

How Rescuers Can Effectively Adopt Out Cats

If you are a colony caretaker you may come across cats in your colonies who appear friendly and adoptable. If these cats seem comfortable with people and you do not think they would be stressed living outdoors, you can try and find them a forever home!

Rescuers can work on their own to place cats and kittens into homes or they may choose to work with an organization that already has an established adoption program. Depending on the number of cats and kittens one is rehoming, it might be more practical to contact a local rescue organization for assistance, since they already have the resources in place. Though please note, most rescue organization are always “full,” meaning they do not have open space to accept new cats, so it is usually necessary for individual rescuers to work on their own to rehome cats.

However, many rescue organizations do have a waiting list and may offer to add individual rescuer names to the list and contact them once space becomes available to take in new cats. Therefore, it is recommended that individual rescuers have their names added to these waiting lists and work with established rescue organizations in conjunction with rehoming cats on their own. Finding suitable homes for adoptable cats can be challenging, so all available resources should be utilized.

Please note that only some rescue organizations have a no-kill policy, meaning they do not euthanize healthy animals, and all animals are kept until adopted. County-run shelters in particular usually do NOT operate under a no-kill policy, meaning they will euthanize healthy animals if they need to free up space for incoming animals.

Tips for rehoming cats and kittens

- In rehoming cats, word of mouth is the most useful tool one can have.
- Make a flyer with important information such as whether the cat has been spayed or neutered; she is current on vaccinations; she has been tested for disease, treated for parasites, and microchipped; and mention if she gets along well with other cats or dogs. (It is highly recommended that **all cats and kittens are spayed/neutered and vaccinated** prior to rehoming to prevent unwanted litters)
- Take advantage of social media to help find homes for adoptable cats and kittens.
- Offer a foster period to potential adopters to help alleviate any initial hesitation and/or reservations. Be willing to work *with* adopters.
- Ask potential adopters for a few references (including their veterinarian), so you can better ensure the cat will be adopted by a responsible, caring individual.

- If possible, offer adopters the ability to contact you post-adoption with questions or concerns.
- It is highly recommended that all cats and kittens are tested for FeLV and FIV prior to rehoming. Testing a cat prior to adoption can prevent cats from being returned, abandoned or killed, should she be later tested and found to be positive for either disease. Some veterinarians still recommend to their clients to euthanize FeLV and FIV positive cats, which is not necessary.
- Never use the words “Free to good home” on flyers or online sites. Advertising *free* animals can attract individuals who may not have good intentions for the animals. Unfortunately, individuals who are looking only to make money and do not care for the well-being of animals are drawn to such ads, particularly individuals looking to sell animals to research laboratories or breeding facilities.