



Michigan Pet Fund Alliance presents the

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

And Best Practices for Rescue Organizations



What's New in 2.0

Animal welfare and the rescue community, including processes and protocols, change continually and the Michigan Rescue Certification Program and Best Practices for Rescue Organizations are periodically updated to keep pace with these changes. Here is a snapshot of major changes made in version 2.0:

- The Best Practices and Program Handbook were combined into one document
- A Website was added at www.mirescuecertification.org (and can also be found linked at michiganpetfund.org)
- Added New Sections: Why We Rescue, Do No Harm, Quality of Life, No Barriers to Life Savings, Pet Retention, Enrichment for Cats and Dogs, Breed Labels, Customer Service Policy and Compassion Fatigue
- Adoption program, foster program, and volunteer programs were updated to include the element of conversations to the application process to best match animals to homes whether foster or adoptive

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Introduction

Why We Rescue

The foundation for every rescue, regardless of size, type or longevity, is to save lives.

Three guiding principles create this foundation:

- Do No Harm
- Quality of Life
- No Barriers to Life Saving

Every decision made for an animal must be based on these three principles.

Do No Harm

With every decision an organization makes, it should always be made with the basis of Do No Harm as the guiding principle. This includes all aspects of animal care and standards. It is inclusive of things such as refusal to cosmetically alter an animal when the surgery is not medically necessary for the animal's health, including declawing, debarking, ear and tail cropping. For example, Do No Harm includes refusal to adopt to a potential adopter, when after educational counseling, they insist they will declaw the cat. In such cases, it would be advisable to locate a cat in rescue that is already declawed.

Do No Harm also includes environmental factors. If a cat is thriving while living outside, capturing it only to have it live in a confined space for months or years on end is harming that animal. Intaking healthy animals only to euthanize them when time or space runs out is considered doing harm. Warehousing animals is the act of keeping animals in confined spaces for extraordinary lengths of time, including life, and is considered doing harm. Have you improved the animal's life by rescuing it? To follow this principle, a rescuer will never make a decision for an animal that would cause them harm in any way.

Quality of Life

Every decision made on behalf of an animal is based on quality of life. Rescues can choose to spend countless amounts of money to save an animal, but if at the end, the animal can't eat or move or must live in pain, a life hasn't been saved. Instead, suffering has been prolonged. A three-legged dog or a one-eyed cat can enjoy the same quality of life as any other healthy pet. Evaluate every animal as an individual and assess its individual needs, then decide how best to meet those needs. A dog that is too unpredictably aggressive to be around people may be forced to live in an isolated kennel for life – what is his quality of life?

To follow this principle, a rescuer will never make a decision for an animal that would hinder the animal's quality of life and, conversely, will only make decisions that enhance or sustain an animal's quality of life.

No Barriers to Life Saving

Rescues exist to save lives. This can't be accomplished if barriers are created that prevent adoptions or returning pets to owners. Rescuers should search high and low for homes that match their animals in need. From an animal's point of view, the choice is easy – a preference to live in an apartment over possible death or continued homelessness.

Restrictions

Creating blanket policies that prevent animals from finding homes restricts rescue. Not all dogs need a fenced yard. Many, many animals live long happy lives in rentals or mobile homes. Some cats thrive when allowed supervised, contained access to the outdoors. Every animal is an individual and should be matched based on its individual needs. Blanket restrictions create barriers to life saving.

Control

Rescuers need to recognize what they have control over and what they do not. Once an animal has left your care, you have very little control over its life in its new home. Always set the animal and its new family up for success by educating, providing resources and a lifeline for assistance anytime in the animal's life. But be aware of where you may have unrealistic expectations or where the rescue organization may overstep its bounds, because while some rescuers wait for "the perfect home," good animals are being killed daily.

Example: a rescue spends a half day completing a home check, then one week after placement, the adopter moves into an apartment.

Example: an adopter has a life-changing event and gives their adopted pet to a family member, most likely violating the adoption contract. Rather than being upset and starting down a road of upset, lawsuit or confrontation, the rescue is better off seeing it as a positive – the animal moved to someone it knows, eliminating the stress of being returned, and didn't take up time, space and resources returning to the rescue.

