



Volunteer Adoption Counselor

Adoption Counselors will facilitate introductions between shelter animals and potential adopters. Screen prospective adopters for compatibility with animals available for adoption. Oversee meeting between the individual(s) and the animal to make sure everyone seems to get along. Answer questions about an individual animal and determine whether that animal may be suitable for their lifestyle. Positively represent the shelter's beliefs and philosophies.

Adoption Counselors are responsible for understanding, working within the guidelines of, and supporting all of the organization's adoption policies. Familiarize yourself with any special needs or personality traits of the animals currently up for adoption. Conduct interviews with potential adopters. Observe interaction between animal and potential adopter for compatibility. Reviewing a potential adopter's application and determining if they meet adoption criteria. Complete all necessary paperwork and collect fees in an organized manner. Counsel and/or educate the adopter on the proper selection, expectations, animal behavior, needs, and care of a pet. Be able to say "no" to an unqualified adopter tactfully. Working well with other volunteers and staff members, as well as independently.

This handbook will help give you the information and guidelines you need to promote a successful adoption.

A. Southside Animal Shelter Pet Information

All animals adopted from SSAS receive the following:

Vaccinations:

DA2PP (Distemper-Adenovirus-Parainfluenza-Parvovirus) adult dogs need two vaccinations and puppies need four. Adults will have at least one shot and puppies will have two before they are adopted. They may have more depending on how long they are at the shelter.

FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis-Calicivirus-Panleukopenia) adult cats need two vaccinations and kittens need four. Adults will have at least one shot and kittens will have two before they are adopted. They may have more depending on how long they are at the shelter.

Shots are given two weeks apart, some vets do them three weeks apart.

RABIES Only a vet can give rabies and that is due at 4 months. Some pets will have their rabies for various reasons. Make sure the adopter gets the rabies tag and certificate.

Deworming: We will give the first dose, some have had the 2nd. All need 2 doses.

Free Vet Check Up: We give a healthy visit check coupon. Vets honoring this are listed, adopter needs to tell them they are using our coupon when they make the appointment. If client has a service done at this check up, example: vaccination, stool check, etc. they will be charged for the service. *It is healthy pet check up only.*

Spay/ Neuter: Southside Animal Shelter is a 100% spay/neuter facility. All pets will be spayed/neutered prior to adoptions. Exceptions can be made in special cases with a pet that has a medical condition whereas they can not be spayed/neutered until treatment is completed i.e. upper respiratory, heart worm, etc. In that case only Rosie can approve the adoption. We will then follow up and make arrangements to get the pet spayed/neutered as soon as possible.

Microchipping: Dogs & Puppies are all microchipped. Put one sticker on the adopters paperwork and give them the tag and other stickers. Suggest they give one sticker to their vet for the file. We will register them with 24 PetWatch and they will receive an email with their information and a phone number for any future changes.

30 Days for Free Shelter Care: This is pet insurance, see attached hand out.

1 Bag of Science Diet (Appropriate for the Age/Type of Pet) We feed Science Diet at the shelter so it's what the pet is use to eating. Be sure the adopter knows that if they decide to change food they should mix it slowly so the pet gets used to it. Pets, especially puppies/kittens or older pets can have problems when changing foods. Recommend adopters use a quality brand of food for their pet, there are many advantages to this.

B. Interview & Adoption Application

Anyone wishing to adopt must complete the adoption application first. This is mandatory for all dogs and cats. It is the same form for both. Take this time to talk with and interview the potential adopter. See attached adoption application.

- You must be 21 years of age to adopt.
- No little kittens or puppies can be adopted to a home with preschoolers or a babysitting service.
- Large puppies do not do well in apartments. Be very cautious about adopting one into an apartment. It can be done but is not a good practice.
- When adopting into an apartment, be sure to ask if there is a weight restriction, pet limit, or deposit required. If the client does not know this information, refuse adoption until they find out.
- If owning a house, large dogs and puppies need a fenced yard.
- If the owner has had a pet die of parvo, distemper, or feline leukemia recently, have them check with a vet as there is a time period where no animal should be in that home until the disease has died out.
- If the owner has given a pet to animal control, be sure to talk about why: Ask why they didn't take it to a vet to be euthanized instead of giving to IAC.
- We do not adopt into homes that have unspayed or unneutered (of age) pets. Being a breeder does not exempt this person. The only exception is if the pet being adopted is already fixed, then use your good judgment.
- We do not adopt to someone giving a pet as a gift unless the recipient is present and they must sign the adoption contract.

If you are satisfied that this pet will be going to a good home, have the client complete the Adoption Contract.

C. Adoption Contract

Have the client read the agreement. Ask if they have any questions. If not, the client fills out the top and signs and dates the bottom. MAKE SURE TO GET AN EMAIL ADDRESS – all Shelter Care and 24PetWatch correspondence is done by email. The SSAS representative completes the animal information section. Always make a duplicate.

When completing this agreement be sure to do the following:

- check dog or cat
- write M or F for appropriate sex
- Write in approximate age: 6 weeks, DOB 1/12/98 (if we know it), young adult, etc.
- Breed: beagle mix, mix breed; never write a breed name without mix unless you know for positive it is a pure bred dog
- Description: brown, black or black white feet.
- Name: if it has one, write it in
- Shots: write the date of shots we have given, do not just check (vets will not recognize a check mark and make the client start vaccination series all over again) If an IOU is issued, write IOU in spot. Be sure to explain to client that they need to continue with vaccinations every 3 weeks until they have 4 shots, then yearly after that. Cats only need 3 sets.

