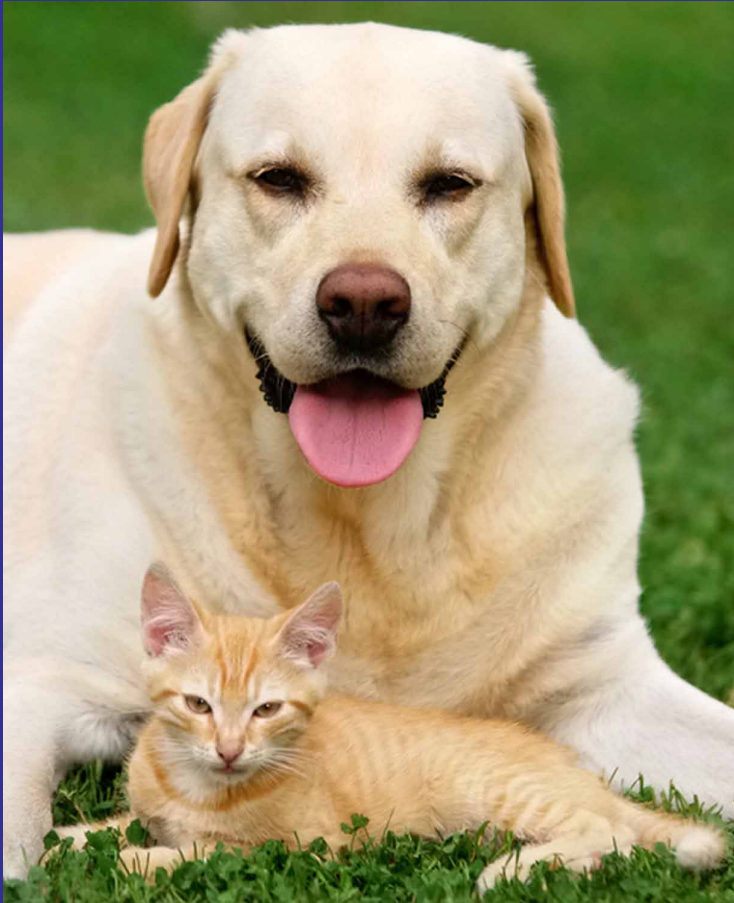


**Get paid to care for pets!**

FabJob Guide to  
**Become a  
Pet Sitter**



JENNIFER JAMES

**Visit [www.FabJob.com](http://www.FabJob.com)**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Why Choose a Pet Sitting Career?

It all starts with a special someone who comes into your life — a four-legged bundle of fur and kisses, a silky, purring lap companion, or perhaps a faithful feathered friend. Suddenly you find yourself head-over-heels in love, and the feeling is mutual. Then as you're rushing home one day to your beloved pet after a hard day at the office, you think to yourself, "What if I could spend every day working with animals instead?"

If this sounds familiar, here's some great news: many people make a career out of visiting, walking and caring for pets, and this dream career is completely within your reach. In addition to the enjoyment of working with beautiful and lovable animals, pet sitting draws people because it requires little or no training, offers a flexible work schedule, and can be done part time. Read on to learn about this relatively new profession that is quickly gaining in popularity.

## 1.1.1 What Pet Sitters Do

Pet sitters are hired to care for pets while their owners are away on vacation, travelling for work, or away from home for any reason. Pet sitters care for people's pets in the pets' own homes, so the pet owner is relieved of the inconvenience of transporting the pet to a boarding facility, and the pet doesn't have to experience the stress and potential exposure to illness of a kennel stay.

In the past, people going away would ask a neighborhood teen, a family member or a trusted friend to check in on their pets while they were gone. While some people still go this route, the busy nature of life today usually means that we don't know our neighbors all that well, our family members are as time-crunched as we are, and our friends are geographically far-flung, and unable to help out. This situation has opened the door of opportunity for today's professional pet sitter.

Pet sitters feed pets, let dogs out or walk them, clean cages or litter, and play with the pets for a while. In addition, pet sitters will often bring in the mail, water plants, and give the home a lived-in look by opening or closing curtains, turning lights on, and so on. This crime-detering facet is an extra benefit to clients of hiring a pet sitter while they are away.

