or something special from our collections of designer tags. We even provide personalized etching of each tag to make the return of lost pets that much easier. Partial proceeds from every designer tag sale are donated to our local animal shelter partner.

Check out our newest designer tags:



Call My Mom



My Best Friend



What A Hotdog!



Baller



Soak Up The Sun



Pineapple Of My Eye



It's A Black Tie Affair



I Shouldn't Be Here



Pet Owners can now personalize the back of their pet's tag with their name & contact info

# Is How They Feel About Licensing Significant?

There is a clear correlation between the perceived functionality of a license tag as a means for returning a lost dog and a pet owner's willingness to pay for one. Now let's learn more about how dog owners feel about the benefits, and their community's engagement, of licensing.

## Perceived Value

*“In your opinion, how important are the following benefits to registering and licensing your dog with city or county government?”  
(1 = not at all, 5 = very much so)*

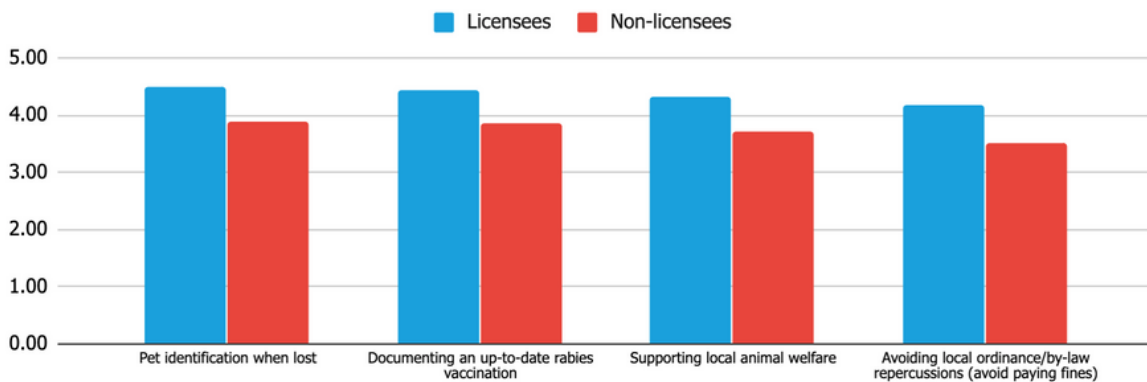


Figure 15: When rating the direct personal benefits of licensing, licensees saw every aspect of licensing moderately more useful than non-licensees.

*“What are the reasons your dog does not currently have a license?”*

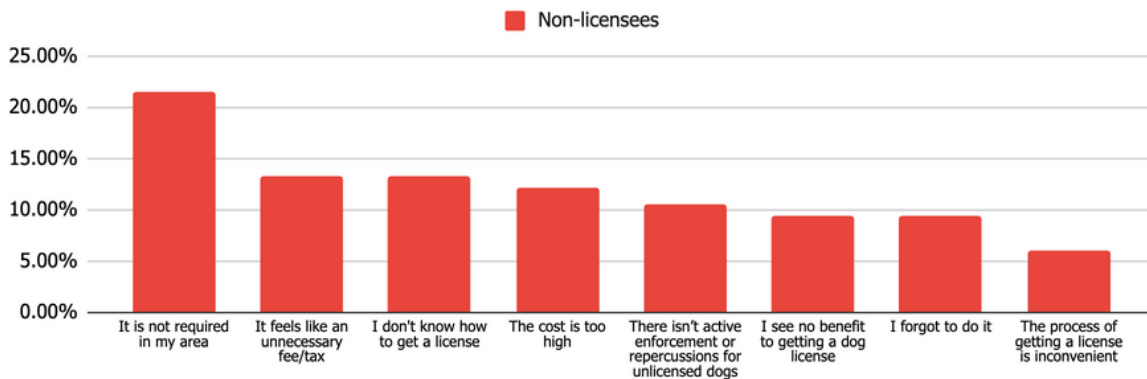


Figure 16: Those who do not license their dogs indicate that they are not required to as the most frequent justification, although this is unlikely. With over 90% of local jurisdictions requiring licenses, it is likely due to a lack of awareness. Additionally, a lack of knowledge, enforcement, recognized benefits or convenience, as well as the opinion that the fee is unnecessary or too high, were also indicated as reasons for non-compliance.

All four benefit options were rated as being of nearly equal value, though, not surprisingly, licensees found every single one to be more important than non-licensees. Interesting to us is that, on average, non-licensees rated each benefit to be moderately important, indicating that license value was not the primary reason for non-compliance.

Those who failed to comply indicated a number of reasons for not doing so, including a lack of local requirement, lack of convenience or knowledge regarding the application process. Peculiar, however, is that even though many non-licensees see value in a license, fee justification, cost of a license, or forgetfulness were still common reasons for not taking advantage of the offering.

