

# What to do if you need to Re-home your Pet

Making a decision to re-home your pet is very difficult but if re-homing is the only option you have, this handout provides resources that will offer alternatives to surrendering to a shelter. The majority of animals find their homes through private individuals, not animal shelters, and by keeping your animal out of the shelter you not only minimize their stress, you actually help the shelter save more homeless animals in need. If you are dedicated and creative you can find a home for your animal. Best of all, you can make sure that the adopter meets your qualifications and your animals' needs.



[www.hssv.org](http://www.hssv.org)

We strongly recommend that you set your animal up for success before you start the re-homing process! Please make sure your dog or cat is spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and has had a recent veterinary exam. All potential adopters should feel comfortable that they are adopting a healthy animal or are made aware of any concerns ahead of time!

## PROMOTING YOUR PET

The following web sites will allow you to post your animals on their web sites. Please visit each site independently to read their rules and regulations:

- <http://www.wagaroo.com/> (dogs only)
- [www.safehavenanimalsanctuary.org](http://www.safehavenanimalsanctuary.org) (cats only)
- [www.furryfriendsrescue.org](http://www.furryfriendsrescue.org)
- [www.animalfriendsrescue.org](http://www.animalfriendsrescue.org)
- [www.rescueme.org](http://www.rescueme.org)
- [www.pbrc.net](http://www.pbrc.net) (pit bulls & pit bull mixes only)

Furry Friends Rescue and Animal Friends Rescue Project also allow individual owners to bring their dogs to pet adoption fairs. Please visit their websites for locations and qualifications.

For a full listing of local rescue groups and breed rescue groups, visit our website [www.hssv.org](http://www.hssv.org) under Resources.

For a more extensive list of purebred rescue organizations, please visit [www.allaboutdogsandcats.com](http://www.allaboutdogsandcats.com). You can also do individual searches for the breed you are trying to place.

We recommend that if you are considering working with a rescue organization, make sure that they are a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. You can confirm any organization's non-profit status at [www.irs.gov/charities](http://www.irs.gov/charities). Don't be afraid to ask questions and to ask for references from local shelters or veterinarians. Any reputable rescue organization will be glad that you care! The animal welfare organizations listed on our resource webpage are groups we have either worked with in the past or have been recommended by our partners.

## A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 WORDS

Remember that with all postings, pictures are key! Full body shots of your pet are great, but make sure that potential adopters can connect with your pet's eyes. We recommend leaving people out of the photo. If possible, provide multiple photos and/or videos of your pet. Make sure to showcase your pet's best attribute; if he or she is super-cuddly, post a photo with a stuffed animal. If your pet is athletic and loves to play, post a photo of them with their ball, swimming, hiking, etc.!

## HELP YOUR PET GO VIRAL, ONLINE AND OFFLINE

Social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook are a great way to spread the word that your pet is in need of a new home. Post the message to everyone you know with video and pictures. Enlist your friends to spread the word!

Don't forget to also reach out to everyone that's already in your pet's inner circle: veterinarians, groomers, neighbors, dog park buddies, and pet sitters are often anxious to help a friend in need. In fact, you would be surprised how often we get calls from neighbors wanting to adopt animals that were surrendered to us! Your dog or cat may already have admirers nearby who would be willing to open their home to your pet.

Consider placing a classified ad in your local paper or posting an ad on Craig's List at [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org). Wagaroo (<http://www.wagaroo.com/>) provides support to owners who need to give up their dog and introduces them to prospective adoptive families. They offer a free listing service for owners who need to rehome their dog and have experienced advisors available as a free resource to owners.

Post flyers everywhere you can! Most veterinary offices, pet stores, and feed stores have bulletin boards with space designated for this purpose. Many employers, gyms, grocery stores, libraries, and Community Centers have bulletin boards as well. Leave tabs with your phone number so that people can contact you without having to remove the entire flyer.

Purchase an "Adopt Me Vest" or make your own and make sure your dog wears it every time he or she is out in public! Go to places where you are likely to connect with other dog lovers, i.e. dog parks, popular hiking trails, pet stores, feed stores, etc. Visit [www.dogbooties.com](http://www.dogbooties.com) to purchase an adopt me vest for a reasonable price.

### **SCREENING POTENTIAL ADOPTERS**

Once you have an adopter interested, we recommend that you screen that person carefully to ensure your pet finds a loving, permanent home. Make sure to ask them for a donation to your favorite animal charity or a "re-homing" fee to help ensure that your dog or cat is in good hands. Never give your animal away for free to someone you don't know!

It is important that all human family members want a new pet, have the opportunity to meet your dog or cat, and that everyone interacts comfortably with your pet. If your pet is not comfortable with them, request another meeting. If the potential adopter rents their home, confirm they have a lease that states pets are allowed.

Other considerations are the potential adopter's lifestyle: Do they have enough time for your dog or cat? Do they have the resources to provide lifelong care? What is their previous history with pets? Can they provide as much exercise as your pet needs? What other animals in the home and are they compatible with your pet? Do any family members have allergies or other health concerns? Don't be afraid to ask a potential adopter for a personal reference or a reference from their veterinarian. Anyone that is prepared to care for your pet as much as you do will understand and appreciate your concern.

We recommend doing an initial meeting in a neutral setting rather than your home so that you don't feel uncomfortable if it is not a good match. If you decide to go through with the adoption, we recommend asking to be able to deliver your pet to his or her new home. By delivering your animal you can be sure that the information matches what you were told and that it is a safe and comfortable environment.

Follow up is an important part of any adoption! Let your pet's adopter know that you'll be calling them in a few days to see how everything is going and to see if they have any questions. The adopter will feel supported and this will give you peace of mind that your pet is settling into their new home.

If at any point you need advice along the way or are feeling uncertain, please feel free to call us, we will be happy to assist you! You can contact our Customer Care team at (408) 262-2133 x110 or at [customer\\_care@hssv.org](mailto:customer_care@hssv.org).

### **RECOMMENDED READING:**

<http://www.aspcabehavior.org/articles/153/Re-homing-Your-Dog.aspx>

<http://www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/pdf/howtofindhomesforpets.pdf>

<http://www.pbrc.net/adoption/owners.html>