A pet sitting business can be started with very few supplies and equipment, and doesn't require buying a building, paying rent, or modifying your home. It does require a genuine love of pets and in most cases a reliable vehicle. In general, you might enjoy starting a pet-sitting business if you:

- Like animals of all kinds
- Are an organized person
- Have a reasonably flexible schedule
- Don't mind working some weekends or holidays

Your pet sitting business can be whatever you want it to be. You can work full time or part time, and offer anything from basic to luxury service, or even overnight companionship for pets. You can further specialize by choosing only a particular type of pet to work with (cat, dog, horse, fish, etc.), or even a specific breed of pet.

“Although we primarily care for dogs, cats, small animals, reptiles and birds, we have had requests to care for livestock such as horses, cows, and even chickens,” says Paul Mann, who is the founder of Fetch! Pet Care, the largest pet sitting franchise in the United States.

## 1.1.2 A Booming Industry

Lots of people share their lives with pets, and where there are pets, there is a need for pet sitting services. According to the 2010-2011 American Pet Products Association (APPA) National Pet Owners Survey, 62% of U.S. households own a pet, up from 56% in 1988. So in addition to revealing that 72.9 million homes in the U.S. have pets in them, the survey also shows that pet ownership is on the rise.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics offers encouraging predictions for people who want to work with animals for a living. They’ve identified animal care as a growth industry — in fact, they expect it to grow faster than the national average for all occupations through 2014. The BLS research indicates that: “As many pet owners increasingly consider their pet as part of the family, their demand for luxury animal services and willingness to spend greater amounts of money on their pet will continue to grow.”

In addition to more people owning pets, it turns out we’re also spending more on them annually too. The American Pet Products Manufacturers Association estimated Americans’ annual spending on their pets at \$48.35 billion as of 2010. This impressive figure has almost tripled since 1994, when annual spending was estimated at \$17 billion.

Starting a pet sitting business offers unlimited income potential. You can add to your client base until your schedule is full, and then add employees to increase your earning potential. And, you can start right now. Like other service businesses, your start-up costs are minimal compared to most: as little as a few hundred dollars can get you set up with everything you need.

## 1.1.3 Benefits of the Career

There’s good reason why so many people consider pet sitting to be a dream job. This flexible career can be custom-made to fit your lifestyle

or other commitments. Perhaps you are looking for a career that will let you keep your children home with you, or be able to meet them after school. Maybe you are just looking for a bit of extra income. Or maybe you've decided that you should be able to do work that makes you happy. The good news is that a pet sitting business can be all these things and more.

Pet sitting businesses allow you to work from home, scheduling your work around family life or other commitments. In emergencies you may need to respond to clients quickly, and sometimes you'll have busy times that require long days. But a career as a pet sitter definitely offers more flexibility than most.

More than once in this career you'll hear clients tell you that they appreciate your work, that you saved the day, and that they don't know what they would do without you. You will be trusted and appreciated by the pets you care for, and you will see firsthand the difference you make in their lives.

"It's rewarding being able to help ease the often-stressful burden that is created by leaving a pet behind. It's satisfying to know you are creating a valuable service that people and their pets really appreciate. And just being with the animals is very rewarding!" says Zeth Weissman, co-owner of Philadelphia-based pet sitting business PhilaPets.com.

## 1.2 Inside This Guide

The *FabJob Guide to Become a Pet Sitter* is designed to help you launch into your new career by providing industry information, how-to guidelines, helpful hints on finding clients, and general advice on starting your pet sitting business. It will teach you how to take your interest in animals and your talent for earning their affection, and turn them into a profitable business.

Throughout the guide you will find handy samples of registration forms, budget planners, marketing materials and checklists you can adapt and use for your pet sitting business. You'll also find encouragement and ideas from several pet sitting business owners who have kindly shared their advice and experience with you.

They include:

- Danielle Vasta, recipient of the Business of the Year Award from the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS), and owner of Bella's House and Pet Sitting (<http://bellashouseandpets.com>)
- Zeth and Deirdre Weissman, who grew their pet-sitting business, PhilaPet.com, into one of Philadelphia's largest in less than four years ([www.PhilaPet.com](http://www.PhilaPet.com))
- Paul Mann, founder of Fetch! Pet Care, the largest pet sitting franchise in the United States ([www.fetchpetcare.com](http://www.fetchpetcare.com))

The information, resources and advice on these pages will save you hundreds of hours of research, so that you can start earning money more quickly. You'll avoid the common pitfalls, and make business decisions like an expert. Armed with the inside knowledge this guide provides, you could be caring for your first furry, finned or feathered "client" in just a short time from right now.