Goodbye to a Good Friend: An Exploration of the Re-Homing of Cats and Dogs in the U.S.

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Abstract

When dogs and cats are not retained in a home, they are re-homed to somewhere, and while there is a collection of research around relinquishment to shelters, little is known about the general re-homing picture. A cross sectional random digit dial survey was conducted with an aim to learn more about who is re-homing, where they are re-homing and why they are re-homing owned dogs and cats in the US. We found the prevalence of re-homing in five years at 6% making for an estimated 6.12 million household re-homing pets every five years. Pets were most likely to be re-homed by being given to a friend or family member (37%) closely followed by being taken to a shelter. Those who re-homed due to a reason related to the pet as opposed to reasons such as family issues were more likely to re-home to a shelter. For respondents who rented, housing reasons were the number one reason for re-homing, and for respondents of lower income, they were significantly more likely to re-home due to cost and housing issues as opposed to pet related issues. We conclude that some reasons for re-homing are not easily modified and humane re-homing is the best option, but that there are many areas in which intervention and prevention programs may increase retention.

Keywords

1. Introduction

In 2014, the estimated number of dogs in US households was 77.8 million and the estimated number of cats was 85.8 million [1]. Of those dogs and cats, some do not remain in the same household throughout their lifetime—some enter shelters, while others are placed with new owners through other methods. The vast majority of data

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available on dogs and cats leaving their original homes is focused on those relinquished to shelters. This is likely because it is a known place to capture information on those re-homing their animals. Although it is difficult to know the exact number of animals entering shelters nationally, as there is not yet a central national database, it is estimated that the number is about 7.6 million dogs and cats, annually [2]. While data vary based on community makeup and shelter policy, owner relinquished animals likely make up at least one third of those animals entering shelters [2], and there is a growing body of data around the descriptors of those dogs and cats that are relinquished.

Dogs relinquished to shelters tend to be between the ages of 5 months and 2 years [3] and reproductively intact [3] [4]. They tend to be originally obtained from a variety of sources, such as a friend, shelter, or stray, are obtained for low or no cost, and typically owned for less than 1 year [3]. Before being relinquished to a shelter, these dogs are more likely to be housed outside [3] or spend the majority of their day in a crate [5], and it would be unusual for these dogs to be allowed to sleep in the owner's bed [5]. They tend to display undesirable behaviors [6], less likely to go to a veterinarian [4], are often ill or have an injury [7], or have a history of medical and/or behavioral issues [5]. Lastly, intact female dogs appear to be at a higher risk for relinquishment, but there does not seem to be the same strong relationship for intact male dogs [3].

In regards to cats, Patronek *et al.* found reproductively intact cats, cats that were indoor/outdoor or lived exclusively outdoors were at a higher risk for relinquishment [8]. New *et al.* found that cats were at a higher risk for relinquishment when the original source was a friend, pet shop, breeder or animal shelter verses obtained as a gift, from a veterinarian or stranger, or is offspring of a pet already in the home [3]. Most cats that were relinquished were not seen by a veterinarian the year before [3], were not allowed to sleep in the owner's bed [5], and were more likely to have a history of medical and/or behavioral issues [5]. Intact cats of both sexes were at a higher risk for relinquishment [8].

Studies focused on the risks for relinquishment from the perspective of the human have revealed some factors that are often quite complex. One study that interviewed people relinquishing dogs and cats at 12 shelters across the US showed the top reason for relinquishing a cat was personal issues which included allergies, the adopter having personal problems, and a new baby [9]. The top three reasons for relinquishing a dog were lack of time, the adopter having personal problems, and allergies [9].

Recently conducted survey work by Weiss *et al.*, focused on in-depth, one-on-one interviews with those relinquishing large dogs to two municipal shelters: one in Washington DC and the other in New York City. Moving, behavior concerns, lack of pet friendly housing options, and financial concerns were all drivers for relinquishment. This study revealed that in some cases, retention may be as simple as providing the owner with the funds to cover a pet deposit, while in other cases significant behavioral and financial needs likely make retention quite difficult [10].

Recent American Pet Products Association data showed 20% of surveyed dog owners and 28% of surveyed cat owners obtained their pets from friends or family [1], which points to dogs and cats changing hands outside of the shelter environment. We refer to all situations where an owned dog or cat is given to someone else with the intention of providing a new home as re-homing. We use the term relinquishment as it has been in the shelter literature to refer to animals surrendered to a shelter. As little is known about re-homing outside of the shelter context, this study aimed to learn the who, what, and how around animals being re-homed in the US. Specifically, we aimed to learn about the demographics of the people re-homing a pet, the pets they re-homed, their reasons for re-homing, and the ways in which they are re-homed.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Subjects

This study is a cross-sectional telephone survey of past or present US pet owners. A random sample of nationwide residential telephone numbers was obtained from a private survey-sampling firm. Both landlines (82% of numbers) and cell phone numbers (18% of numbers) were included. Subjects were eligible if they were 18 years or older and spoke enough English to participate. One household member was selected based on who had the most recent birthday. If this target respondent was not available at the initial call, subsequent calls were made to the household to try and reach that respondent. Respondents were then screened to include only current or previous dog or cat owners. The full survey was asked of any screened respondent who had re-homed a dog or cat within the past five years. The pet owner was asked to think about the pet most recently re-homed if more than

one had been re-homed within the past 5 years. Respondents who re-homed more than one pet at a time were asked to provide responses for all pets re-homed at the most recent re-homing event. For example, if one cat was re-homed to friend/family and one to someone they didn't previously know, both answers would be included for that respondent. However, which cat was re-homed to which place was not tracked. Therefore, data were recorded at the respondent/household level not the individual pet level and all questions were designed accordingly. Pet owners who had re-homed a dog or cat more than five years prior were excluded from the study to reduce recall bias. Respondents who re-homed dogs and cats at the same re-homing event were also excluded to avoid mixing species specific responses.

Re-homing was defined for the respondent as follows: Sometimes circumstances change and people are unable to keep their pets for various reasons. Other than foster animals or puppies or kittens from your own pets that you sold or gave away, have you ever had to give up a cat or dog to a new home, a shelter or animal rescue organization, or a veterinarian, other than foster animals or puppies or kittens from your own pets?

2.2. Survey

The telephone survey was developed by the authors in conjunction with Edge Research, Inc. All questions were multiple choice with "other" as an option. The survey began with screening questions to assess eligibility. Re-homers who were eligible for the full survey were then asked details about the most recent re-homing event, including the number and species of the pets that were re-homed at that time, the pets' original source and spay/neuter status, where the pets were re-homed, reason for re-homing (primary reason and any contributing reason), the decision-making process leading up to re-homing, and what support services may have helped them to keep the pets. Additional information was collected on respondent demographics and household characteristics (**Appendix 1**).

