

Pets, Money and City Tradeoffs:

A Survey on Seattle's Pet Licenses

About

Explores the correlation between wealth and pet ownership in Seattle through an analysis of pet license data, shedding light on disparities in license renewals and the implications for different socioeconomic groups.

Description

"Pets, Money and City Tradeoffs: A Survey on Seattle's Pet Licenses" delves into the relationship between wealth and pet ownership in Seattle. The dataset combines pet license data from Seattle with IRS income data by zip code, providing insights into the distribution of pet licenses across different socioeconomic areas. Through real-life anecdotes and survey data, the project highlights disparities in pet license renewals, explores potential obstacles to obtaining and renewing pet licenses, and raises questions about the city's role in facilitating responsible pet ownership.



Tags

- pet ownership
- socioeconomic status
- Seattle
- pet licensing
- wealth disparity
- city governance



Source

- Name: Pet License Dataset

Description: Dataset containing information on issued pet licenses in Seattle.

link: <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/pets/wait-a-minute-do-i-need-to-license-my-pet/>

- Name: IRS Income Dataset

Description: IRS US Income Data by Zip Code available on Kaggle.

link: <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/thedevastator/2013-irs-us-income-data-by-zip-code?resource=download>

Bias

- The dataset predominantly comprises data from the year 2022, despite spanning 2019-2023, potentially impacting temporal analysis.
- The lowest recorded adjusted gross income in the dataset is approximately \$45,000, potentially skewing the data towards higher income demographics.



Misrepresentation

Because our dataset uses information exclusively from government sources, we are limited to the data collection practices utilized by both the City of Seattle and the IRS. This means that instead of looking at every pet owner in the City of Seattle, we have access to only the pet owners with active pet licenses. Therefore, when we attempt to discover the relationship between wealth and pet ownership, what we are really discovering is the correlation between wealth and pet licensing rates.

Our research inherently excludes pet owners who do not purchase or renew pet licenses for their household animals. However, we can make various assumptions about pet licensing rates and the misrepresentation of various income groups in our study.



First, we can assume that wealthier individuals choose to not license their pets because they do not care as much about supporting the welfare programs that the licensing fees support. For example, Seattle pet licensing fees help fund emergency veterinary services for all pets with active pet licenses and

animal shelters. However, wealthy individuals who can afford to purchase household pets from breeders and not shelters might not care as much about supporting local shelters with their licensing fees because they have fewer interactions with these services. Additionally, wealthy individuals might also not require assistance with emergency veterinary services, therefore not seeing the value in paying the licensing costs. However, we could also assume that wealthier individuals might have higher rates of licensing because, relative to their average income, pet licensing fees are cheaper. For example, a \$30 license for a dog might be an easy payment to make for people with higher incomes.

However, another reason pet owners might be misrepresented in our study might be because of a lack of pet licensing enforcement. Using numbers from the Seattle Animal Shelter, it's estimated that only one in five pets are properly licensed, and this disparity might be a result of just a lack of awareness. Many Seattle residents online claim that they simply just didn't realize they had to license their pets, and because the City of Seattle doesn't have a unified system to enforce pet licensing, many pet owners don't realize they're harboring illegal animals in their homes. Additionally, failure to license your pet can result in fines of up to \$125, but since the likelihood of such a citation is extremely low, many pet owners who know about licensing regulations simply choose to ignore them.

As a result of these factors, various demographics of pet owners can end up misrepresented in our study data.



Limitations

- Variability in data collection practices between the City of Seattle and the IRS may affect the accuracy of correlations between zip codes and wealth.
- Potential misrepresentation of pet ownership rates due to factors such as enforcement discrepancies and awareness of licensing regulations.

Accuracy

- Overall accuracy/extrapolation rating: 8/10.

Format

- CSV files containing structured data.



Related_links

- Name: Seattle Pet License Dataset

link: <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/pets/wait-a-minute-do-i-need-to-license-my-pet/>

- Name: IRS Income Dataset (Kaggle)

link: <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/thedevastator/2013-irs-us-income-data-by-zip-code?resource=download>