

Finding a New Home for a Pet

If you would like to find a new home for a pet, rather than turn the animal into a shelter where he or she may be euthanized, there are proactive strategies you can use to increase your chances of success.

First, prepare the animal for adoption. To increase the chances of finding a home and the success of the new placement, it is important that the pet is:

- Spayed or neutered
- In good health
- Clean and groomed
- House-trained and reasonably well-behaved

Although your local shelter may not be able to adopt out the pet, they may be able to offer other assistance. Some have low-cost spay/neuter clinics, or offer obedience-training classes. They may have a bulletin board where they post information about animals available for adoption.

Next, advertise widely. Get the word out, in as many places as possible, to increase your chances of success in finding a new home. Here are some tips:

- Photos and descriptions really help people make a connection to an animal. Compose an ad that describes the pet's personality, habits, and some of the little things that make this animal special. Do not hold back when it comes to telling about any disabilities, health issues or behavior quirks. Sometimes these are the things that potential adopters particularly respond to.
- Flyers are inexpensive to produce and often highly effective, especially when they include a good photo and lively description of the animal. They work especially well for older animals or animals with special needs. Post the flyers throughout your community, wherever a good prospective adoptive person may see it. Health food stores, supermarkets, libraries, churches, health clubs, and sporting goods stores are just a few examples of good places to post flyers.
- Posting the description and photo of the pet on adoption websites is another effective way to find a new home. Check with your local shelter to see if they have an online adoptions page where you could list your pet. There are specific sites for certain types of animals (FIV+ cats, disabled pets, senior dogs, etc.) as well as general adoption websites (such as www.petfinder.com).
- To find a home for a dog of a particular breed or breed mix, look for a breed rescue group with whom you could list the dog. (On the Internet, search for "breed rescue," where "breed" is the name of the particular breed.)

Use word of mouth and community contacts. Word of mouth should not be underestimated! Tell anyone and everyone about the pet that needs a home and ask



friends, co-workers and family members to help with spreading the word. It could be that a co-worker's father's neighbor's daughter is looking for a new pet.

Ask people you know to mention the animal in their church's newsletter, send an e-mail about the pet through their office memo system, or share some flyers with the members of their book club.

Get the pet out there! (This works especially well with dogs.) The more the pet is out and about, interacting with people, the more likely he'll charm the right person. Take him on walks, to pet supply stores, to the local park. You can even put a colorful bandana or sign on him that says "Adopt me" or "Looking for a home." Check with your local shelter to see if they have off-site adoption days; if so, they might let you bring your pet.

Be creative, positive and persistent. There are many animals needing homes at any one time, so finding a home can take some work. But, there *are* good homes out there, so try to maintain a positive attitude. Explore all options you can think of for finding a home – creativity and persistence are usually rewarded.

Remind yourself that you are this pet's best option for finding a new home. You might think shelters or rescue groups would be more adept at placing the pet because we have experience, facilities, screening guidelines, etc. But, an individual, particularly one who knows the animal, can focus all his or her efforts on that pet, provide the most information to prospective adopters, and best determine the appropriateness of a new home. Also, any shelter or sanctuary is stressful for an animal. The shelter setting, no matter how nice, can bring on stress-related problems. Anxiety, aggression, and even illness are common and these natural reactions may make adoption difficult or impossible.

For more detail about the strategies described above, see the Best Friends manual called *How to Find Homes for Homeless Pets*, available for download as a PDF from this website. The manual provides simple step-by-step instructions for finding a good new home for a pet.