*“People in my dog-owning community understand how and why to license dogs.”*

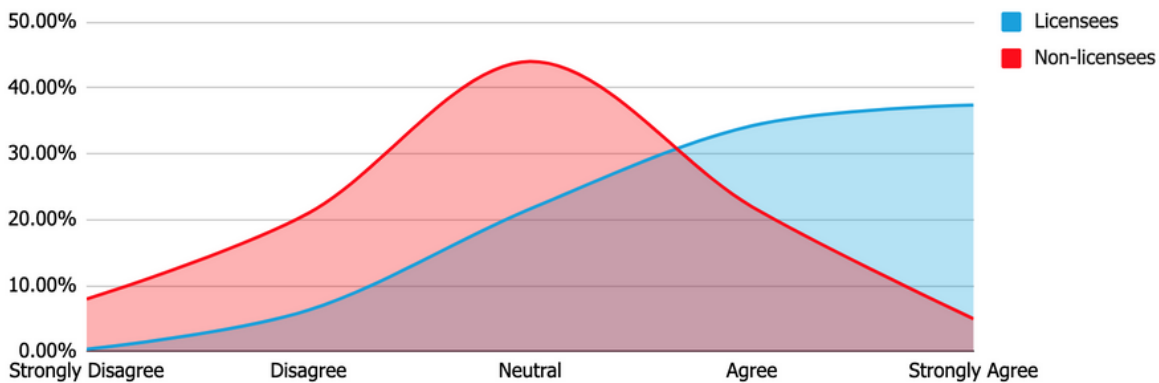


Figure 17: 71% of licensees believe that people in their dog-owning community understand how and why to license dogs, in comparison to only 27% of non-licensees.

While the vast majority of licensees believe that people in their dog-owning community understand how and why to license dogs, very few non-licensees feel the same way. This demonstrates that a general lack of awareness surrounding why and how to license is likely contributing to lower licensing rates.

## Social Pressure

*“I feel as though the majority of my dog-owning community licenses their dogs.”*

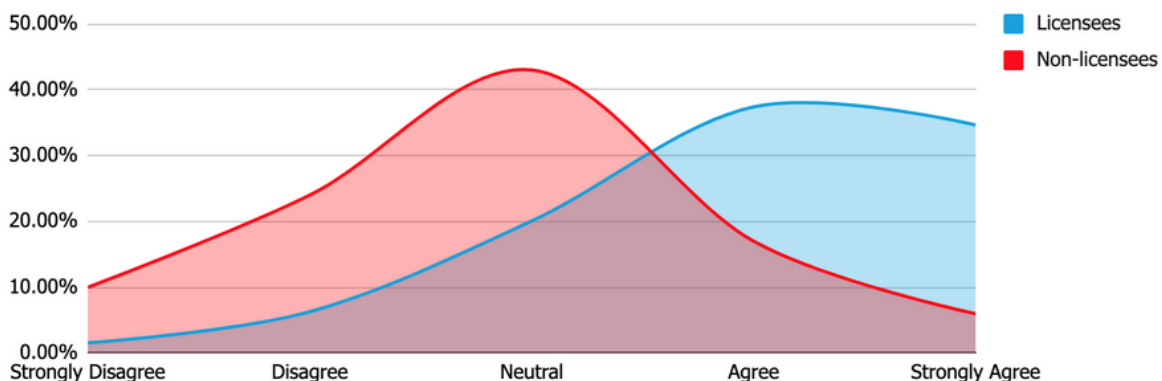


Figure 18: 72% of licensees believe that the majority of their community licenses, whereas only 23% of non-licensees believe that the majority of their community licenses.

With many non-licensees indicating that they were unaware of how to license, forgot to do it or believed that it was not required, it is not surprising that the majority of non-licensees would assume that others in their community are also not licensing. On the other hand, licensees overwhelmingly indicated that they believed the majority of their community licensed their dogs.

As humans tend to follow social norms and patterns, it can be inferred that if one believes their community does not take the requirement to license seriously, they will be less likely to participate in the program.