Respondents were allowed to skip questions they did not want to answer. To qualify for the main analysis of re-homers, however, respondents must have minimally answered questions on where the pets were re-homed and demographic information.

The survey was pilot tested with 82 respondents to assess question clarity, sequence and response rates. These data were used to revise the final survey work.

Our objective was 600 completed re-homing surveys. This would provide a 95% confidence interval on the proportion of re-homed dogs or cats of ±5% if half of the sample was dogs and half cats. To reach 600 dog or cat re-homers, 105,813 phone numbers were randomly selected for the study.

The survey was fielded by interviewers with the American Directions Group, between October 14 and December 23, 2014 during weekday evenings and weekends. Each number was called up to 15 times before being considered a non-response.

2.3. Analysis of Data

The objectives of the data analysis were to describe characteristics of re-homers and the animals that were re-homed, frequency of reasons and methods for re-homing, and to compare characteristics of re-homers and non-re-homers. Information about the pets and people involved in re-homing was summarized using counts, percentages and 95% confidence intervals.

Respondents were asked for the primary reason for re-homing out of 14 answer choices and an "other" category. These 14 primary reasons were then collapsed into five categories: 1) pet related: problematic behaviors, aggressive behaviors, grew larger than expected, health problems owner couldn't handle; 2) family related: personal or family health troubles, allergies to pet, divorce or separation, new person in the household who did not like pet, death in the family, a new baby in the household, lack of time to care for pet; 3) housing related: landlord did not allow pets, didn't have enough space for pet; 4) resource related: could not afford the costs involved in having a pet; and 5) other. This collapsed variable was use throughout the manuscript unless otherwise specified. Respondents were also asked if any of the 14 choices other than the primary reason were part of the reason they re-homed their pet.

The question about the reason for re-homing included an "other" category and those were recorded verbatim. They were recoded into existing categories when appropriate. Any themes in the "other" category that were not captured in the existing answer choices were explored and added if appropriate.

The response choices for the source of the pets given up most recently was collapsed slightly based on sample size in each response. Similarly marital status, number of people living in the home, and employment were also collapsed as needed. The type of housing was collapsed to just rented or owned. Hispanic/Spanish speaking was combined with race to create a variable (ethnicity) with white non-Hispanic, black non-Hispanic, other and prefer not to say as categories. Income was collapsed to ≤$50,000 and >$50,000. Zip code was converted to state of residence and collapsed into US Census regions [11] for analysis.

Available data on non-re-homers was compared to those who did re-home (age of respondent, current or past pet ownership, type of phone (landline or cell) and region. Among re-homers, we tested the associations between species of pet and pet characteristics, owner characteristics, and details of the re-homing process. We also assessed pre-planned comparisons between those who re-homed some vs. all of their pets (among those with more than one pet). Services that might have helped the owners keep the pet were summarized for respondents with income ≤ $50,000. All analyses used the chi-square test unless any expected value was less than 5 when Fisher exact test was used. Missing data was excluded from statistical analysis. $p < 0.05$ was considered to be significant.

3. Results

Out of 105,815 phone numbers, 2482 were blocked or on do not call list, 1333 respondents did not speak enough English to participate, 13,079 were disconnected, bad or non-residential leaving 88,919 usable numbers. There were 9668 refusals (of 88,919, 11%), 48,593 where the chosen respondent was not available (55%), 18413 with answering machine, no answer, busy (21%), and 12,245 (14%) reached and screened for eligibility.

There were five respondents who re-homed dogs and cats at the same time. To avoid confusion about species specific responses, these 5 respondents were excluded from further analysis, yielding 590 re-homers and 11,655 non-re-homers eligible for main analyses (**Figure 1**).

Those who re-homed an animal were significantly younger than those who did not ($p < 0.001$) with 21% who were 18 - 39 years old (vs. 9% for non-re-homers) and 21% who were ≥50 years old (vs. 32% for non-re-homers). Similarly, the re-homers were more likely to be reached by cell phone (14% cell vs 6% landlines, $p < 0.001$). Re-homers and non-re-homers were contacted in all regions.

3.1. Characteristics of Re-Homed Animals and Households

There were 391 respondents who re-homed one or more dog(s) and 199 respondents who re-homed one or more
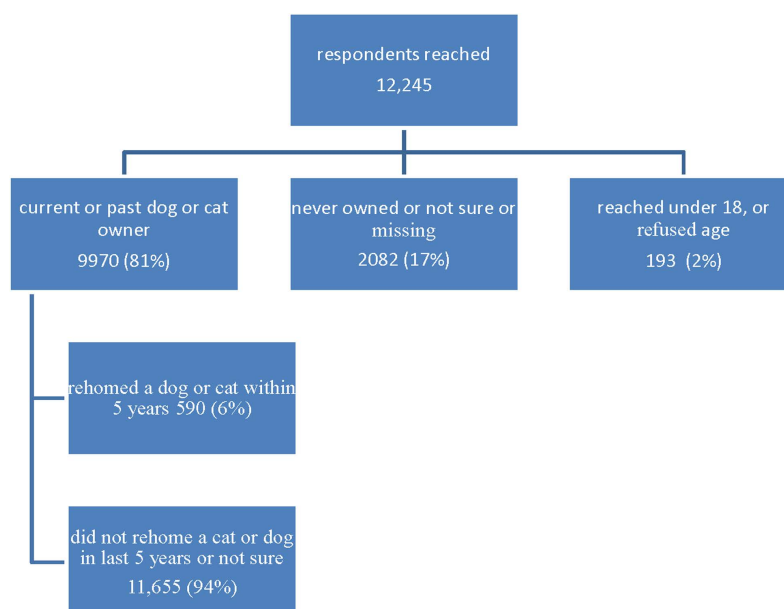

Figure 1. Breakdown of respondents who did or did not own pets and did or did not re-home them in the past 5 years.

cat(s) during the most recent re-homing event for their household. **Table 1** shows the characteristics of dog and cat re-homers by animal and owner characteristics. The re-homed animals were most commonly all spayed/ neutered (58%, 95% CI 54% - 62%) and were acquired free from a friend/relative/neighbor (28%, 95% CI 25% - 32%).

Re-homed dogs and cats were similar in terms of proportion spayed/neutered. Respondents who re-homed cats were more likely to still have other cats than dogs retained in the home. Cats were more likely than dogs to have been acquired as strays and less likely as purchases or gifts. There were no significant differences between human demographics variables and species re-homed except that households that re-homed cats were less likely to have children under 18-year-old than those who re-homed a dog.