Denying an adoption without a conversation

Making pass/fail decisions from answers on a questionnaire is inadequate and a barrier to life saving.

Examples:

Application question: "What happened to your past animals?"

Answer: "My last dog was hit by a car."

On paper, a rescue may be inclined to deny the adoption of a dog. Upon having a conversation with the applicant, the rescue learns that he was on vacation and while his dog was boarded at his vet clinic, he was hit by a car and killed.

Application question: "How many pets do you have?"

Answer: “27 cats”

On paper, a rescue may be inclined to deny the adoption of a cat. Upon having a conversation with the applicant, the rescue learns that she is referring to the community cat colony she cares for in her yard and that she considers them “her cats.”

Application question: “Would you be willing to hire a trainer to solve any behavior issues?”

Answer: “No”

On paper, a rescue may be inclined to deny the adoption of a dog. Upon having a conversation with the applicant, the rescue learns that the applicant is a certified behavior trainer and will handle training needs herself.

Without the conversation-based adoption protocol, three animals would have been denied homes and three people would have been denied a new family member while being turned off to adoption and rescues. Denied applicants are more likely to go to a pet store or breeder after one negative experience trying to adopt, and they will also share their bad experience with others.

People who apply to adopt an animal from a rescue or shelter are already trying to do the right thing. Why would an organization make it harder for them?

To follow this principle, a rescuer will not create barriers that prevent life saving.

Best Practices

Rescue Organizations lack the luxury of having a national or statewide umbrella organization to set standards, provide guidance or act as a resource. Each organization not only cares for the homeless cats and dogs in its care and seeks to rehome them, but each organization is also required to set-up a legal organizational structure, develop protocols, policies, documents, financial systems and fundraise to pay for it all. It is a daunting task, especially for what is usually a 100% volunteer-run organization. However, several hundred such organizations have been established in Michigan alone and have accomplished these tasks successfully.

The purpose of this document, along with the additional resources and supporting materials on the website is to gather and present the best practices for various operations and functions of rescue organizations.

Best Practices evolves as the animal welfare community evolves. Some may be surprised to see a medical protocol that indicates that spay/neuter surgery can be performed for heartworm positive dogs in stage one or stage two of the disease. This is a best practice in shelter medicine and one which needs to be adopted by the rescue community as well.

In order to ensure that Michigan's rescue community stays up-to-date with best practices, the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance produces annual education and learning opportunities.

Finally, these Best Practices ([Animal Care Standards](#), [Organizational Standards](#), and [Operational Standards](#)) along with the adherence to the [Code of Ethics](#) will be used as the basis for compliance with the Michigan Rescue Certification Program.

Animal Care Standards

The number one priority for any rescue organization is the proper care and safety of the animals for which they are responsible.

Care Philosophy

It is important that Michigan rescue organizations subscribe to the philosophy of [Do No Harm](#) and the Five Freedoms:

- **1st Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** by constant access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
- **2nd Freedom from Discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- **3rd Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- **4th Freedom to Express Normal Behavior** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and companionship.
- **5th Freedom from Fear and Distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

Capacity

The Five Freedoms and Do No Harm are the basis for determining capacity in your organization. It is important for foster-based organizations to have a Foster Coordinator to both communicate and assist in determining capacity with the Board of Directors and the main day-to-day managers. Some foster homes can only foster one animal at a time. Others may be able to take care of a mother and litter of puppies. Capacity is a direct result of the number of foster homes multiplied by the number of animals a foster home can foster at one time. You can run a quick table to help you to determine your rescue's capacity at any given time.

For example:

Number of Fosters	Multiplied By	Number of Foster Animals They Can House	Total
3 foster homes	X	1 animal	3 animals
4 foster homes	X	2 animals	8 animals
Total			11 animals

In this example, your organization's capacity is 11 animals. There will always be a fluctuation in these numbers sometimes even daily. It is a good idea to review capacity monthly or bi-monthly if not more often with the Board of Directors.

Foster homes have their own priorities that will affect capacity, such as a foster's work schedule and hours spent at home, space to appropriately house animals, family dynamics, and existing animals in the home. Fosters take vacations or need breaks. Sometimes a foster no longer wants to foster an animal. Sometimes a foster may be able to temporarily house two animals even though they normally only foster one. Foster homes will drive or reduce capacity.