*“I am likely to purchase a dog license in the future.”*

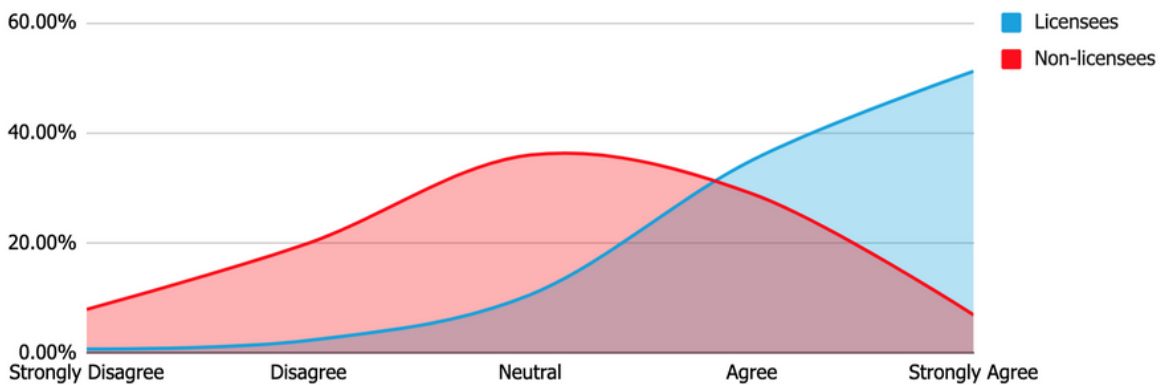
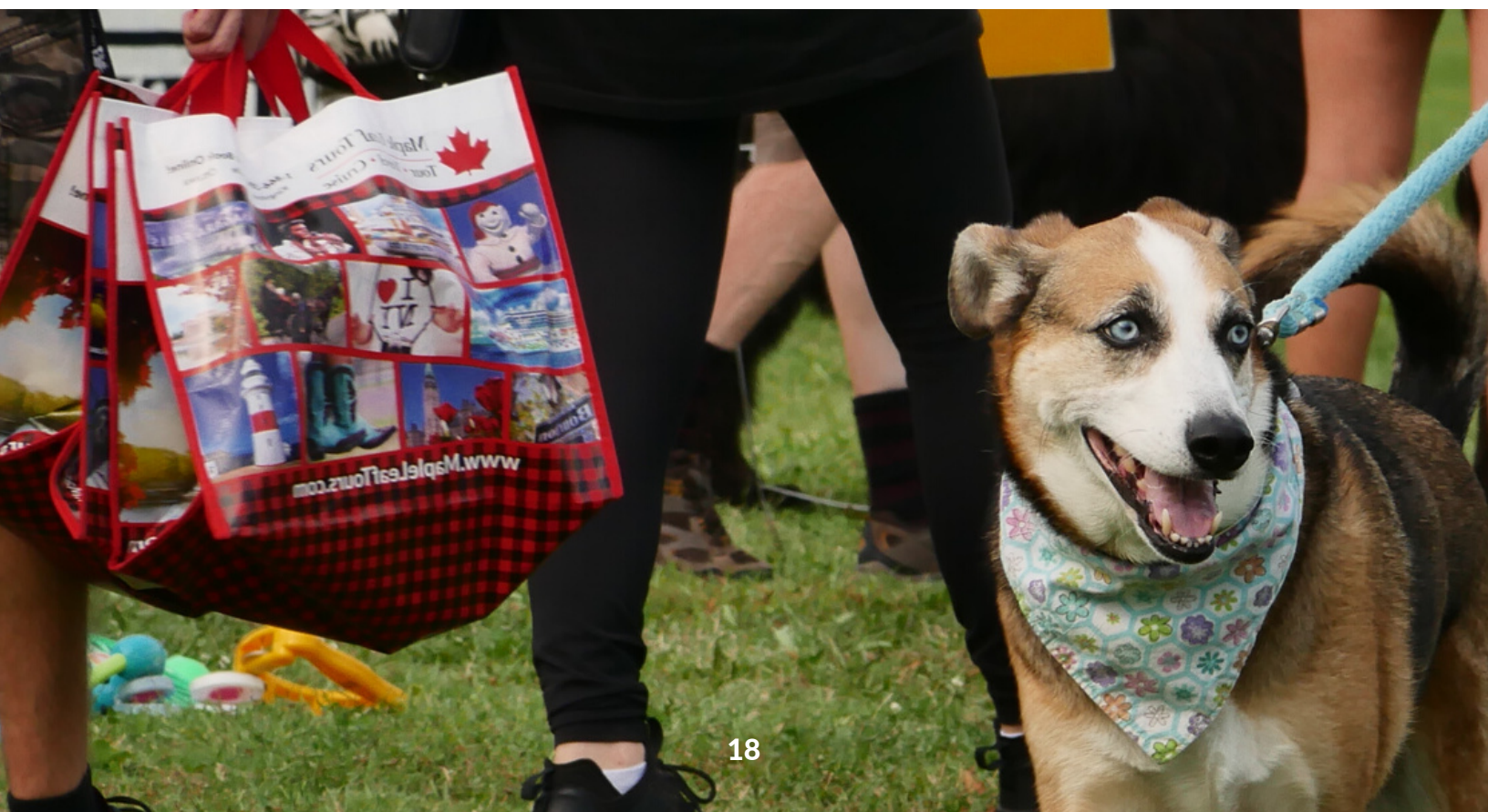


Figure 19: 86% of licensees agree that they are likely to purchase a dog license again in the future and 36% of non-licensees stated that they were likely to purchase a dog license in the future.



When faced directly with a question surrounding their likelihood to license, 36% of non-licensees said that they are likely to purchase a dog license in the future, indicating that non-licensees are much more inclined to purchase a license than perhaps previously thought, while current licensees are extremely likely to remain compliant.

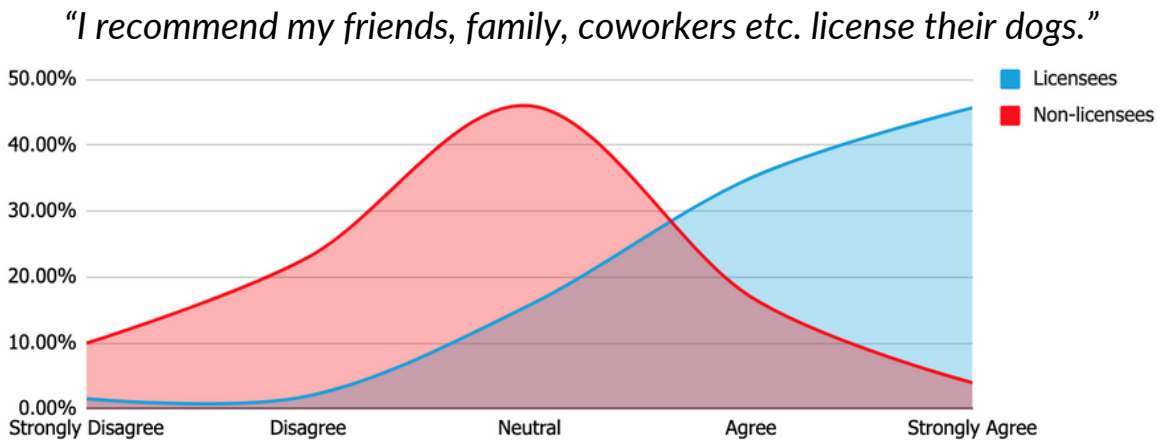


Figure 20: The vast majority of licensees claim to recommend licensing to their peers, while just 21% of non-licensees would do the same.