3.2. What Might Have Helped Pet Retention

Services that might have helped pet retention were examined for the lower income category since the services listed were all described as free or low cost. The service that was selected most commonly as something that might have helped respondents was free or low cost veterinary care (40%). Other service options were free or low cost training or behavior help (34%, more common for dog owners), access to pet friendly housing (33%), free or low cost spay/neuter services (30%), free or low cost pet food (30%), free or low cost temporary pet care or boarding (30%) and assistance in paying pet deposits (17%).

3.3. Where Pets Were Re-Homed

Pets were most likely to be re-homed by being given to a friend or family member (37%) closely followed by being taken to a shelter (36%, **Table 1**). Being taken to a veterinarian (14%), given to someone not previously known (stranger, 11%) and set free (1%) were less likely re-homing options. When dogs and cats were compared by where they were re-homed, cats were more likely to have been re-homed through a veterinarian and less likely to a friend or family member (p = 0.02). Among re-homers with more than one pet, there were no significant differences between those who re-homed only some of their pets and those re-homed all of their pets in terms of where the pet was re-homed (p = 0.1 for cat and p = 0.2 for dogs).

When respondents re-homed to friends or family, 42% also considered re-homing to the shelter. When respondents re-homed to the shelter, 18% also considered re-homing to a stranger.

For respondents who did not re-home to a shelter, they were asked if they had contacted a shelter prior to re-homing. Only 36 dog re-homers (14%) and 18 cat re-homers (18%) had contacted a shelter prior to re-homing.

Where the animal was re-homed was associated with respondent age (p = 0.006) and homeowner status (p = 0.001) but not income (p = 0.4). Those who were 18 - 29 years old were more likely than other age groups to re-home to friends/family (48% vs. 37% overall), to strangers (15% vs. 11% overall) or by setting the pet free (3% vs. 1% overall) This same age group was less likely to re-home to shelters (24% vs. 36% overall) or veterinarians (7% vs. 14% overall). Re-homing to friends/family (47%) or setting the pet free (3%) was more likely for renters.

3.4. Reasons for Re-Homing

There were 10 respondents who indicated they re-homed due to too many pets and 18 respondents who were moving. These responses were included in "pet problem" and "housing problem" in the collapsed categories for re-homing, respectively.

Overall, the most common primary reasons for re-homing were pet problem (46%), family problem (27%) and housing problem (18%). The most common individual pet-related reasons were aggression (35%), destruction (29%) and health problems (26%). The most common individual family related reasons were family health troubles (44%) and allergies (24%). The most common housing related reasons were landlord (43%) and not enough space (39%).

There were no differences between dogs and cats for the primary reason they were re-homed (p = 0.2, **Table 1**). Respondent 18 - 29 years old were more likely than others to re-home for housing and less likely than others to re-home for family or pet problems (p < 0.001, **Table 2**). Those 65 and over were more likely than others to re-home for other reasons and less likely for housing problems. Respondents with income ≤ $50,000 were more likely than others to re-home due to cost or housing and less likely than others due to pet related problems. We

Table 1. Characteristics of re-homed animals and their households, by species.

Pet or owner characteristics*	Total Number	Dog re-homers N = 391			Cat re-homers N = 199			P-Value
		Number	Column Percentage	95% CI	Number	Column Percentage	95% CI	
Pet Characteristics								
Were the pets you re-homed, s/n?								0.2
Yes, all were spayed	331	214	56%	51 - 61	117	62%	55 - 69	
Yes, some or none were spayed	238	167	44%	39 - 49	71	38%	31 - 45	
What type of pet left in the home (328 still had pets left)								0.004
Dog	133	94	47%	41 - 54	39	33%	25 - 42	
Cat	98	51	26%	20 - 32	47	40%	31 - 49	
dogs and cats	70	40	20%	15 - 26	30	25%	18 - 34	
all other combinations	15	13	7%	4 - 11	2	2%	0.4 - 7	
Where did you get the pet you re-homed?								<0.001
It was given to you free from friend/relative/neighbor	162	107	28%	24 - 33	55	29%	23 - 36	
You adopted it from a rescue/shelter	103	67	18%	14 - 22	36	19%	14 - 25	
You took it in as a stray	88	41	11%	8 - 14	47	25%	19 - 34	
You purchased it from a breeder, not on internet	55	51	13%	10 - 17	4	2%	0.8 - 6	
You purchased it through an online listing	46	39	10%	8 - 14	7	4%	2 - 8	
It was given to you as a gift	37	33	9%	6 - 12	4	2%	0.8 - 6	
You purchased from a pet store	23	17	4%	3 - 7	6	3%	1 - 7	
Some other way	57	27	7%	5 - 10	30	16%	11 - 22	
Why did you re-home (primary categorized reason)								0.2
Pet problem	250	171	47%	42 - 52	79	42%	35 - 49	
Family problem	150	100	28%	23 - 32	50	26%	20 - 33	
Housing problem	100	65	18%	14 - 22	35	19%	13 - 25	
Cost problem	30	17	5%	3 - 7	13	7%	4 - 11	
Other	18	8	2%	1 - 4	10	5%	3 - 10	
Where did you re-home?								0.02
Friend/family	221	161	41%	36 - 46	60	30%	24 - 37	
Stranger	62	45	12%	9 - 15	17	9%	5 - 13	
Shelter	210	131	34%	29 - 38	79	40%	33 - 47	
Veterinarian	80	43	11%	8 - 15	37	19%	14 - 25	
set free	6	3	1%	0.2 - 2	3	2%	0.5 - 5	
Other	11	8	2%	1 - 4	3	2%	0.5 - 5	
Owner Characteristics								
Gender of respondent								0.5
Female	347	236	62%	57 - 67	111	59%	52 - 66	
Male	222	145	38%	33 - 43	77	41%	34 - 48	
Age of respondent								0.04
18 - 29	124	94	25%	21 - 28	30	15%	11 - 21	

