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Funding for Classroom Pets Available to Teachers

Pre-Kindergarten through 9th grade teachers who are interested in owning or already own a classroom pet can apply to receive funding through the Pets in the Classroom grant program beginning August 1.

The [Pet Care Trust's Pets in the Classroom grant program](#) will begin accepting applications for the 2019-2020 school year beginning August 1.

The grant program provides funding for a small animal or pet supplies to Pre-Kindergarten through 9th grade teachers in both private and public schools who desire to introduce a pet into the classroom or who already have a pet in the classroom. Interested teachers are welcome to apply.

The program was established by the Pet Care Trust with the knowledge that, while pets are a valuable teaching tool, many teachers have very limited resources for the support of classroom animals. Through the grant program, teachers have the option of obtaining a pet through one of the program's participating retailers — Petco, PetSmart, Pet Supermarket, Pet Supplies Plus, and Petland — or of purchasing their pet through a local pet store through a rebate grant. Past grant recipients are not eligible to receive funding for a new classroom pet, but are welcome to apply for a sustaining grant, which provides up to \$50 to maintain an existing classroom pet. With seven different grant types, each teacher has the opportunity to choose the grant that is right for him or her through a direct, no-hassle application on the Pets in the Classroom website (www.PetsintheClassroom.org).

A recent survey conducted by the Pets in the Classroom grant program showed a staggering 99 percent of respondents said they would recommend the Pets in the Classroom program, and over 90 percent would be **extremely likely** to recommend the program. The survey — which was conducted this spring and received over 10,200 overwhelmingly positive responses from teachers who have received Pets in the Classroom grants within the past two years — also showed 96 percent of teachers said that having a pet in the classroom has been a positive experience. Teachers saw improvements in attendance, empathy/compassion, responsibility, testing/academic performance, self-esteem, and student engagement. Teachers also reported that pets help students improve their social skills and decrease anxiety.

The [survey results](#), coupled with studies and thousands of previously shared teachers' experiences, show the many benefits that pets can provide to students in the classroom. One little pet can help shy kids open up, struggling readers build confidence, aggressive children develop nurturing

tendencies, and apathetic students gain a new desire for learning. During the 2018-19 school year, 25,550 Pets in the Classroom grants were awarded — the largest number of grants awarded in a single year — bringing the total number of grants to 144,895 since the program's inception in 2011. This means that almost 5.8 million children have experienced the benefits of pets thanks to the Pets in the Classroom grant program.

For more information, visit www.PetsintheClassroom.org.