

Adoption Policy

Purpose

To ensure every animal is placed in a safe, responsible, and permanent home that aligns with Fresh Start Rescue's mission of saving lives and promoting ethical, compassionate care.

1. Adoption Criteria

Applicants must meet the following minimum standards:

- Age: Must be at least 21 years old.
 - Applicants aged 18–20 may be considered if they demonstrate stable housing, financial independence, and strong references.
- Residency: Must provide proof of current address and consent to a home check.
- Financial stability: Must demonstrate the ability to afford routine and emergency veterinary care.
 - Determined by ensuring the following:
 - Current or past pets were up to date with recommended services
 - Applicant is in a stable living situation
 - Applicant can positively support routine and emergent care for the animal
- Housing: Must have landlord approval if renting; no breed or size restrictions that would endanger placement.
- Lifestyle match: Must select an animal whose temperament, energy level, and medical needs fit the adopter's household.
- Other pets: Current pets must be spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and well cared for.
- Commitment: Must agree to provide lifelong care and comply with all local animal ordinances.

2. Adoption Process

1. Application submission — Applicants complete the online adoption form.
2. Review and screening — Rescue staff or volunteers review applications for completeness and suitability.
3. Reference checks — Veterinary and personal references are verified.

4. Interview — A phone or virtual interview may be conducted to discuss expectations, lifestyle, and animal compatibility.
5. Meet-and-greet — Approved applicants meet the animal, often with the foster present.
6. Home check — A virtual or in-person home visit confirms safety and readiness.
7. Approval and agreement — Upon approval, adopters sign the official Adoption Agreement and pay the adoption fee.
8. Transfer of ownership — The animal's microchip is registered to the adopter, and medical records are provided.

3. Home Checks

Home checks ensure the environment is safe and appropriate:

- Indoor safety: Adequate space, secure doors/windows, and safe containment areas.
- Outdoor safety: Fenced yard or secure leash plan; no unattended outdoor housing.
- Household readiness: All family members understand and support the adoption.
- Education: Adopters receive guidance on transition, decompression, and training.

Virtual home checks may be used when distance or safety prevents in-person visits.

4. Denials

Fresh Start Rescue reserves the right to deny any application that:

- Fails to meet adoption criteria.
- Provides incomplete or false information.
- Demonstrates unsafe or unsuitable living conditions.
- Shows evidence of prior neglect, abuse, or abandonment.
- Conflicts with the animal's best interests (e.g., temperament mismatch).

All denials are documented internally. Applicants may reapply after 90 days if circumstances change.

5. Post-Adoption Support

Adopters receive:

- A 14-day adjustment period for questions or minor concerns. This may include the following:



- Check-ins email, text, or phone) at 24 hours, 3 days, 7 days, and 14 days
 - Guidance on decompression (crate rest, slow introductions, routines)
 - Behavior coaching for normal transition issues (whining, accidents, pacing, mild reactivity)
 - Resources (handouts, videos, training tips, etc.)
- A return option if the adopter cannot keep the animal, per the Adoption Agreement.

6. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect best practices and legal requirements.

Approved: 07-22-2026