Continued

	N	%		N	%		p
30 - 39	86	16%	13 - 20	25	13%	9 - 18	
40 - 49	69	11%	8 - 14	27	14%	10 - 19	
50 - 64	176	28%	23 - 32	70	36%	29 - 43	
65+	123	21%	17 - 25	44	22%	17 - 29	0.3
Marital status							
Married	344	62%	57 - 67	116	63%	56 - 70	
Single	116	23%	19 - 28	33	18%	13 - 24	
Separated, divorced, widowed	90	15%	12 - 19	35	19%	14 - 25	0.02
Do you have children under age 18 in the household?							
Yes	211	41%	36 - 46	57	31%	25 - 38	
No	346	59%	54 - 64	128	69%	62 - 75	0.5
Number in household including self							
1	89	15%	11 - 18	34	18%	13 - 24	
2	169	29%	24 - 34	60	31%	25 - 38	
3	108	19%	15 - 23	37	19%	14 - 25	
4	85	16%	13 - 20	25	13%	9 - 18	
5	63	12%	9 - 16	16	8%	5 - 13	
6 or more	58	10%	7 - 13	22	11%	8 - 17	0.07
Ethnicity, self-reported							
White/non Latino	408	74%	70 - 79	147	83%	77 - 88	
Black/non Latino	62	13%	9 - 16	18	10%	6 - 16	
Latino	29	7%	5 - 10	4	2%	0.6 - 6	
Other	29	6%	4 - 9	8	5%	2 - 9	0.4
Employment type							
Employed full-time	236	43%	38 - 49	78	42%	35 - 49	
Employed part-time	51	10%	7 - 14	14	8%	4 - 12	
Retired	131	22%	18 - 27	50	27%	21 - 34	
Homemaker	54	10%	7 - 13	18	10%	6 - 15	
Not employed	47	10%	7 - 13	12	6%	4 - 11	
Disabled	31	5%	3 - 7	14	8%	4 - 12	0.3
Income category							
≤$50,000	240	50%	45 - 56	76	45%	37 - 53	
>$50,000	259	50%	44 - 55	93	55%	47 - 62	0.1
Rental or owned house/apartment							
Own	412	75%	70 - 79	142	82%	75 - 87	
Rent	121	25%	21 - 30	32	18%	13 - 25	0.9
Which describes where you live?							
An urban area or city	149	27%	23 - 32	51	28%	22 - 35	
Rural	146	27%	23 - 32	48	26%	20 - 32	
Suburban	144	26%	22 - 31	49	27%	21 - 34	
Small town	107	20%	16 - 25	34	19%	14 - 25	

*Each variable was missing some observations: were re-homed pets s/n 21, type of pet left in home 12, source of pet 19, why re=homed 38, respondent gender 21, age 12, marital status 40, children under 18 33, number in household 18, ethnicity 62, employment type 40, income category 91, rent or not 57, area live in 44.

Table 2. Primary categorized reasons for re-homing dogs and cats by respondent and household characteristics.

Respondent or household characteristics*	Total N = 552	Pet Problems N = 250		Family Problems N = 150		Housing Problems N = 100		Cost Problems N = 30		Other Problems N = 18		P-value (excluded missing)
	Number	Number	Row Percentage	Number	Row Percentage	Number	Row Percentage	Number	Row Percentage	Number	Row Percentage	
Where re-homed												<0.001
Friend/family	205	60	30%	72	35%	60	30%	6	3%	7	3%	
shelter	200	111	56%	41	21%	24	12%	17	9%	7	4%	
veterinarian	73	52	71%	15	21%	1	1%	3	4%	2	3%	
stranger	58	21	36%	20	34%	13	22%	3	5%	1	2%	
set free	6	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	
Other	10	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	
Gender of respondent												0.3
Male	203	97	48%	50	25%	34	17%	16	8%	6	3%	
Female	328	146	45%	95	29%	64	20%	13	4%	10	3%	
Age of respondent												<0.001
18 - 29	118	43	36%	24	20%	42	36%	8	7%	1	1%	
30 - 39	81	35	43%	23	28%	14	17%	7	9%	2	2%	
40 - 49	64	31	48%	16	25%	12	19%	2	3%	3	5%	
50 - 64	163	80	49%	46	28%	23	14%	10	6%	4	2%	
65+	110	53	48%	38	35%	9	8%	3	3%	7	6%	
Race/Ethnicity												0.06
White/non Latino	386	187	48%	100	26%	69	18%	16	4%	14	4%	
Black/non Latino	57	17	30%	21	37%	14	25%	5	9%	0	0%	
Latino	28	12	43%	4	14%	8	29%	4	14%	0	0%	
Other	26	14	54%	6	23%	4	15%	1	4%	1	4%	
Income Category												<0.001
>$50,000	240	129	54%	65	27%	35	15%	2	1%	9	4%	
≤$50,000	227	86	38%	58	26%	54	24%	23	10%	6	3%	
Marital status												<0.001
Married	320	166	52%	78	24%	48	15%	16	5%	12	4%	
Single	109	36	33%	27	25%	36	33%	9	8%	1	1%	
Separated	87	34	39%	34	39%	14	16%	2	2%	3	3%	

Continued

	Total	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	p-value
Do you have children under age 18 in the household?												0.046
Yes	196	91	46%	42	21%	47	24%	11	37%	5	3%	
No	327	148	45%	101	31%	51	16%	16	53%	11	3%	
Number in household including self												0.02
1	85	29	34%	36	42%	14	16%	3	10%	3	4%	
2	159	76	48%	45	28%	29	18%	3	10%	6	4%	
3	104	47	45%	26	25%	22	21%	7	23%	2	2%	
4	79	36	46%	21	27%	16	20%	6	20%	0	0%	
5	60	33	55%	10	17%	12	20%	4	13%	1	2%	
6 or more in household	48	22	46%	10	21%	6	13%	5	17%	5	10%	
Rental or owned house/apartment												<0.001
Own	391	199	51%	115	29%	44	11%	20	5%	13	3%	
Rent	113	36	32%	21	19%	49	43%	4	3%	3	3%	
Which describes where you live?												0.01
An urban area or city	140	54	39%	32	23%	42	30%	7	23%	5	4%	
Suburban	138	71	51%	34	25%	23	17%	7	23%	3	2%	
Small town	101	42	42%	36	36%	16	16%	5	17%	2	2%	
Rural	134	69	51%	36	27%	16	12%	7	23%	6	4%	
Employment												0.02
Employed full-time	219	104	47%	49	22%	47	21%	13	43%	6	3%	
Employed part-time	47	25	53%	10	21%	10	21%	2	7%	0	0%	
Homemaker	52	28	54%	9	17%	11	21%	2	7%	2	4%	
Retired	124	57	46%	45	36%	12	10%	3	10%	7	6%	
Disabled	29	10	34%	9	31%	8	28%	2	7%	0	0%	
Not employed	46	14	30%	17	37%	10	22%	5	17%	0	0%	
Re-homed all or some pets												<0.001
Re-homed all pets	43	8	19%	23	54%	10	23%	2	5%	0	0%	
re-homed some pets	314	174	55%	61	19%	43	14%	23	7%	13	4%	