The animals themselves can also dictate capacity. If an animal has specialized medical issues that require a more demanding time schedule, a foster who could foster two animals may now only be able to foster one due to the specialized care that animal requires. Or if a cat needs assistance with her two kittens, she may be able to be placed in a foster home that generally can only foster one animal. The care that is being given needs to remain constant for the animals that are in foster care.

Care should never be compromised for capacity.

We have all heard the ugly stories of "rescue gone wrong." This is often due to capacity and an organization continuing to take animals in that they cannot adequately care for. This can be an issue both at the individual level (individual foster taking on too many animals) or at an organizational level (organization taking in more animals and then begging for more fosters or placing more burden on existing fosters.)

The Humane Society of the United States has a great article on Exceeding Capacity [here](#). They also discuss the warning signs for individual rescuers that could be in danger of being over their capacity:

- Accepting more animals into the organization than are adopted out
- Having many animals with a poor external appearance
- Keeping many un- or undersocialized animals
- Maintaining impossible adoption standards because no one else is "good enough" to care for the animals. Facing widespread disease that is usually only present in overcrowding situations (e.g., URI, parasites, kennel cough, FeLV)
- Taking animals to the veterinarian only once, even when follow-up care is needed
- Refusing to euthanize animals whose physical health is compromised to the point that they no longer have a good quality of life
- Keeping bodies of animals that have passed

Please make capacity a consistent conversation with managers and the Board of Directors. What went right? What went wrong? How do you fix going forward?

Basic Care

The animal care standards listed below are best practices in providing general care, adequate shelter, water, nutritious food, transport, event standards and a safe environment for foster-based rescue organizations. Some of these standards are not absolutes and prudent judgment is necessary to make appropriate decisions for individual animals. One size does not fit all, as rescue organizations care for a variety of animals that range from big to small, young to old and in between, healthy to sick, strong to weak, different breeds and breed characteristics. To account for all the variations, we cannot stress enough that the decision has to center around what is in the best interest of the particular animal and that animal's quality of life. The Resources section contains additional resources.

Each rescue should develop basic care standards in writing and include them in its foster care manual, volunteer manual and volunteer training. Below are some general care standards:

- Animals should wear a collar and tag imprinted with the rescue name, phone number and any other relevant contact information. Microchipping is also recommended.
- Provide dogs with timely and appropriate access to the outdoors.
- Protect dogs adequately from the sun and elements when outdoors.
- Never allow animals to roam free or become a nuisance or threat as this violates state and local laws.
- Evaluate amount of time each dog needs for housetraining, exercise, and behavior training.
- Determine how dogs will be contained while outside (leash, lead, fence, exercise pen, etc.)
- Standards must comply with local laws.
- Never leave dogs unattended outside.
- Provide regular and appropriate grooming for good health and comfort, including bathing, brushing, nail trims, eye care, etc.
- Never leave an animal unattended in a vehicle.
- A best practice is to train foster care parents how to teach animals basic behavior and obedience skills, including house training, crate training and basic commands.

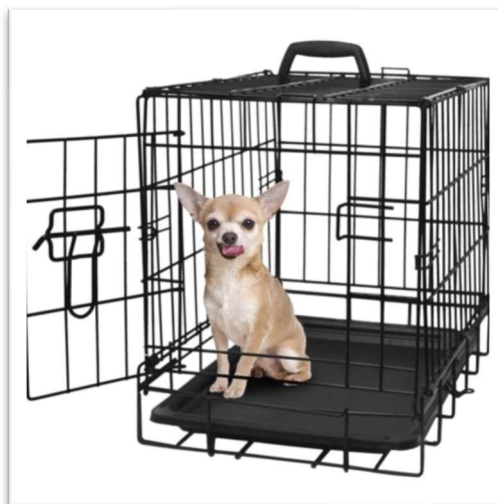


Animals should wear a tag imprinted with the rescue's contact information.

