

Adopters Welcome: Key background information for adoption staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers who help adopters will need to understand the mechanics of your organization's adoption process from start to finish in order to feel comfortable with a conversation-based adoption approach. They will need to be comfortable providing information about individual animals and may get questions about general pet care, veterinary needs and behavioral support. A checklist can help identify areas for further training and help staff and volunteers recognize when to say, "I'm not sure, but let me find out for you," and where to go for answers.

What follows is a basic checklist of information to include in your training program. Organizations should fill in the blanks with details unique to your programs. You can also find pet care tips and handouts at humanepro.org/adopters-welcome to share with the public and to grow your team's knowledge around common questions.

This list is just a start. To make sure staff and volunteers feel supported, regularly check in with them to learn what else they need to know to facilitate great adoption matches.

Facts about your organization (some of this will be a review from other trainings and orientation)

- Organization's mission:
- Basic statistics:
- Details about services offered by your organization:
- Details about services offered through community partnerships:
- Details about how adopters can get more involved (volunteering, donating, sharing your wish lists):
- Where to go with questions about different issues:

Facts about your adoption program

- Adoption program mission (Example: To connect individuals with pets through a conversational matchmaking approach):
- All related policies:

[Help staff and volunteers understand how your policies serve animals, adopters, your agency and your community, including other adoption agencies, all without driving pet lovers to less humane sources for pets. This can be especially helpful when switching from more restrictive policies to an Adopters Welcome approach.]

- Details about services included in adoption fees (or waived fees) such as:
 - Spay/neuter, vaccinations, parasite treatment and prevention, heartworm testing

- Microchips
- Pet insurance
- Access to discounted services such as health checks or training classes
- Administrative details of your process, including paperwork and filing:
- How to direct adopters to ask follow-up questions:
- Where to go with adoption-related questions (team leaders, supervisor, etc.):
- Relevant pet-related laws:
- How to direct adopters to share pictures and stories about their pets with your team:
- How to find veterinary or behavioral support post-adoption:

Facts and observations about the pets adopters are interested in

- How to access medical and behavior information on pets, including:
 - Known history
 - Staff and volunteer observations
 - Medical notes
 - Behavior notes
- How to be transparent with facts and observations, while avoiding promises:

[For example: Use, “Blue did great with housetraining in his foster home,” instead of “Blue is housetrained” to avoid setting unrealistic expectations for adopters that can lead to frustration or confusion.]

- Where to go with detailed medical or behavior questions: