

Pet Trusts and Pet Wills

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Recently, Anne Tergesen of *The Wall Street Journal* reported that [more and more people are making provisions in their wills to provide for pets](#) after they're gone. It's true: according to the [American Pet Products Association](#), as of 2012, 9% of U.S. cat and dog guardians (up from 6% in 2010) had made arrangements in their wills to provide for their pets should anything happen to them.

Unfortunately, however, stipulations made in a will may not be enough. Money left for the care of a pet can't be left to that animal directly; instead, it must be left to a caretaker. In an interview with *WSJ*'s Hank Weisbecker, Tergesen emphasizes that if you leave money to a caregiver for your pet, "there is no legal obligation that caretaker has to either keep your pet or to use the money for the care of your pet." She suggests instead that you should set up a trust, which will legally obligate a caretaker to spend the funds on the wellbeing of your pet. Currently pet trusts are allowed by all but four states.

In the event that anything unexpected were to happen to you, thinking about the safety and security of your loved ones (even the furry ones) is excellent practice. But you should always consult with a lawyer regarding any arrangements you would like to make. The legalities involved in any document will vary from state to state and the last thing you want is an estate argument while your pets suffer from neglect. [Petfinder.com](#) suggests that you also provide your chosen caregiver with copies of your pet's veterinary records.

By having a trust and talking with potential caretakers now you can have the peace of mind that comes with knowing your pet will always be taken care of. That said, hopefully you will both enjoy long and happy lives together.