Environment

The following list provides best practices for basic environmental conditions:

- Crates must be large enough so the animal can sit, stand, lie down and turn around comfortably, with no overcrowding.
- Care should be taken to provide only appropriate toys, bedding and other items in crates, especially when animals are unsupervised.
- All bedding material must be clean and odor free.
- Feces, urine and any other bodily fluids must be picked up and disposed of immediately.
- Cat litter boxes must be cleaned daily.
- A shelf must be provided when more than one cat or kitten is in a cage or crate.
- In general, animals should be maintained in ambient temperatures and in proper ventilated areas, ideally 60–80 degrees.
- When outdoors, ensure dogs have the necessary protection from the natural elements.
- An emergency preparedness plan should be kept for the type of breed and number of animals at each foster care home and boarding kennel.
- Prior to placing a rescued animal in foster care, make sure that the foster parent's own companion animals are well-cared-for, free of parasites, spayed/neutered and current on vaccines.
- Dogs should be heartworm tested annually and on monthly heartworm preventative.
- Cats should have a negative test result for leukemia if living with other cats. Although vaccinations for feline leukemia (FeLV) are available, there is evidence to support that some cats develop tumors at the site of multiple injections, so you should follow your vet's recommendation regarding feline leukemia vaccines. Do NOT vaccinate cats for FIV. Once vaccinated for FIV, a cat will always test positive for it. If an FIV-vaccinated cat escapes and is taken to a shelter, it will be euthanized when it tests positive for FIV, even though it does not actually have the disease.
- Cats provided with outside access, such as a catio, leash walks or stroller walks, should be kept on monthly heartworm prevention.
- Ensure foster care homes provide a safe, loving and stable environment for all foster animals.



Crates must be large enough for the animal to sit, stand, lie down and turn around comfortably.

Microchip & Identification

On average, a lost dog in Michigan has a 25% chance of being reunited with its owner and a cat only has a 3.7% chance. There are two primary reasons for the low return rate: myths about lost animals and lack of identification.

All adopters should be encouraged to use both a tag and a microchip. The rescue should register the chip and transfer the microchip to the adopter as a part of the adoption process. Remind adopters to keep the microchip information up-to-date. No form of ID is perfect. Both have merits that make up for the other's deficits. It is especially important for cats to have ID and a breakaway collar since cats do escape. Michigan shelters are doing a much better job saving cat lives as they embrace Community Cat programs. However 14% of dogs and 52% of the cats that enter shelters face certain death. New owners need to know that a dog license and a microchip are a pet's ticket home.

A stray or lost cat has a 66% chance of reuniting with its owner if it is left where it is found, as opposed to a 3.7% chance if it is taken to a shelter or taken in by a rescue. Cats are usually very self-sufficient. A stray cat should only be taken in by a shelter or rescue if in need of medical assistance if underweight. All stray or community cats should be candidates for spay/neuter to ensure no unwanted births.

Mission Reunite, www.missionreunite.org, is an extraordinary resource that provides information on how to reunite missing/lost pets with their owners using behavior-based techniques. The scientific information found on this site is contrary to many of the myths and misinformation most rescue organizations and shelters currently possess. Rescue volunteers being familiar with the information on this site is critical to reuniting pets and owners and has the power to dramatically reduce the number of homeless animals in need.

Dietary Standards

The following outlines the standards for providing food and water:

- Animals must have access to fresh water in water vessels (dishes, bowls, self-waters, sipper-tubes, etc.) at all times.
- Each rescue should be aware of food ratings. Dogfoodadvisor.com is one resource that offers a dog food calculator to help you determine quality.
- Each animal has specific dietary needs, such as food allergies or a need for weight management. These needs should be assessed and a proper diet consistently provided accordingly.
- Water bowls, dishes or vessels should be sanitized at least once a day or as appropriate for the household. Avoid plastic dishes.
- Animals must have access to wholesome, nutritious and uncontaminated food provided at appropriate intervals to maintain the animal's good health, with consideration given to age, size, health and condition of the animal. Food should be stored so that it is protected from mold, insects, rodents and contamination, including refrigerating perishables.



Water must be available at all times.

Exercise and Socialization Standards

Exercise and socialization are critical to an animal's health and happiness. Each animal must be evaluated based on his/her individual needs for exercise and socialization. Exercise and socialization that is in each animal's own best interest must be provided. Standards include:

Fosters and volunteers should be taught how to properly introduce animals to humans, including children, and other animals.