Similar to our findings on whether a pet owner believes the majority of their community licenses, it is true that individuals who license are more likely to recommend it to their inner circle, while those who do not are less likely. Despite this, 21% of non-licensees would still recommend it to their friends, family or co-workers, possibly indicating social pressure around the subject, where pet owners are more likely to advocate for licensing in a public setting despite not complying themselves.

### ***So, does a dog owner's perception of licensing benefits and community involvement contribute to their likelihood to license?***

We've learned that dog owners see the value in licensing when questioned directly on each benefit – even those who do not license. This is likely because the root issue of low compliance is more centered around a lack of awareness and understanding when compared to licensees who widely recognize and praise the benefits of pet licensing. Non-licensees, however, could be persuaded through awareness campaigns and further application of social pressure, as 1/3rd already state that they are likely to purchase a license in the future.



# Does Who Provides a License Matter?

In our 2019 report we discovered that over 66% of Pet Licensing Organizations received a portion of licensing revenue to help subsidize their costs. With such a high proportion of pet licensing revenue contributing to local animal care and control funding, we wanted to explore the perceptions of local shelters and how licensing behavior might be affected if this funding link was more clearly identified.

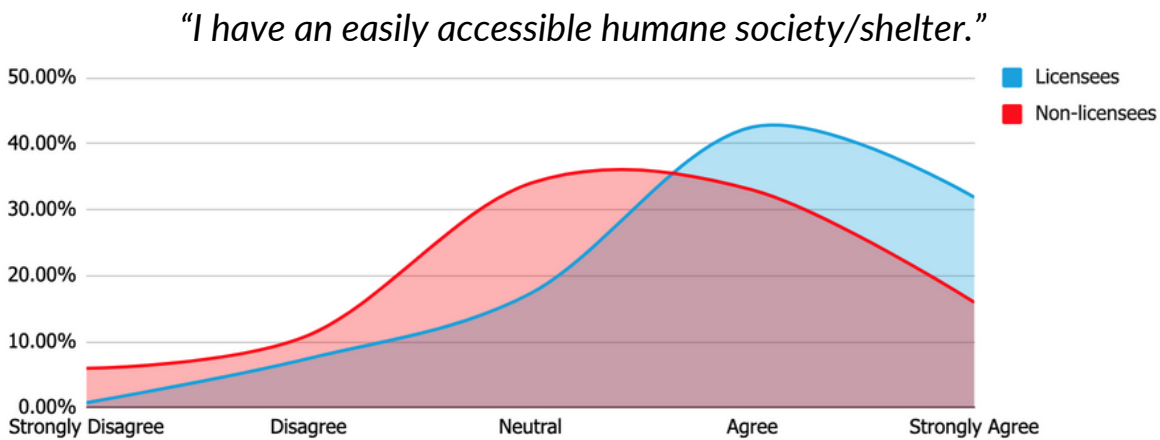


Figure 21: 74% of licensees believe that they have an accessible shelter while less than half of non-licensees believe the same.

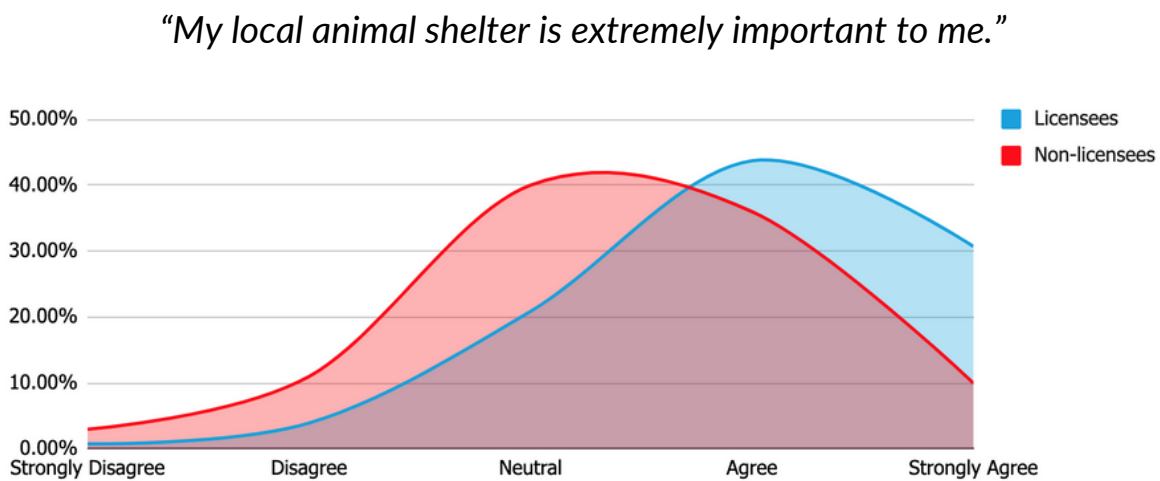


Figure 22: Licensees typically have a stronger positive attitude towards shelters, with 30% strongly agreeing that they are of extreme importance, while only 10% of non-licensees share the same sentiment.