*Gender was missing an additional 21 responses, age an additional 21 responses, age an additional 12, ethnicity 55, income category 81, marital status 36, children under 18 an additional 21, number in household 13, rent 48, area live 21, employment 35. In comparing the primary collapsed reasons for re-homing with the original individual primary reasons to look for patterns, responses for family problems also had the individual primary reason of lack of time and "other" contributing. Housing and pet problems as collapsed reasons also included some "other reasons" from the original individual reasons.

also found re-homing reason was significantly associated with ethnicity, marital status, presence of children in household, number of household members, rent/own status, employment status, and urban location

We found a significant association between where the respondent re-homed the pet and the primary reason for re-homing (**Table 2**, p < 0.001). When pets were re-homed to friend/family, family and housing problems were most common and cost and pet problems, least common. When pets were re-homed to the shelter, the opposite pattern was seen with cost and pet problems most common and family and housing least common. When pets were re-homed to veterinarians, pet problems were most common and housing least. Pets who were set free were more likely to have "other" reasons for re-homing. In examining the responses that included any contributing reason for re-homing and comparing them to the collapsed primary reason for re-homing, two patterns were seen. The first was that more than 70% of the individual reasons clustered within one collapsed category. For example, when personal or family health troubles was one of the reasons for re-homing, 71% of respondents only gave other family related reasons. This was also true for divorce/separation, allergic to pet, landlord did not allow pets (76% in housing), behavior problems (76% in pet problems), aggression (82% in pet related), pet health problems (83% in pet problems). However, the other seven individual possible reasons were more spread out, suggestion that these pets may have been re-homed in a more complex, and multi-factorial situation.

3.5. Re-Homing Some or All Pets

Among respondents who had multiple animals in the household during their most recent re-homing event, 12% re-homed all the animals in the household and 88% re-homed only some of the animals. There was no association between age and re-homing all or some pets (p = 0.5). Dog owners were more likely to have re-homed all their dogs if the income was ≤$50,000 compared to if the income was >$50,000 (18% and 6%, respectively, p = 0.008). Among cat owners, there was no different in re-homing all or some for cats by income (p = 0.1). Renters were more likely to have re-homed all their dogs (45% all vs 18% overall p = 0.001) or all their cats (44% all vs 15% overall, p = 0.001). There were no differences when comparing where the pet was re-homed by whether or not some pets were kept for dogs (p = 0.2) or cats (p = 0.1).

Re-homing all the pets or only some of the pets was significantly associated with why the pet was re-homed (p < 0.001, **Table 2**).

4. Discussion

This study aimed to increase the available information relevant to the re-homing of dogs and cats in the US. Specifically, we aimed to learn about the demographics of the people and the pets they re-homed, their reasons for re-homing, and the ways in which they re-homed.

While, due to resource restraints, we did not focus many of our survey questions on those that have not re-homed their pets, it was of interest that we found differences between the groups. Those who re-homed an animal were significantly younger than those did not. This finding supports other research that found those that did not retain a shelter pet were younger than those that did [5].

One of the most basic but informative points was to learn the percentage of those who either currently have a pet or had a pet recently who also had re-homed a pet in the past 5 years. In our sample the rate of re-homing was 6%. Ninety four percent of those who fit the pet owning criteria had not re-homed a pet. With the most recent American Pet Products Association estimates of households with dogs and cats in the US at 102 million and with 6% of them re-homing pets in 5 years [1], this would put an estimate of the number of households in the US re-homing pets every 5 years at 6.12 million households.

Of particular interest is where dogs and cats are being re-homed. As much of the research regarding retention of pets has focused on the shelter population [3]-[5] [12], gaining an understanding as to where pets move when re-homed provides new insight regarding the incidence of pet homelessness as well as the potential opportunities for re-homing to occur without an animal becoming temporarily (or permanently) homeless. Combining dogs and cats, people were most likely to re-home their pet to a friend or family member (37%) followed by relinquishment to a shelter (36%). When exploring the differences between dogs and cats, we found that re-homing to a friend or family member was the most likely way to re-home for canines (41%), and the second likely way to be re-homed for felines (30%). The most common place for re-homing of felines was to shelters at 40% of re-homed felines reported to be relinquished to shelters.

We explored other re-homing options that people considered and found some interesting patterns. Forty two

percent of respondents who re-homed to friends and family also considered a shelter for re-homing, and 18% of those who re-homed to a shelter considered re-homing to someone they did not know. We hypothesize one of the drivers for shelter relinquishment may be lack of ready access to other options for re-homing.

When we explored where those in our sample who re-homed their pets obtained their pets, we find for cats that 28% were obtained from friends/family, followed closely by taking in a stray (24%) and shelters at 18%. The most recent American Pet Products Association data reflects a similar trend in acquisition for cats with shelters, friends/relatives and strays being the top three sources for acquisition [1]. Dogs too were most likely to be obtained from a friend/relative/neighbor (27%), followed by those who obtained their dog from a breeder or purchased the dog through an online listing (23%), followed by shelters (17%). Similarly, American Pet Products Association data is in agreement [1] for dogs with the top three being sources being breeders, shelter/rescues and friend/relative.

It is interesting to note that the percentage of altered pets in the sample was lower than what might be expected in the general pet population of 90% for cats and 86% for dogs [1], with just 56% of all dogs re-homed being altered and 62% of cats. Research focused on shelter relinquishment note that relinquished animals are less likely to be altered than other pets [3], and these data may further support a potential link between retention and alter status.

We explored the difference in reasons for re-homing by where respondents re-homed to uncover any patterns. Those that re-homed their pets because of a cost problem were more likely to relinquish to a shelter than any other place. We found that pets re-homed for issues regarding family (new baby for example) or housing problems were more likely to be re-homed with friends or family than any other place, and if multiple pets were present, they were more likely to all be re-homed at once. Most interesting is the finding that pets re-homed due to an issue regarding him/herself were most likely to be relinquished to a shelter. When we looked further into those pet related issues, we found that pets displaying aggression were driving the significance, with pets showing other problematic behavior or health or size challenges not significant. When we asked respondents "besides the option you chose for re-homing, what other option did you consider", only 14% responded that they considered a shelter. It may be that those confronted with aggression issues chose the shelter not because they couldn't find another option, but that they chose to not find another option.