- Animals should play and exercise on a daily basis based on age, health and condition.
- Animals should receive daily human socialization by their caretakers.
- Where applicable and, if possible, healthy animals should also receive socialization with people other than their caretakers, children and other animals.
- Interactions with children, other animals and the general public should always be supervised, with the animal kept under control by the caretaker, and interactions consistently monitored for potential adverse behaviors.
- The animal should never be left unattended with children or other animals



Animals need play and exercise on a daily basis.

Enrichment

Cats and Kittens

Enrichment refers to mental and physical stimulation. Allowing animals to think, engage, explore and learn goes a long way to keeping them behaviorally healthy and well socialized.

Food Puzzles and Busy Toys

In the wild, cats spend the majority of their time finding, catching, tormenting, killing and consuming their food. In our homes, we have reduced that natural activity to a 5-minute task by dumping a cup of kibble in a bowl. All house cats and confined cats need to be fed from puzzles or games in order to enrich their lives, increase their activity level and stimulate their instincts and senses. From homemade options, such as hiding treats or kibble in boxes, bags or hidden around their environment, to purchasing food puzzles and games, keep cats more stimulated by moving beyond the standard bowl of food. There are also a lot of options for slow feeders, which benefit cats who eat too fast or gobble their food.

Confined Cats

These could be shelter cats, cats living in a boarding kennel environment or cats who live in cages in a store. Every shelter cat should be provided with some form of enrichment each day. This should not be considered “extra” as it is part of the humane treatment of confined companion animals.

Environmental Enrichment

This type of enrichment involves modifying the environment so that it is more comfortable, provides more space, provides more choices and is more stimulating. Caged cats should be provided with an environment that includes a comfortable place to sleep, a hiding box and a perch.

If your shelter uses traditional banks of stainless steel cages, consider cutting portholes between units to provide the cats with more space. Providing the cats with two cages instead of one not only allows them more space to move around but also separates their toilet area from their sleeping and eating area.

Sensory Enrichment

All of the cat’s senses should be considered in your enrichment plan.

Olfactory Stimulation

Cats have an amazing sense of smell and this sense should be stimulated daily. A pinch of a dried spice (cinnamon, cumin, nutmeg, ginger) or a drop of a liquid extract (vanilla, almond, banana, etc.) can be placed on a cloth, piece of paper or stuffed animal and placed in the cage or liquid extract diluted in water can be spritzed into the air. Be aware that cats find some scents (citrus, menthol, floral perfumes) offensive or irritating.

Having the cats use their amazing sense of smell to search for hidden treats is a great enrichment strategy.

Provide a small pinch of dried or fresh catnip every few days. About 60% of cats have the receptors for catnip and find it pleasurable. Most cats get mellow after eating catnip, but if a cat gets over-stimulated by the catnip – discontinue the practice for that cat if he is housed in a small cage or in social housing.

Auditory Stimulation

Research shows that some forms of music can be calming to animals. Classical music, new age music, and music designed to calm the nervous system (‘Through A Dog’s Ear’) should be played at a low volume in the shelter during daytime hours. Recordings of books on tape can also be played. The sounds should be turned off at night because all animals require quiet time in order to sleep well.

Cats can also benefit from playing CD’s of bird songs for a few minutes each day. The sound of birds is biologically significant to cats meaning that they are hardwired to find it intriguing.

Visual Stimulation

This sense is stimulated a lot in the shelter environment – in fact sometimes too much. Cats are often stressed by the sight of other cats, dogs and even people and should have a place to hide if needed.

Because of their motion-sensitive vision, anything moving outside of their cage can peek their interest.

Visually stimulating things can be placed outside cat cages such as televisions, perpetual motion toys, mobiles, fish tanks or bird feeders outside a window. Something as simple of blowing bubbles for a few minutes or playing with a fishing pole type toy outside the cages will provide visual stimulation for all of the cats in the vicinity.

Tactile Stimulation

Many animals respond positively to tactile stimulation from humans (petting and brushing). Along with the tactile stimulation this enrichment also provides social interaction. Make sure to identify the kind of touch the cat appreciates and only pet him/her in that way on those body parts. Some cats are sensitive about being touched on certain parts of their bodies (such as the belly) so try not to irritate the cat with un-appreciated contact.