*“To the best of your knowledge, which entity currently receives the proceeds from dog licensing in your area?”*

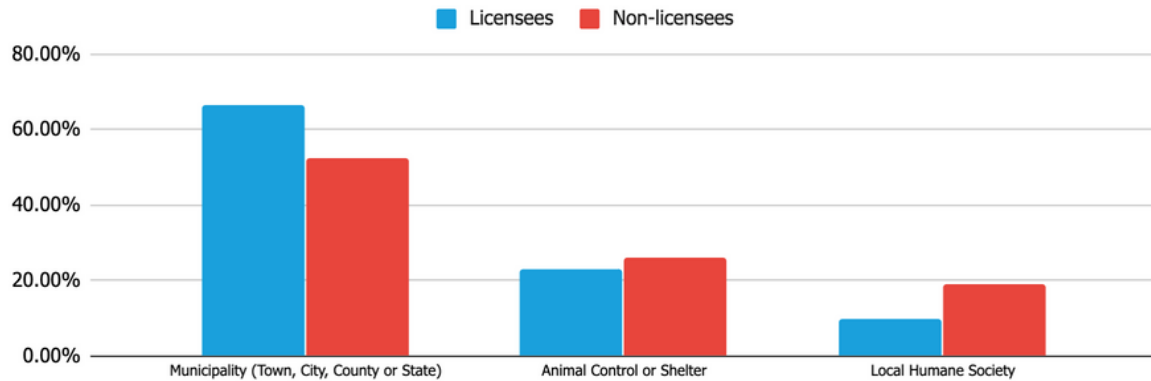


Figure 23: Overall, it is believed that the municipality (town, city, county or state) receives the majority of the proceeds from dog licensing, followed by animal control or shelters, and then local humane societies.

Despite having more accessible shelters, and generally feeling that their shelter was more important to them, more than 63% of licensees believe that their dog license fees go to the local municipality's general fund. Non-licensees tended to have less accessible animal shelters but felt more often that the dog license fees supported animal care and control directly.

## Safe&HappyFund by DocuPet

DocuPet's mission is to help provide a safe and happy home for every pet. Beyond raising funds through pet registrations and helping lost pets get home with our HomeSafe™ service, we have created a donation program.

We strive to partner with an animal welfare organization or initiative in each of the communities we provide licensing services for. These humane societies, shelters, rescues, and community groups make a difference for so many of our furry friends.

**We raise money for our Safe&Happy Fund by:**

- Donating 20% of product purchases, including Designer Pet Tags
- Collecting direct donations from pet owners through our website

# Supporting Local Shelters

We examined dog owners' perceptions of their local animal shelter, if they personally supported the organization, and if they were more likely to purchase a license if they knew the funds would support animal welfare.

*"Dogs are well cared for by the local animal shelter."*

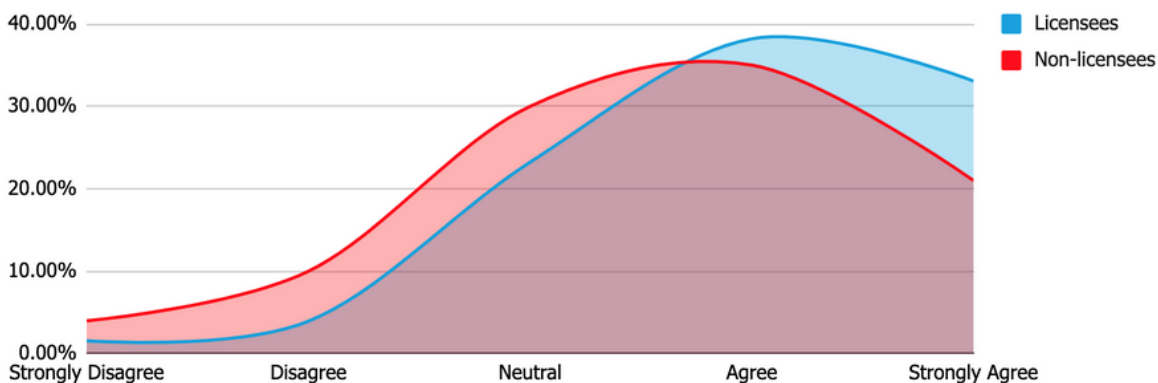


Figure 24: 71% of licensees feel as though dogs are well cared for by the local animal shelter, yet only 56% of non-licensees feel as though they are well cared for.