One of the most powerful findings in the study was the differences in reasons for re-homing for those with an income below $50,000 and those with an income above. Those with income below that threshold were significantly more likely to re-home due to cost and housing issues as opposed to pet related issues, and were more likely to re-home all pets in the household at once. We hypothesize that this may be because financially related risks to retention can be more easily absorbed by those with higher incomes. When we probed regarding options that may have helped retention, affordable veterinary care, pet friendly housing free or low cost food and boarding were reported by at least 30%. A recent study (in review) found that in a population of people with pets living in poverty, high stress in the household increased the likelihood that a person would need to relinquish. When these relinquishers were given access to solutions, medical care for example, they reported they would prefer the solution as opposed to re-homing. Poverty in and of itself is not a driver, but it appears that lack of access to affordable options for pet care and retention is. By increasing access to these options, we can likely increase retention.

The inverse of the income finding is that those with higher incomes are more likely to re-home for pet related problems (such as behavior or pets not getting along). We hypothesize that this is due to the fact that the cost related problems are more easily absorbed by this population.

It is also very important to note that for those that rented, housing problems were the number one reason for re-homing. Lack of affordable, accessible pet friendly housing has been shown to be a driver for relinquishment [10], and this study highlights if one needs to rent, the risk for a need to re-home is high simply because there are not options available where the person needs to live. With more people living with pets [1], access to affordable pet friendly housing is likely one of the most important solutions to decreasing dog and cat homelessness.

American Pet Products Association's estimate of 102 million pet owning households [1], an estimated 1.2 million households set free dogs and cats every five years. We found in a previous study that most people who lose their pet recover their pet and that the number of stray animals estimated to enter shelters far exceeds the number of lost dogs and cats that have people looking for them [13]. This data set hints at the population of pets that are truly abandoned and have no one looking to find them. While re-homing is occurring for just a small

fraction of the pet owning population, the number of animals that end up homeless in the process (by landing at a shelter, veterinarian, or being set free) is quite considerable. Many of the reasons for re-homing reported in this study were reasons that may be easily resolved through affordable, accessible avenues for veterinary care, housing and supplies. Knowing that some that relinquish to shelters report they would retain their pet if they could access help [10] (in review), this data points to the opportunity to explore programs and processes that reach pet owners both at the time of re-homing, but also ideally before that time to best avert the need for re-homing and increase retention.

This study was subject to several limitations, many of which are common to telephone surveys that collect data retrospectively. We experience a relatively high number of telephone numbers for which we were unable to make contact, even with multiple attempts per number, and we have no data to serve as a basis for estimating how those not contacted might differ in terms of their experiences re-homing pets. Given the 5-year look back period, it is possible that some respondents were not able to accurately recall the reasons for re-homing. Also, some respondents may have been more likely to report socially acceptable reasons for re-homing (such as "allergies") and less likely to report those that might appear less acceptable (such as "new person in the household did not like pet"). The concept of re-homing was difficult for some respondents to understand and there was initial confusion for some of these respondents. Because the survey was not designed to collect data on each individual animal that was re-homed together, we excluded data on respondents who re-homed both dogs and cats at the same time (N = 5). This small number of excluded respondents, however, would not have impacted the overall conclusions.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1

ASPCA PET RELINQUISHMENT STUDY
SURVEY

Good afternoon/evening. My name is_____, and I'm calling from the National Opinion Research Center, and we are conducting a brief survey about pets. We are not selling anything, and I promise I will not ask you for a contribution or donation.

May I please speak to the person in your household, 18 or older, who celebrated a birthday most recently? Would that be you?

REPEAT INTRO AS NEEDED IF A NEW PERSON GETS ON THE PHONE. IF NO ONE 18 OR OLDER IS AVAILABLE, ASK FOR A GOOD TIME TO CALL BACK.

1. First, just to make sure we have a representative sample, what is your age? **CODE BELOW**

   1 Under 18 **TERMINATE**
   2 18 - 29
   3 30 - 39
   4 40 - 49
   5 50 - 64
   6 65+
   7 Prefer not to say

2. **IF Q1 = 7 (PREFER NOT TO SAY):** Ok, can you please confirm that you're at least 18 years or older?

   1 Yes
   2 No **TERMINATE**
   3 Prefer not to say **TERMINATE**

REPEAT INTRO AS NEEDED IF A NEW PERSON GETS ON THE PHONE. IF NO ONE 18 OR OLDER IS AVAILABLE, ASK FOR A GOOD TIME TO CALL BACK.

3. Do you currently have or have you ever had a dog or cat as a pet in your household?

   1 Yes, currently have a dog or cat
   2 Yes, had a dog or cat in the past but do not have one currently
   3 No, have never had a dog or a cat **TERMINATE**
   4 Not sure **TERMINATE**

4. Sometimes circumstances change and people are unable to keep their pets for various reasons. *Other than foster animals or puppies or kittens from your own pets that you sold or gave away*, have you ever had to give up a cat or dog to a new home, a shelter or animal rescue organization, or a veterinarian?

   1 Yes
   2 No **TERMINATE**
   3 Not sure **TERMINATE**

5. When was the last time you had to give up a cat or a dog?

   READ LIST
   1 In the last year
   2 1-3 years ago
   3 3-5 years ago
   4 More than 5 years ago **TERMINATE**
   5 Not sure **TERMINATE**

If you have had to give up more than one pet in the past, please think about the **dog or cat** you had to give up most recently as you answer the remaining questions.

6. Thinking about the pet you had to give up most recently, was it a dog or a cat?

    1   Dog(s)
    2   Cat(s)
    3   **(volunteered)** Both at the same time

7. How many pets did you give up at that time? **NUMERIC. MIN 0, MAX 99.**

8. Thinking about the most recent time you had to give up a pet, did you keep *other* pets or were there no other pets left in the household?

    1   Kept other pets
    2   No pets left in the household
    3   **(volunteered)** Not sure

9. Thinking of the pet you had to give up most recently, which of the following options did you choose? I will read you a list. **ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES. MAX RESPONSES = ANSWER TO Q7.**

    READ AND RANDOMIZE 1-5
    1   Gave the pet to a friend or family member
    2   Gave the pet to someone you didn't previously know
    3   Took the pet to a shelter or rescue organization
    4   Gave the pet to a veterinarian or other pet care professional
    5   Set the pet free to be found by someone else
    6   **ALWAYS ASK LAST:** Some other way

10. Besides the option(s) you ultimately chose, what OTHER options did you CONSIDER when you had to give up your pet. I will read you the list again and you can choose as many as you considered. **ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES.**

    READ AND RANDOMIZE 1-5, SHOW ONLY THOSE <u>NOT</u> SELETED IN PREVIOUS (Q9)
    1   Gave the pet to a friend or family member
    2   Gave the pet to someone you didn't previously know
    3   Took the pet to a shelter or rescue organization
    4   Gave the pet to a veterinarian or other pet care professional
    5   Set the pet free to be found by someone else
    6   **ALWAYS ASK LAST:** Some other way

11. Here are some things other people have mentioned as criteria when they are looking for someone else to care for a pet that they have to give up. For each, tell me how important that is to you on a scale from 1 to 5, where a 5 means extremely important and a 1 means not important at all.