Taste Stimulation

Cats should be given novel food treats regularly to stimulate their taste buds and fed from puzzles or games.

Stimulating Species Typical Behavior

Scratching and rubbing are normal cat behaviors we want to stimulate in the shelter. To do so, provide rubbing clothes and brushes and scratching boards in the cage and scratching posts in the playrooms, visiting room and colony room.

Mental Stimulation

All animals need mental stimulation to stay behaviorally healthy in the shelter. Mental stimulation occurs during all of the above practices but additional stimulation should be provided.

Food Gathering Enrichment

Presenting food/treats inside a Kong, feeder ball or empty container so that the animal must work to get them out. Any plastic container, paper bag or tube, cardboard box can be used to make a puzzle feeder. PVC can be made into puzzle feeders as well.

Physical Stimulation

All animals require exercise to remain healthy. Cats should also be allowed out of their cages several times a week so they can run, jump stretch and play.

Play Stimulation

Play is the best way to keep animals in a positive frame of mind. Each cat should be provided with a play session at least several times a week and whenever he/she looks depressed.

Toys should be provided in their cages to stimulate self-play.

Social Stimulation

Cats are social animals and as such should be provided with opportunities for social interaction with humans and other cats (if appropriate).

When socially housed, observations should be made regularly to ensure that each cat is coping with the social living. Some cats are too fearful of other cats to live in social housing and others may bully the other cats.

The colony rooms should contain multiple food bowls, water bowls and litter boxes should be provided and they should be spread around the environment to ensure that the cats can always have access to them.

Efforts should be made to utilize the vertical space in the colony rooms so that there are plenty of resting areas and travel routes.

KITTENS: Make sure all experiences are safe and positive for the kitten. Each encounter should include rewarding treats and praise. Slow down and add distance if your kitten is scared.

Dogs and Puppies

Enrichment refers to mental and physical stimulation. Allowing animals to think, learn and explore goes a long way to keeping them behaviorally healthy and well socialized.

Food Puzzles and Busy Toys

The options in this area have extended far beyond the peanut butter-filled Kong. From homemade options, such as hiding treats or kibble inside an empty pizza box, to purchasing food puzzles and games, keep dogs more stimulated by moving beyond the standard bowl of food. There are also a lot of options for slow feeders, which benefit dogs who eat too fast or gobble their food.

Confined Dogs

These could be shelter dogs, dogs living in a boarding kennel environment or dogs who spend time crated. Each dog should be provided with enrichment each day. This should not be considered “extra” – it is part of the humane treatment of confined companion animals.

All dogs should have a comfortable place to rest inside their cage.

Olfactory Stimulation

Dogs have an amazing sense of smell and this sense should be stimulated daily. Introduce novel scents into the environment (spray scent in the air, peel an orange, etc.) or a pinch of dried spice (cinnamon, cumin, nutmeg, ginger) or a drop of liquid extract (vanilla, almond, banana, etc.) can be placed on their bed, the floor or the walls. Allow dogs to sniff when on walks. Hide treats for the dogs to find (“find it” (nosework) and “tracking” games.)

Auditory Stimulation

Research shows that some forms of music can be soothing to animals. Classical music, new age music and music designed for stress reduction (Through A Dog’s Ear) should be played at a low volume in the kennels during daytime hours. Recordings of books on tape can also be played. The music should be turned off at night as all animals required quiet time to sleep.

Visual Stimulation

This sense is stimulated a lot in the shelter environment – in fact sometimes too much. Dogs who become over stimulated or agitated by the sight of other dogs should be moved to a less stimulating cage or a sheet should be hung on their cage door. Other visually stimulating things can be placed outside the dog runs such as perpetual motion toys or mobiles to provide them with something interesting to look at.

Tactile Stimulation

Many animals respond positively to tactile stimulation from humans. This stimulation involves petting, brushing, and massage. Along with the tactile stimulation comes social interaction and this practice helps to ensure that these social animals receive the attention they need. Make sure to identify the kind of touch the animal appreciates. For example: some dogs like their belly scratched while others find it intimidating.

Taste Stimulation

Dogs should be given special food treats daily to stimulate their taste buds.