*"I personally support my local animal shelter through volunteering or monetary donations."*

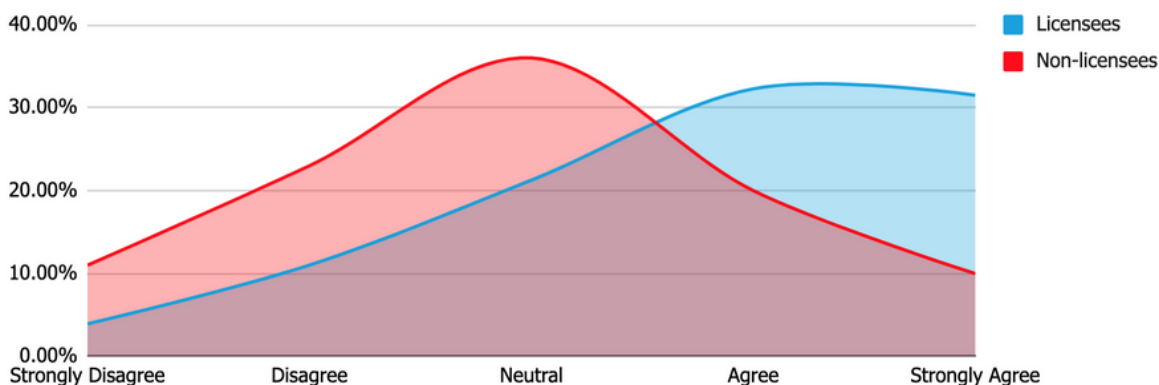
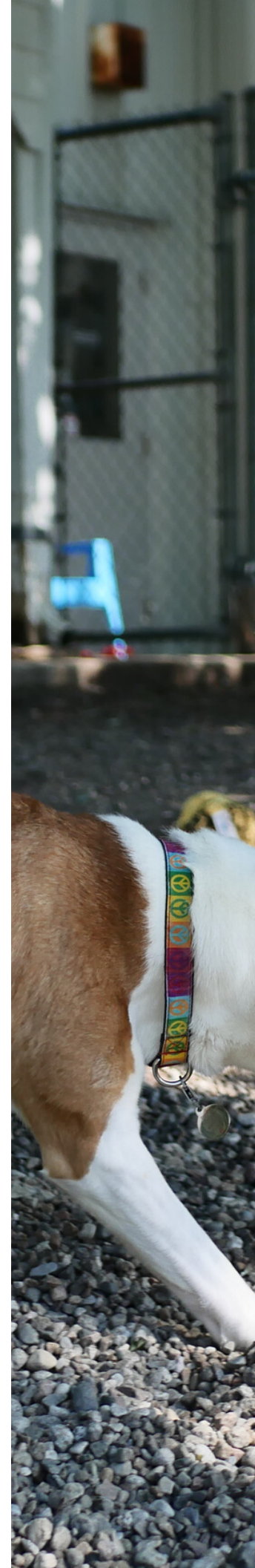


Figure 25: 64% of licensees state that they have personally supported their local animal shelter, versus only 30% of non-licensees.

Licensees have an overall higher perception of their local animal shelter and are also more likely to directly support the organization.





*“I would be more likely to purchase dog-related products if I knew a portion of the sales would support my local animal shelter.”*

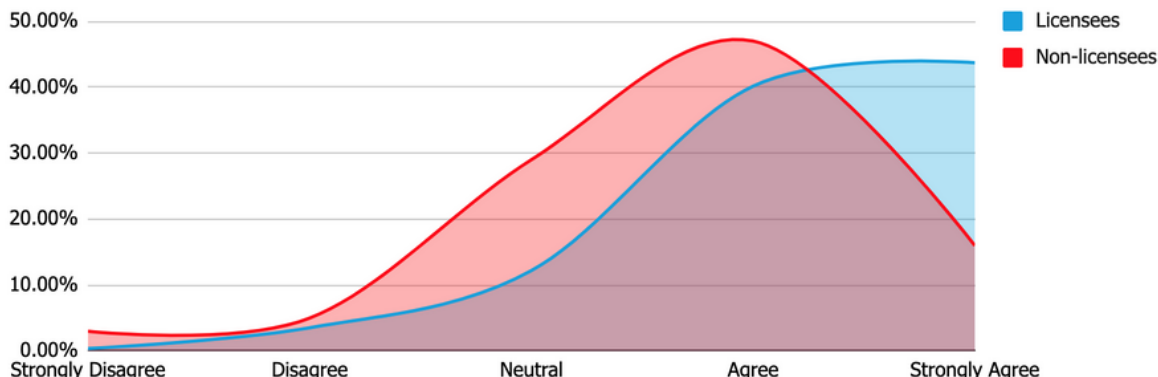


Figure 26: 84% of licensees, and 63% of non-licensees agree that they are more likely to purchase dog-related products if a portion of the sale supports their local animal shelter.

Both groups are more likely to purchase dog-related products if they feel the proceeds will support their local shelter, with licensees "strongly agreeing" at a far higher rate than their non-licensee counterparts.