    PROMPT AS NEEDED: How important is that to you on a scale from 1 to 5, where a 5 means extremely important and a 1 means not important at all?
    5   Extremely important
    4
    3
    2
    1 Not important at all
    1   **VOL:** Not sure

    RANDOMIZE
    a. Finding someone who you know well to care for your pet

b. Finding someone who is known for providing good care to pets
c. Finding a new home for the pet quickly and easily
d. Finding someone who will pay money to have your pet
e. Making sure your pet will not be put to sleep or euthanized unnecessarily
f. Finding someone with other pets to keep your pet company
g. Finding someone with the financial means to care for your pet now and in the future
h. Having someone else screen and choose a new owner for your pet
i. Finding

12. **IF DID NOT RELINQUISH TO SHELTER/RESCUE ORG (Q10≠3):** At any point, did you talk to someone at shelter or rescue organization about your decision to find someone new to care for your pet?

1 Yes
2 No
3 Not sure

13. Here are some reasons that other people have given for why they had to give up a pet. Thinking about the dog or cat you had to give up most recently, which of the following reasons were part of why you decided to give up that pet? I will read you the list and you can tell me yes or no for each.

PROMPT AS NEEDED: Was that one of the reasons that you decided to give up your pet?
1 Yes
2 No
3 Not sure
RANDOMIZE A-M
a. Personal or family health troubles
b. Could not afford the costs involved in having a pet
c. Divorce or separation from a spouse
d. A new person who joined the household did not like or get along with the pet
e. A death in the family
f. Arrival of a new baby in the household
g. Lack of time to care for or spend with the pet
h. You or another member of the household was allergic to the pet
i. Landlord did not allow pets
j. Didn't have enough space for the pet
k. Pet had problematic behavior like destruction of your home or furnishings or was too loud
l. Pet displayed aggressive behavior toward people or other pets
m. Pet grew larger than expected
n. Pet had health problems you were unable to handle
j. Some other reason (please specify: _____)

14. **IF YES TO MORE THAN ONE ABOVE (Q13):** And which of the following would you say was the *main* reason why you had to give up your pet?

IF THEY ONLY SAID "YES" TO ONE ABOVE, PROGRAM TO RECORD THAT ANSWER HERE. RANDOMIZE 1-13; SHOW ITEMS FOR WHICH THEY SAID YES ABOVE (Q13a-n) = 1.
1 Personal or family health troubles
2 Could not afford the costs involved in having a pet
3 Divorce or separation from a spouse
4 A death in the family
5 Arrival of a new baby in the household
6 Lack of time to care for or spend with the pet
7 You or another member of the household was allergic to the pet
8 A new person who joined the household did not like or get along with the pet

9 Landlord did not allow pets

10 Didn't have enough space for the pet

11 Pet had problematic behavior like destruction of your home or furnishings or was too loud

12 Pet displayed aggressive behavior toward people or other pets

13 Pet grew larger than expected

14 Pet had health problems you were unable to handle

15 Some other reason

FAMILY HEALTH FOLLOW-UP
ASK Q15 IF Q13a = 1.

15. You mentioned that one reason for giving up your pet was personal or family health troubles. Was that health situation short-term, long-term, or permanent?

1 Short-term

2 Long-term

3 Permanent

4 VOL: Not sure/Prefer not to say

END FAMILY HEALTH FOLLOW-UP
COST FOLLOW-UP
ASK Q16-18 IF Q13b = 1.

16. You mentioned that cost was a factor in giving up your pet. Which of the following costs were part of the problem? I will read you a list and you can select whichever ones apply.

READ AND RANDOMIZE
1 General cost of pet care and supplies

2 Cost of pet food

3 Veterinary care costs for an injury or illness

4 Veterinary costs due to your pet's aging

5 **VOL:** None of these

17. Was this problem with costs caused by a temporary situation or some kind of permanent change that affected you or your pet?

1 Temporary

2 Permanent

3 **VOL:** Not sure/ Prefer not to say

18. What caused this concern about costs? Was it…

READ AND ROTATE
1 An increase in the cost of caring for your pet

OR

2 A change in your personal financial situation

3 **VOL:** Both

4 **VOL:** Neither/not sure

END COST FOLLOW-UP

LANDLORD FOLLOW-UP

ASK Q19-21 IF Q13h = 1.

19. You mentioned that your landlord didn't allow pets. Was this ban on pets at your existing home or did you move to a new home where pets were not allowed?

READ AND RANDOMIZE
1 Existing home
2 Moved to a new home
3 **VOL:** Neither/not sure

20. **IF EXISTING HOME (Q19 = 1):** Was the ban on pets a new rule or change your landlord implemented or an old rule that you had previously ignored?

   1 New or changed rule
   2 Old rule you had ignored
   3 VOL: Neither/not sure

21. **IF MOVED (Q19 = 2):** Which of the following BEST describes how you moved to a new home that didn't allow pets?

   READ AND RANDOMIZE 1-3
   1 You were not aware of the ban on pets when you chose the new home
   2 You were unable to find another home that fit your needs and budget that did allow pets
   3 You were willing to give up your pet or pets, if necessary, to move to a new home
   4 **VOL:** None of the above/not sure
   END LANDLORD FOLLOW-UP

PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR FOLLOW-UP
ASK Q22-Q23 IF Q13j = 1.
22. You mentioned that problematic behavior was a factor in deciding to give up your pet. What was that problematic behavior? **PROBE FOR SPECIFICS. OPEN END; RECORD VERBATIM.**

23. How long did that behavior go on before you decided to find someone else to care for your pet?

   READ LIST
   1 A month or less
   2 More than a month but less than 6 months
   3 More than 6 months
   4 **VOL:** Not sure
END PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR FOLLOW-UP.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR FOLLOW-UP
ASK Q24-26 IF Q13k = 1.
24. You mentioned that your pet displayed aggressive behavior. Toward which of the following was that aggressive behavior directed? I will read you a list and you can tell me which ones apply.

