



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## **Providing a New "Leash" on Life for Pets in Need of Adoption**

Senator Patty Ritchie

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## Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Every year, more than 150,000 animals are brought to local shelters across New York State. While our shelters do an amazing job of spreading the word that these animals need a loving home, the unfortunate, heartbreaking, reality is that many of these animals do not end up finding their forever family. Because of that, we need to do all we can to encourage more people to consider animal adoption from a local shelter or humane society.

As chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I made it a point to help secure \$5 million in the new state budget for the New York State Companion Animal Capital Fund. This support will allow eligible organizations to make important upgrades to their facilities, as well as improve the care of animals residing there. Since 2017, \$10 million in has been invested in this effort to improve shelters statewide.

The program—which is administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets—is open to non-profit and municipal animal shelters, humane societies and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. For more information on applying for these funds, organizations are encouraged to visit the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets website at [www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS](http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS). The deadline for applications is November 7<sup>th</sup>.

A pet owner myself, I know how rewarding it can be—but, I also know that a lot of work goes into caring for an animal. If you are considering adopting a pet, please here are several guidelines you can use to determine if you are ready:

- Make sure you have the financial resources necessary to care for a pet—that includes being able to budget enough money to pay for veterinarian visits, food and other necessities;
- Determine whether you have the time in your schedule to care for a pet. Pets cannot be ignored and require food, water, regular exercise and other types of care every day of the year;
- If you have little ones under the age of six, you may want to consider waiting a few years before you adopt, as younger children typically have a more difficult

time learning how to properly care for and interact with a pet; and

- If you rent, it is important to determine whether your property owner allows pets, and if so, what types. In addition, the size of your home should also complement the type of pet you select.

If you are ready to become a pet owner, I hope you will consider giving pets at local shelters a loving home.