*“How likely would you be to purchase a dog license if a portion of sales went to support your local animal shelter?”*

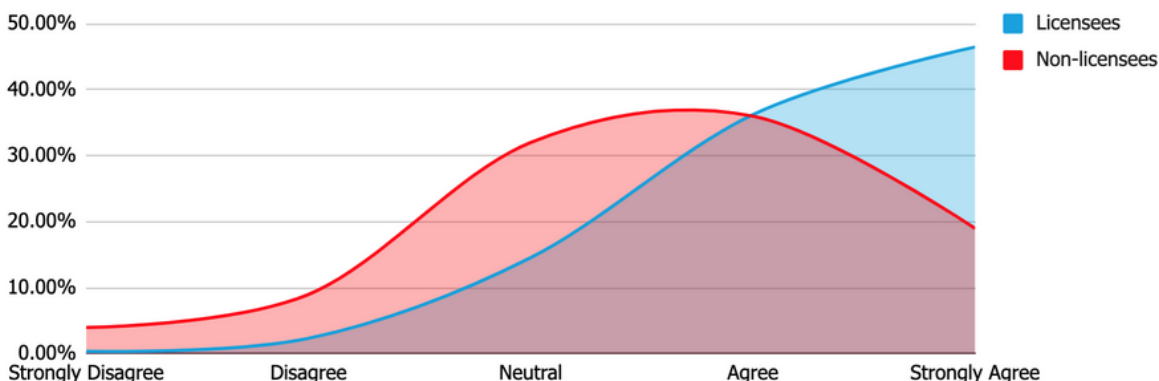


Figure 27: 82% of licensees and 55% of non-licensees are likely to purchase a dog license if a portion of the sale went to the local animal shelter.

Similarly, both groups indicated that they are likely to purchase a dog license if the proceeds support the local animal shelter. Not surprisingly, the licensee cohort agrees with the statement more strongly on average, however, interesting to us is that non-licensees are more likely than not to purchase a license if they knew a portion of the proceeds went to the local animal shelter.

*“How much more would you be willing to pay for a dog license if 100% of sale proceeds went to your local animal shelter?”*

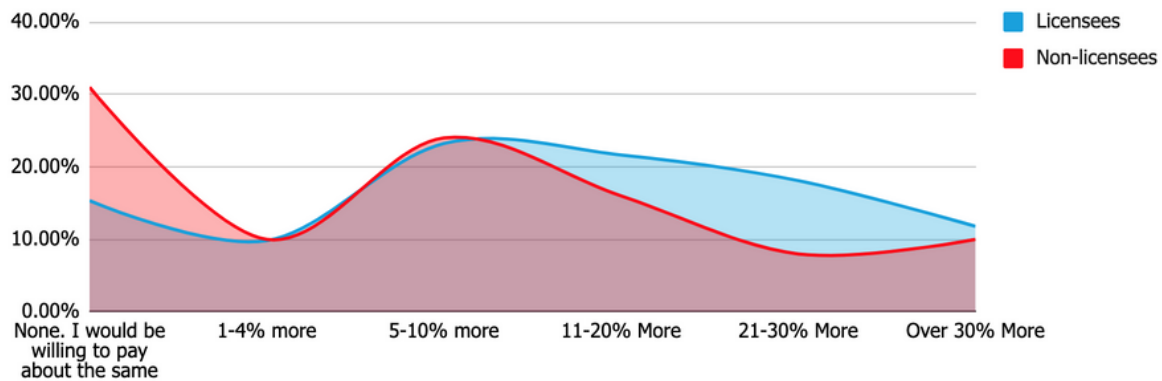


Figure 28: When we began to analyze how much more respondents might pay for a dog license if they knew 100% of proceeds went to their local animal shelter, 75% of licensees said that they would pay 5% or more, while 58% non-licensees would pay over 5% or more.

Both groups indicated that they would pay more for a license if the all proceeds went to their local animal shelter. 10% of non-licensees would even be willing to pay over 30% higher fees if this was the case.



***So, does who provides a license matter?***

We’ve learned that although licensees typically have more positive attitudes surrounding their local shelter, non-licensees sway positively as well. While the majority of pet owners believe that their local municipality receives animal licensing fundings, pet owners appear drastically more likely to purchase licenses, and even to pay higher fees, if the funds are used to support local animal welfare organizations instead.



# DocuPet's Solution

Fewer than **13%** of pet owners license their animals with local jurisdictions. DocuPet was founded to increase pet license sales, decrease administrative workload, and build programs that reduce shelter stays and overall intake numbers.

By providing pet owners with *better* pet tags, a *free* lost pet service, *incentives*, and lots of information about *pet care* in their community, we make pet license registration as valuable to them as it is to local animal welfare.

## With...

- ✓ Awareness Campaigns
- ✓ Personalized and Designer Pet Tags
- ✓ Robust Renewal Communications
- ✓ Educational License Packages
- ✓ Advanced Reporting for Partners
- ✓ Customer Service by Phone, Email and Chat
- ✓ A Free Lost Pet Program, with 24/7 Hotline
- ✓ Zero Startup or Monthly Fees - & Lowest Fee Per Registration

# What We've Learned

We don't see dramatic differences between those who license their dogs and those who don't, but the variances can add up. Let's take a look at what our survey might determine the "typical" licensee to be compared to their non-licensee counterpart.

