

In a perfect world, living in New Jersey's countryside means enjoying privacy, peace and quiet, and life at a slower, less hectic pace. It conjures up images of country gardens and homemade pies cooling on sunny window sills.

The reality is that today's country residents face the same time crunch as everyone else. And it is often compounded by the distance between home and the nearest city. Tasks city-dwellers take for granted often pose a real challenge for those who choose a non-urban lifestyle. A trip to the convenience store, for example, may be anything but convenient. And since today's country residents are likely to be professionals, the demands of work and a potentially lengthy commute often leave little time to deal with home repairs, running errands or fixing dinner. In short, country life can overwhelm even the most determined person, robbing them of the ability to do what they moved to the country for in the first place.

It should come as no surprise then, that a new service industry has arisen whose businesses are willing to take their services directly to customers. Whether you need your cat watched, your dry cleaning picked up, your grocery shopping done, your meals cooked or your woodwork redone, there is likely to be someone with a business ready to serve you.

What follows is an informal guide. Keep in mind this isn't comprehensive – some service businesses operate exclusively through word of mouth and often hover just below the state's media radar. But if nothing else, it will get you looking in the right direction.



Pet Sitters

"It's not dollars and cents for me," says Jill Tierney who operates River Run Pet Sitters in Tinton Falls. "I love what I do, I love the animals and I've made a lot of good friends with the customers I deal with."

Tierney often gets up as early as 4 a.m. and goes to bed as late as one in the morning, making anywhere between a handful and 30 house visits in a single day.

The advantages to hiring a pet sitter rather than using a kennel or leaving your pet alone all day while you're at work are many. First, sitters perform a wide variety of tasks – washing, grooming, feeding, walking and more – for the pet. And by keeping the animal in its home environment, pet sitters guard against the possibility of the pet becoming depressed and lethargic, either from separation anxiety or from being in the unfamiliar and unpleasant surroundings of your average kennel. "Pets are happy and adjusted when their owners come home. They're not nervous. They've eaten."

In addition, pet owners gain an extra measure of security by having the sitter check up on the house while they're at work or on vacation. "When owners are away, they get peace of mind between their pets and home being taken care of," Tierney says.

Critter Sitters
East Hanover
(973) 887-2539

Critter Sitter
Annandale
(908) 634-4123
Kozy Kritter Sitters
Montville
(973) 263-8898

Pet Sitters, Inc.
Bloomfield
(973) 743-5330

No Place Like Home-Pet Sitters
Clifton
(973) 458-1616

Alternative Pet Sitters
Jersey City
(201) 653-3343

Happy Tails Pet Sitters
Englishtown
(732) 786-1465

River Run Pet Sitters
Tinton Falls
(732) 576-1570

Pet Sitter Plus
Rumson
(732) 530-0755

Gotta Go Pet Sitters
Manasquan
(732) 223-7486

Paw-Ferred Pet Sitters
Toms River
(732) 349-3500