Stimulating Species Typical Behavior

Chewing and digging are normal dog behaviors that can be stimulated by providing safe chew items and a digging pit in the play yard.

Mental Stimulation

All animals need mental stimulation to stay behaviorally healthy in the shelter. Mental stimulation occurs during all of the above practices but additional stimulation should be provided. Below are some additional ideas:

Food Gathering Enrichment

Presenting food/treats inside a Kong, feeder ball, PVC pipe feeder or empty container of any kind so that the dog must work to get them out. Frozen food works well too.

Physical Stimulation

All dogs require exercise to remain healthy. Dogs should be walked on a leash, as well as provided aerobic exercise in the form of:

Running/jogging with a human
 Playing a game of fetch
 Playing a game of tug (with rules)
 Agility

Social Stimulation

Dogs are social animals and as such should be provided with opportunities for social interaction with humans and other dogs (if appropriate).

Those individuals who appear to be dog-friendly should be allowed time with another dog for socialization and play. First test the dogs together on leash and if all goes well – remove the leashes and supervise the session. If the dogs appear to enjoy each other's company and play well they should be placed together for a short time each day.

PUPPIES: Make sure all experiences are safe and positive for the puppy. Each encounter should include treats and lots of praise. Slow down and add distance if your puppy is scared!

“12 by 12” Program

Socialization Goals by 12 Weeks Old:

(If cat or puppy is over 12 weeks, start right away)

- Experience 12 different surfaces: carpet, tile, cement, linoleum, grass, wet grass, dirt, mud, puddles, grates, wood, woodchips, sand, pebbles/rocks, uneven surfaces, on a table, on a chair, etc.
- Play with 12 different objects: fuzzy toys, big and small balls, hard toys, funny-sounding toys, wooden items, paper or cardboard items, milk jugs, metal items, car keys, etc.
- Experience 12 different locations (should have at least two distemper combo vaccines on board): front yard (daily), other people's homes, school yard, lake, pond, river, boat, basement, elevator, car, moving car, garage, laundry room, kennel, vet hospital (just to say hi and visit, lots of cookies, no vaccinations), grooming salon (just to say hi), etc.
- Meet and play with 12 new people (outside of family): include children, adults (male and female), elderly adults, people in wheelchairs, walkers, people with canes, crutches, hats, sunglasses, etc.
- Expose to 12 different noises (always keep positive and watch puppy's comfort level – we don't want the puppy scared): garage door opening, doorbell, children playing, babies screaming, big trucks, Harley motorcycles, skateboards, washing machine, shopping carts rolling, power

- boat, clapping, loud singing, pan dropping, horses neighing, vacuums, lawnmowers, birthday party, etc.
- Expose to 12 fast-moving objects (don't allow to chase): skateboards, roller-blades, bikes, motorcycles, cars, people running, cats running, scooters, vacuums, children running, squirrels, horses running, etc.
- Experience 12 different challenges: climb on, in, off and around a box, go through a cardboard tunnel, climb up and downsteps, climb over obstacles, play hide & seek, exposed to an umbrella, jump over a broom, walk on a wobbly table (plank of wood with a small rock underneath), bathtub and bath, etc.
- Handled by foster parent and family 12 times a week: hold under arm like a football, hold to chest, hold on floor near owner, hold in-between foster parent's legs, hold head, look in ears/mouth/in-between toes, trim toenails, etc.
- Eat from 12 different containers: wobbly bowl, metal, cardboard box, coffee cup, pie plate, plastic, frying pan, spoon fed, etc.
- Eat in 12 different locations: backyard, front yard, crate, kitchen, basement, laundry room, bathroom, friend's house, car, bathtub, under umbrella, etc.
- Play with 12 different puppies (or safe adult dogs) as much as possible.
- Left alone safely, away from family and other animals (5-45 minutes) 12 times a week.
- Experience a leash and collar 12 different times in 12 different locations.

Source: Kelley Bollen, MS, CABC - Animal Alliances, LLC

Medical Protocols

Recognizing that there is no single type of rescue group, and many differences exist in the type of animals, the financial resources and the space available, the following requirements are the **minimum** acceptable standards to be certified.