## Licensee

Most likely a middle-aged female

Probably has very reliable employment and income

More likely to live in urban and suburban neighborhoods

More likely to own one dog

Feels very strongly about making their pet a top priority and involving it in their life

More worried about and likely to lose their dog

Views every listed benefit of licensing as higher than 4 out of 5 when ranked on importance

More likely to believe that microchips, and licenses are the best ways to reunite dogs with their owners

More likely to want appealing tags with their pet's name and phone number etched onto it

Quite likely to agree that their community understands how and why to license

Quite likely to believe that the majority of their community licensees

Very likely to recommend licensing to their friends and family members

Likely to believe that their animal shelter is extremely important, accessible, and caring towards dogs

Very likely to pay more for a license if proceeds went to local animal welfare, with over half willing to pay more than a 10% increase



# Non-licensee

Most likely a young (18-34) or elderly (65+) male

Less likely to have reliable employment and income

More likely to live in rural neighborhoods

More likely to own two or more dogs

Feels strongly about making their pet a top priority and involving it in their life, but less so than licensees

Less worried about and likely to lose their dog

Views every listed benefit of licensing as higher than 3 out of 5 when ranked on importance

More likely to believe that microchips, and reading a phone number off of a tag are the best ways to reunite dogs with their owners

Similarly to licensees, more likely to want appealing tags with their pet's name and phone number etched onto it

Not likely to agree that their community understands how and why to license

Not likely to agree that the majority of their community licenses

Not likely to recommend licensing to their friends and family members

Seldom likely to purchase a license in the future

Likely to believe that their animal shelter is extremely important, accessible, and caring towards dogs, but less so than licensees

Likely to pay more for a license if proceeds went to local animal welfare, with over half willing to pay more than a 5% increase

# Findings & Recommendations

In so many ways, both licensees and non-licensees are similar. They love their dogs and they are concerned about their whereabouts. They place tags on their dogs and see value in licensing. And both tend to want to support local animal care and control.

But the differences between the two groups helps us identify new insights that we can use to deploy strategies that could help move a greater portion of the non-licensing group into compliance.

Here's what we think you might want to consider for your licensing program...

## Use Generational Marketing

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Younger people tend to license less than their middle-aged counterparts. This could simply be due to a lack of awareness, especially if they are new to pet ownership. It's important to understand that this demographic gains new knowledge differently than other generational cohorts. Are you promoting your licensing program, and the associated ordinance, in places and ways that will reach and resonate with a younger audience?

Consider using social media and placing advertisements in municipal emails or mobile apps, if you haven't already.

Older generations also seem to license less frequently. How do we reach this generation and ensure that they see the value of your licensing program? Consider municipal mail inserts or community canvassing campaigns. Make clear in this communication that you are there to help them if their pet gets away (a service mentality) instead of only expressing the mandate to license (tax collection mentality).

## Make the Tag Really Matter

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Pet owners love their furry family members, that's clear. Have you noticed how popular pet photos and stories are in social media? We know that dog owners are likely to see value in placing a tag on their dogs, but that they don't necessarily like ugly stamped aluminum tags.

With the high revenues associated with pet licensing programs, consider making your license tag more useful to pet owners. Can they choose different designs? Can they have their phone number and pet's name etched on each tag? If pet owners get to "shop" for a tag that they really want, they will be much more likely to place the tag on their pet, and much more likely to tell others about it - hopefully on social media!

Plus, this would give you something fun to promote - we have long struggled to make the promotion of pet licensing anything more than a reminder to comply, but offering a product that attracts your targeted market draws them to the act of licensing.

## Improve the Functionality of Your Lost Pet Service

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Most dog owners have experienced their companion getting away from them at some point and our study shows that many are concerned about it happening again. We also see that non-licensees view a license tag as a valuable method in having lost pets returned safely.

But do your citizens really understand how your tag helps them in this manner? Do they know how your service works? Do they know how often you've helped others get their pets home safely and at no costs?

Take the time to really explain the value of the "Free Ride Home" service your organization likely provides and make sure you describe this value every time you promote and sell licenses.

## Ensure The Funds Go to a Good Cause

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We feel this is really important. Most dog owners in our survey feel that the money spent on licenses goes to a general fund. They aren't making the correlation between license fees and the important animal care and control work that your municipality does (or funds).

We highly recommend that you do all that you can to build the link between licensing revenue and animal care and control. Pet owners think fondly of their local animal shelters, and are happy to support and even pay more if they think the dollars spent are going to that cause - and not a general bucket that feels like "just another tax".

## Normalize It

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While just 13% of pet owners license their animals on average, our survey reveals that most think that others do, in fact, comply with mandatory registration requirements. They are even likely to recommend that others do so. What can we do with this insight?

Reinforce the value of the license to your current licensees so they can tell others about the benefits of the program. Then be sure to proactively enforce the law with warning letters, fines, and citations. Take some time to get out in the community and sell licenses or issue fines so that people know that this isn't "the jaywalking of animal-related crimes". You won't have to play bad cop forever, but you do want word to get around that not licensing a pet is abnormal and that you take non-compliance seriously.

## Be Positive

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Pet owners like pets. That just makes sense, right? They like them because they are funny, loving and innocent. They are happy distractions from life's concerns. Your organization likes pets too, right? So, celebrate pet ownership, share fun stories, share responsible pet ownership tips, run contests, and invite the community to pet celebration events. The more the community sees that you have a positive view on animal ownership, the more likely they will be to be on your side when asking them to comply with your existing or changing legal requirements.



# DocuPet<sup>®</sup>

A Safe and Happy Home for every pet

**For more information**

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