Pets have played an important role in our lives throughout the pandemic, and this stronger human-animal bond is predicted to change how we live and work in the future. As people return to the office and worry about leaving their pets behind, the demand for more pet-friendly workplaces will rise. According to a recent poll, 72% of c-suite level executives expect more workplaces will be pet-friendly after the COVID-19 pandemic, and 6 in 10 companies plan to be more flexible in a post-pandemic world. The science-backed benefits of pet-friendly workplaces show that this is a smart decision for employers:

1. **Increased Employee Attraction and Engagement**
   - According to a survey conducted by Nationwide in partnership with HABRI, 91% of employees in pet-friendly workplaces are more engaged by their work and 83% feel their work is rewarding compared to 65% of employees who feel engaged and 46% who feel rewarded in non-pet-friendly workplaces. In addition, 88% of employees at pet-friendly workplaces would recommend their employer to others versus 51% at non-pet-friendly companies. Another study found that employees report feeling pride while working at pet-friendly offices.

2. **Improved Workplace Collaboration**
   - Science suggests pets can facilitate social interaction and serve as an organizational mascot, bringing people together. In fact, employees at pet-friendly workplaces are 3x more likely to experience positive working relationships with their supervisors and coworkers than employees in non-pet-friendly workplaces. Research also shows that groups performing a collaborative task with a pet around were more communicative, less closed-off, and cooperated better.

3. **Better Employee Retention**
   - Pet-friendly employers are better able to retain employees. While 72% of employees would stay with a pet-friendly company saying they would decline a job offer with another company at similar pay versus only 44% who work in non-pet-friendly businesses. In addition, at pet-friendly companies 91% of employees say their company offers a good work/life balance compared to 58% of employees at non-pet-friendly companies.

4. **A Healthier Workforce**
   - A study on the effect of dogs at work found that while all employees start the day with similar levels of stress, those with a dog in the office end the day significantly less stressed than those in non-pet-friendly offices. In addition, test results show employees who reported getting more exercise than non-pet owners and employees in pet-friendly workplaces were unusually healthy and likely to report good physical health as compared to those in non-pet-friendly workplaces.

Meeting the Needs of Pet Owning Employees
- Helping employees care for and spend more time with their pets is an effective way to support their overall health and wellbeing. Even if allowing pets in the workplace is not an option, employers can demonstrate that they care about their pet-owning employees by providing benefits that help pet owners take good care of their pets. For example, employers can consider offering pet health insurance, time off to care for a new pet, pet sitting services or allowing employees the flexibility to work from home to take care of pets.