   READ LIST AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.
   1 People in your household
   2 Other pets in your household
   3 People in your neighborhood
   4 Other pets or animals in your neighborhood
   5 **VOL:** None of these

25. Which of the following were included in the aggressive behaviors displayed by your pet?

   READ LIST AND RANDOMIZE
   1 Noises like growling or hissing
   2 Clawing or scratching
   3 Biting

4 Attacking
5 **VOL:** None of these

26. How long did the aggressive behavior go on before you decided to find someone else to care for your pet?

READ LIST
1 A month or less
2 More than a month but less than 6 months
3 More than 6 months
4 **VOL:** Not sure
END AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR FOLLOW-UP
RESUME ASKING ALL

27. Here is a list of programs or services that a local organization could provide. Still thinking about the pet(s) you gave up most recently, for each, please tell me if the availability of that program or service in your area would have changed your decision to give up your pet. I will read you the list and you can just tell me yes or no for each.

PROMPT AS NEEDED: Would the availability of that program or service in your area have changed your decision to give up your pet?
1 Yes
2 No
3 **VOL:** Not sure
RANDOMIZE
a. Free or low cost veterinary care
b. Free or low cost spay/neuter services
c. Free or low cost pet food
d. Free or low cost training or help with behavior modification
e. Free or low cost temporary pet care or boarding
f. Assistance and guidance on finding pet friendly housing
g. Assistance in paying for pet deposit or fees in a rented home or apartment

Thank you. These next few questions are to understand more about the pet or pets that you gave up.
28. Where did you get the pet or pets that you had to give up most recently? I will read you a list and please tell me all that apply. Please only select one source for each pet you gave up most recently.

READ AND RANDOMIZE. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. MAX REPLIES = ANSWER TO Q7.
1 You adopted it from animal shelter or rescue group (this includes petfinder.com)
2 You purchased from a pet store
3 It was given to you for free from a friend, relative, or neighbor
4 It was given to you as a gift
5 You took it in as a stray animal
6 You purchased it through a listing or ad on a site like Craigslist or in a newspaper or other local publication
7 You purchased it through an online ad or posting on a website AND HAD THE PET SHIPPED TO YOU
8 You purchased it from a breeder, but not over the Internet
9 Some other way
10 **VOL:** Not sure

29. Was the pet(s) you gave up spayed or neutered? **IF YES AND MORE THAN ONE PET GIVEN UP:** Were all of them spayed or neutered?

1 Yes, all were spayed or neutered **SELECT IF YES AND ONLY ONE PET GIVEN UP.**
2 Yes, some were spayed or neutered
3 No, none were spayed or neutered

4 **VOL:** Not sure

30. **IF KEPT OTHER PETS IN THE HOUSEHOLD: (Q8 = 1):** You mentioned earlier that when you gave up a pet most recently, you kept other pets in the household. How many other pets were still in the household after you gave up a pet? **NUMERIC. MIN 1, NO MAX.**

31. **IF KEPT OTHER PETS IN THE HOUSEHOLD: (Q8 = 1):** And what types of pets did you keep?

    READ LIST; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
    1 Dogs
    2 Cats
    3 Some other type of pet
    4 **VOL:** Not sure

Thank you. These last questions are about you and your household and are for classification purposes only. Again, all of your responses are completely confidential.

32. **RECORD BUT DO NOT ASK GENDER**

    1 Male
    2 Female

33. What is your marital status? **READ OPTIONS**

    1 Married
    2 Unmarried with a partner
    3 Single
    4 Separated
    5 Divorced
    6 Widowed
    7 **(volunteered)** Prefer not to say

34. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your household?

    1 Yes
    2 No
    4 **(volunteered)** Prefer not to say

35. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

    _____ **[NUMERICAL ANSWER, INCLUDE "PREFER NOT TO SAY" OPTION]**

36. What type of home do you live in? **READ LIST**

    1 Apartment that you RENT
    2 Apartment that you OWN
    3 House that you RENT
    4 House that you OWN
    5 **(volunteered)** Other
    6 **(volunteered)** Prefer not to say

37. Which of the following best describes where you live?

    READ LIST
    1 An urban area or city

2   Suburban
3   Small town
4   Rural
5   **VOL:** Prefer not to say

38. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation? Are you…

READ LIST
1   Employed full-time
2   Employed part-time
3   Homemaker
4   Retired
5   Temporarily unemployed
6   A student
7   Disabled
8   Not employed
7   **(volunteered)** Prefer not to say

39. **IF REACHED ON LANDLINE:** Do you have a cell phone? **IF YES:** Is it a regular cell phone that can only make calls or send text messages, or is it a smartphone that can access the internet and send emails?

1   Yes, regular cell phone
2   Yes, smartphone
3   No, do not have cell phone
4   Not sure

40. **IF REACHED ON CELL PHONE:** What type of cell phone have we reached you on today? Is it a regular cell phone that can only make calls or send text messages, or is it a smartphone that can access the internet and send emails?

1   Regular cell phone
2   Smartphone
3   Not sure

41. **IF REACHED ON CELL PHONE:** In addition to your cell phone, do you also have a landline phone in your home?

1   Yes
2   No
3   Not sure

42. **IF Q40 = 1-2 OR Q41 = 1:** You have said that you have both a cell phone and a landline. Do you mostly use your cell phone for calls, mostly use your landline for calls, or do you use both about equally?

1   Cell mostly
2   Landline mostly
3   Both equally
4   Not sure

43. Are you from a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-speaking background?

1   Yes
2   No
3   Prefer not to say

44. What is your race?

    DO NOT READ LIST
    1 White or Caucasian
    2 Black or African American
    3 Asian or Pacific Islander
    4 Something else
    5 **(volunteered)** Prefer not to answer

45. What was your approximate annual household income for 2012, before taxes, from all sources? I will read you some ranges; just stop me when I get to the one that applies to your household.

    READ LIST
    1 Less than $25,000
    2 $25,000 to under $50,000
    3 $50,000 to under $75,000
    4 $75,000 to under $100,000
    5 $100,000 to under $125,000
    6 $125,000 to under $150,000
    7 $150,000 or more
    8 **(volunteered)** Prefer not to answer

46. **IF REFUSED INCOME QUESTION:** Well, would you mind telling me if your household income was above or below $50,000?

    1 Below $50,000
    2 Above $50,000
    3 **(volunteered)** Prefer not to say

47. What is your zip code? **NUMERIC RESPONSE. MUST BE 5 DIGITS.**

43. Sometimes it is important to get additional feedback on trends we see across the survey responses. Would you be willing to participate in short, open-ended phone interview at your convenience? You would be compensated for your time.

    1 Yes
    2 No

    [IF YES]
Name:
Email address:
Best phone number to contact you to set up an appointment: