

Pet Retention Tools and DIY Rehoming Kit

Introduction

Pets end up in shelters for all of the reasons you'd expect and even more that you wouldn't. But this packet isn't about why pets enter shelters. It's about ways to prevent it from happening in the first place.

The goal is always to fix the situation to allow a pet to stay in his current home. To that end, in this packet you'll find information about pet-friendly housing, force-free trainers, veterinary care assistance, and other pet retention tools. We hope the information will help pet owners keep the pets they already have.

Sometimes leaving a pet in his current home isn't an option. In that case, the best outcome is for the pet's owner to DIY and rehome the pet without him entering the shelter system.

Pet Retention Tools – Helping people keep their pets

Vet Care Assistance

A quick Google search of 'financial assistance for pet owners' brings up many results. The more you look, the more you'll find, but here are a few to start with.

- Best Friends offers a "comprehensive list of resources that offer financial assistance for pet guardians who are struggling, as well as senior citizens, people with disabilities and people who are seriously ill": <https://bestfriends.org/resources/financial-aid-pets>
- Care Credit is a company that offers credit cards specifically for medical and veterinary care: <https://www.carecredit.com/vetmed/>
- Helping Hands Affordable Veterinary Surgery and Dental Care is an affordable vet clinic in Richmond, VA: <http://www.helpinghandsvetva.com/>
- You can also ask your pet's regular vet if they would be able to offer any discount or payment plans themselves, or see if there are alternative treatments that may be more affordable for you.

Behavior Assistance

Pet behavior problems are one of the main reasons pets are relinquished to shelters. The SPCA of Wake County has compiled a series of articles for both dogs and cats that cover many common behavior concerns, such as separation distress, resource guarding, and housetraining or litter box troubles. Many of these issues can be solved right in your own home with just some time and patience, allowing you to keep your beloved pet! You can find the full library on this page of our website:

<https://spcawake.org/services/pet-behavior/>

Force-Free Trainers

Sometimes pet behavior problems are more complicated and may need the help of a professional to be resolved. The SPCA of Wake County has collaborated with the Force Free Academy for Canine Trainers to create and maintain a list of pet trainers across the state of North Carolina who offer fee discounts for pets adopted from the SPCA of Wake County. However, they're happy to help pets that weren't adopted from the SPCA as well! The trainer database can be found here:

https://www.facttrainingacademy.com/trainer-directory/wpbdp_category/spca-of-wake-county-partnership-program/

Resources for Military

- Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pet offers foster homes for pets of military members and veterans, under certain conditions: <https://gafsp.org/>
- Dogs on Deployment has a database of volunteers that military members can search for in-home pet boarding: <https://www.dogsondeployment.org/>
- Fayetteville Animal Protection Society is Fayetteville and Cumberland County's only licensed no-kill shelter: <https://www.fapspet.org/>

Pet-Friendly Housing

- The Wake County Government website has a list of dog-friendly housing within the county, categorized by breed restrictions and location: http://www.wakegov.com/pets/adoptions/Documents/Dogfriendly_housing_guide.pdf (Last updated on 1/30/17)
- The Friends of Wake County Animal Center has compiled a spreadsheet of pet-friendly housing in the Triangle area, including some locations outside of Wake County: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10hN8lgypys9CV-makjgxKOUkEa6QwNrf1dwuF3WXkao/edit#gid=1333213067> (Last updated on 1/27/18)
- Most housing websites allow you to filter your search by pet policy, and many listings include specific details about their policies like fees and restrictions. Some popular websites that have this feature are ApartmentFinder.com, Apartments.com, Rent.com, and Zillow.com.

Finding Temporary Housing for Pets

- Ask friends, family members, and coworkers if they would be able to care for your pet temporarily, or if they know anyone else who would be able to.
- Write public posts on your social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) advertising your pet and ask your friends to share the post to reach a wider audience.
- Displaced Paws, a service of Adopt-a-Pet.com, allows people to post their pets in need of temporary housing: <https://displacedpaws.org/>
- Differences between foster homes and long-term boarding for pets: <http://www.fosterdogs.com/i-need-a-temporary-home-for-my-dog.html>

Resources for Domestic Violence

- RedRover has information about grants and housing for people & pets in need after domestic violence: <https://redrover.org/resource/domestic-violence-and-pets/>
- The Animal Welfare Institute offers a searchable database of shelters across the country that “provide sheltering services for the companion animals of domestic violence victims, have a relationship with an entity that does, or provide referrals to such facilities: https://awionline.org/safe-havens?administrative_area=NC

Pet Food Programs

- The SPCA of Wake County and the nonprofit group Resources for Seniors collaborated to create the AniMeals program, which provides pet food to home-bound seniors and adults with disabilities in Wake County: <https://spcawake.org/get-involved/animeals/>
- SAFE Haven for Cats Pet Food Pantry provides temporary assistance for up to 3 months for residents of Wake County: <https://www.safehavenforcats.org/programs-and-services/pet-food-pantry/>
- Pet Food Pantry of Eastern NC has a monthly assistance program for residents of eastern NC as well as a “Meals on Wheels” program for seniors (pets must be spayed/neutered): <http://www.petfoodpantryenc.org/>
- STARelief and Pet Assistance in Stamford, CT offers their own Pet Food Pantry program as well: <http://starelief.org/pet-food-pantry-application/>

Coupon/Discount Websites

- Coupons.com keeps a current list of manufacturer’s coupons for pet care products: <https://www.coupons.com/coupons/pet-care-coupons-102/>
- Walmart offers store and manufacturer’s coupons on their website: <https://www.walmart.com/store/5743/garner-nc/coupons> *(May vary by store; select the store nearest you for the most accurate information)*
- A list of brands/manufacturers that offer their own coupons and how you can get them: <http://www.couponcat.net/coupon-lists/pet-coupons-list/>
- Cat food, treats, and litter coupons: <http://thekrazycouponlady.com/coupons/cat>
- Dog food, treats, and accessories coupons: <https://thekrazycouponlady.com/coupons/dog>

Why DIY?

Competition

Even in a “no-kill” shelter environment, your pet will be alongside many other pets, all waiting for homes. Shelters can be noisy and frightening, and sometimes excellent pets aren’t able to show their best qualities to the people who’ve come to choose a new companion. If your pet isn’t the most beautiful, the best behaved, and the closest-to-perfect one in the whole facility, he may very well get

overlooked and repeatedly passed by. Time in frightening, noisy environments is hard on pets, and the longer they spend in kennels wondering where their families are, the more stress they can experience. Stress can cause unattractive behaviors, and unattractive behaviors can cause stressed animals in shelters to continue to be passed over. For some pets, ending up in a shelter – even a really great shelter – can turn into a vicious cycle in a competition they become less and less likely to win.

If you look for a new family for your own pet, he can stay with you during the process, and the people who come to see him are interested in meeting him, specifically. If all goes well and the adoption takes place, you'll have the peace of mind that comes with meeting the people who are bringing your pet into their lives, and your pet can have the peace of mind that comes with staying out of the shelter system altogether.

Owners know pets best

Nobody in the world knows your pet better than you do. You know his favorite foods, his feelings about vacuum cleaners, and which television shows he likes best. You know where he likes to be scratched, how he likes to be spoken to, and what sorts of mischief he gets into when he's bored. You've been your pet's family for as long as he's known you, and so you're more qualified than anyone else to know what he's going to need from his new human friends.

Space is limited

Many shelters operate on an Open Admission basis, which means they don't turn any incoming animals away, regardless of how much space there is to house them in the facility. Sadly, many animals are euthanized in order to make room in the kennels and cages for the new arrivals. In North Carolina, shelters are required to keep stray animals for three days before choosing what step they'll take next in their journey, but if an animal is surrendered by his legal owner, the law does not require any "hold time" at all. Because these shelters are obligated to make sure the pets in the community that have been picked up as strays have a place to stay while their families try to locate them, it's possible that on a busy day in a busy shelter, pets surrendered by their owners might be euthanized before ever being placed in a kennel, since they're not lost and nobody is going to come searching for them. If you know you can't keep your pet forever, please consider going through the rehoming process yourself instead of bringing him into the shelter system. Surrendering him may cost him his life almost immediately, or, perhaps another healthy, adoptable animal will have to lose her life because she's come to the end of her 3rd day, and the shelter wants to put your dog in her kennel.

Define No-Kill

Maddie's Fund:

The term No-kill is defined as saving both healthy and treatable dogs and cats, with euthanasia reserved only for unhealthy & untreatable animals. Each organization or community is responsible for defining the terms "healthy, treatable, untreatable, and manageable" in ways that are appropriate and applicable to their particular geography, economy, and population. While no-kill organizations save all

the healthy and treatable shelter dogs and cats under their care, no-kill communities save all of the healthy and treatable pets in all of the animal welfare agencies community-wide.

No-Kill does **not** mean “no euthanasia.”

DIY Rehoming Tips – When you can't keep your pet

How to Find Other Rescue Assistance

- Contact rescues that are outside of your area, or even in neighboring states.
- Try breed-specific rescues in addition to general rescues.
- If a rescue isn't able to help place your pet, ask if they have any other rescue contacts or rehoming advice to share.
- When contacting rescues it's important to include plenty of information about your pet. Some types of information that rescues look are: demographics, including age, breed, and size; vet care history, including vaccinations and heartworm or FIV/FelV testing; behavior information, including whether they get along with cats, dogs, and children; and your specific reason for needing to rehome your pet. Pictures are *always* helpful as well!

How to Network

- Ask friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers if they or anyone they know would be able to take in your pet, either to adopt or even to foster temporarily while you find a more permanent solution.
- Contact veterinarians in your area and ask if they have a message board for you to promote your pet to potential new adopters.
- Ask rescues in your area if they can post courtesy listings on their websites.
- Use websites like www.rescueme.org to promote your pet online with a self-published profile & pictures.

Use Social Media to Promote Your Pet

- Write public posts to your Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter accounts advertising your pet, including pictures & a short written profile of your pet, and ask your friends & family to share them.
- Write posts in Facebook groups for pet rehoming in your area. These can sometimes be called “rehoming networks” and may be helpful for finding short-term foster as well.
- From each email account you own, send out the best photo and a brief description of your pet's situation to every name in the contacts list/address book. It's important to be brief, as people sometimes skim unsolicited email and you need your message to make an impression in about 2 seconds.

How to Take & Choose the Right Photos

- Basic things to keep in mind when trying to take good pictures of your pet:
<http://dogtime.com/lifestyle/parties/1874-how-to-take-pictures-of-your-dog>
- Before-and-after examples of pet photography:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/21/one-picture-saves-a-life_n_4810738.html

Screening Potential Adopters

- Considering your requirements for a new home:
<http://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2014/05/27/go-ahead-try-it-open-adoptions>
- What kinds of questions to ask a possible adopter:
<https://spcawake.org/services/surrendering-your-pet/>
- Figuring out when to say “no” to a possible adopter:
<http://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2016/07/21/when-you-can-say-no>

Feral/Barn Cat Resources

- Alley Cats and Angels: <https://alleycatsandangels.org/> (*Website under construction as of 6/14/19*)
- TNR Wake: <http://www.tnrwake.org/>
- TNR Wake Helpline: 919-743-2287
- Operation Catnip: <https://www.ocraleigh.org/> (*Trap-neuter-release only, not a rescue*)