- Deworming: Same as above, write dates, not checks if we have dates
- Other: This is where other information: declawed, heartworm negative; feline leukemia tested, bordetella, rabies, microchipped, fostered by, number of animals in litter, whose baby it is if we know (example: calico mom), where it came from, IAC, o/s
- Sign the form at the bottom with your name
- Write in the amount of adoption CASH ONLY no checks or charges
- Certificate Number: Your location, the month, day of the month and the # of adoptions for the day (example: PT0720-1 - petco july 20 1st adoption of the day).
- Give client the copy of agreement, we keep original

Be sure to tell the new owner that if for any reason this animal does not work out we have first rights to have it back. We feel we have saved its life once, if possible we want to do it again. This does not guarantee we will take it back but will try, provided we have space and health of animal is good. Be sure they know there are NO REFUNDS or EXCHANGES for any reason. We are a non-profit, no-kill shelter and all our funding comes from our adoption fees and donations.

Continue with the adoption by completing the Free Vet Check-Up and Microchip form if the pet is microchipped.

All of this information is very important for several reasons:

- If a littermate comes down with an illness, we contact the other mates' owners to alert them of a possible problem.
- If the animal is returned to us with no records, we can research its previous care at SSAS and provide additional care if necessary to re-adopt.

Please print legibly, all this information needs to be entered in to PetPoint for our records and so the adopter will get a copy of their Shelter Care and 24PetWatch.

D. FREE HEALTH CHECK UP

Complete the form and give to client.

Explain to them this is a healthy check up.

If they choose to have any service done at this time, such as vaccinations, stool check, blood work, etc. they will be charged for it. However, there will be no office charge. We do not inquire to see if this check up has been done.

Make sure the client knows to tell the vet they have one of our certificate when they make the appointment.

If they choose to use a vet that is not on our list, they can ask the vet if they will honor the certificate. We do not guarantee this nor do we contact the vet for them.

E. MICROCHIP FORM

Fill out the 24PetWatch information form. If there are no forms available, get an emergency contact name or number (adopter's cell or work number can be used). Explain to the adopter that if their pet is found and turned in to a shelter or taken to veterinary clinic, they will need the best way to contact them in order to reunite them with their pet.

F. GENERAL INFORMATION

CAGE TAGS – These can be used at adoption centers or special events. These cards list the name of the animal (if it has one), breed (if known), sex, age, vaccination & deworming history (write in dates & initial if you do the service).

The price of the animal should also be on this card. When completing an adoption, copy all this information on the adoption form. Once an animal is adopted, all this information should be on the adoption form and will be placed in the computer.

CARRIERS - We cannot loan out our carriers for any reason.

CHECKS - We CANNOT accept checks from anyone, only Rosie can OK to take a check. We have had many bounce.

DEWORMING & VACCINATIONS - This must be done prior to coming into the adoption center or special event. We are to administer no vaccinations, dewormings, nor medications outside of the shelter.

FOOD - Animals are fed prior to coming into the adoption center or special event and as soon as they return to the shelter. Small amounts of food or treats can be given, use your best judgment in this. Water can be given but most animals never drink it during this time, and most puppies just play in it.

FOSTERS - Foster parents are volunteers who have agreed to take pets into their homes, bringing them back and forth each day until adopted. We are always in need of foster homes. If someone inquires about fostering have them complete the adoption application, write Foster on top of it, and give to Rosie. She will contact them in the future.

HOLDING ANIMALS - We do not allow children under 18 to pick up the animals or open the cages. This is for the safety of the pets as they can be picked up roughly and dropped, it makes them sick to be handled a lot, it spreads disease, they can escape and get out the door, etc. Use your best judgment in letting people handle the pets.

PUPPIES/KITTENS - Never allow puppies or kittens to be placed on the bare floor or ground unless they are fully vaccinated. There are possibilities of germs there.

REFUNDS - There are no refunds or exchanges. All animals are adopted as is, we will take back (see adoption contract) but not refund or exchange.

RETURNS - If someone wants to return a pet adopted from us, ask the reason why. Get their Name, as much pet information as you can, when they adopted, etc. Contact Rosie and she will make the decision.

We do try to take back the animals we have placed in homes unless they are biters or have a severe health problem. If Rosie approves the return, have client complete the **Return/Surrender** paper - when client returns the animal.

SURRENDER/RETURN PAPERS - If Rosie agrees to take a litter or animal, the surrendering owner must complete the **Surrender** document. Make sure they complete as much information as possible. Stress to them they must spay the mother dog (we cannot mandate this). Give them the flyer for low-cost spay/neuter information if available or send them to www.getthemfixed.org or www.indyferal.org.

TAKING IN ANIMALS - The only person who has authority to take in an animal is Rosie. If someone asks you to take in an animal, refer them to Rosie. If the person is there with the animal and you feel it is very, very adoptable, call Rosie for approval. We almost always take little dogs or puppies as they are normally easy to place in homes.

TRIAL RUN - We do not let people take home animals for the night to try.

If you have any questions you can contact Rosie at 317-710-2831 or Robin at 317-295-5259.

Adoptions are the most important thing we do at Southside Animal Shelter. Adoptions give our pets the loving forever homes they need. Adoptions provide the funding we need to rescue and give our pets the day-to-day, medical and behavioral care they need in order to find their forever home. And adoptions open up the space we need to rescue another pet in need of sanctuary until they can be made ready for their forever home.