All rescue groups need to have a relationship with at least one veterinarian or clinic. This veterinarian will be the one to treat sick animals and perform surgeries, while the rescue consults with the veterinarian for routine testing, such as heartworm or fecal, and scheduled vaccinations. This veterinarian can also be an important ally in your attempt to adopt out healthy animals.



All rescue organizations must have a relationship with at least one veterinarian.

The following are protocols that rescue groups must have performed **unless medical records and the rescue's veterinarian suggest alternative protocols and care:**

- All puppies and kittens must be vaccinated immediately upon intake with distemper/parvo for puppies and panleukopenia/URI for kittens. The vaccinations should be repeated every two to three weeks until the animal reaches 12 weeks old. If the rescue has substantial turn-over, with new animals coming and going within the same households or locations, there is an increased risk of these serious diseases being contracted or transmitted; thus, animals may need to receive boosted vaccinations every two to three weeks until they are 4 months old.
- All adult animals with no known history of vaccination must be vaccinated upon intake.
- All dogs and cats regardless of age must be dewormed for intestinal parasites upon intake.
- All dogs and cats must be given a flea prevention product, if needed, such as Capstar for immediate 24-hour protection or topical for 30-day protection. Tracking for application every 30 days may be necessary. Flea collars and low quality products do not work effectively and should not be used.
- All healthy animals weighing at least two pounds and at least 8 weeks old need to be spayed/neutered.
- All animals must be given an exam. Any signs of illness/injury should be noted on the intake report.

Signs to look for when evaluating an animal:

- Attitude: playful behavior is a good indicator of health, especially in young animals. Lethargic animals need to see a veterinarian ASAP.
- Clear eyes: no discharge
- Clear, clean nostrils
- Skin that is free of crusts, bald patches, masses and sores
- Gait: the animal should walk without lameness or limping
- Coughing
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Appetite: a healthy appetite is usually a sign of health
- Injuries
- Any animal with signs of illness or injury, along with all cats with litter box issues, must be taken to a veterinarian for diagnosis and treatment.
- All pets with flakey, crusty areas of hair loss, especially on the face, ears and paws, must be isolated from all contact with other animals and people until checked by a veterinarian for ringworm, mites, mange or other skin issues.

Ideally, the following should be part of standard medical protocols:

- Dogs and cats benefit from a thorough physical exam by a veterinarian.

- Dogs should be housed separately from cats and young animals should be housed separately from adults when the animal's origin and health status are unknown. However, once these conditions are fully determined, they may cohabitate with other animals if found to be healthy and compatible.
- Foster homes where an animal with a communicable disease has resided needs disinfecting prior to a new animal's arrival. A household where a dog had parvo should be totally disinfected and not house puppies under 6 months old for up to one year, and all dogs fostered should be vaccinated prior to arrival at the foster home.
- If possible, new intakes should be isolated from other animals for 7 to 10 days, a reasonable amount of time for incubating disease to become symptomatic.
- All dogs and cats at least 12 weeks of age must be vaccinated for rabies, which by law must be performed by a licensed veterinarian. Some vets prefer to wait until 16 weeks old. Follow your vet's recommendation.
- At 4 months old, kittens can be tested for **Feline Leukemia (FeLV)** and **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)**. This can be done much earlier, but for an accurate test result, it would have to be repeated at 4 to 6 months old.
- All dogs at least 6 months old must to be tested for heartworm disease and begin a monthly preventative.
- Regardless of resources, all adopters should be educated on appropriate pet care, including veterinary care, vaccination schedules, heartworm, FeLV, FIV, parasites, housing and feeding.



Disinfecting is important to prevent spreading disease.

Spay/Neuter

All dogs and cats older than 8 weeks, weighing at least two pounds and deemed healthy must be sterilized prior to adoption. If an animal is ill when the surgery is scheduled, the animal must remain in foster care until it is healthy enough to be sterilized unless the animal is placed through a Foster-to-Adopt contract where the rescue retains legal ownership, schedules, pays for and coordinates the spay/neuter at a more appropriate date.

If a dog is found to have heartworm in stage one or two, the dog should be placed on Doxycycline and an anti-inflammatory for two weeks, then sterilized prior to heartworm treatment, unless a veterinarian finds conditions to prevent it. Dogs that have more advanced heartworm disease should be treated for heartworm first, then sterilized six months later. These dogs should remain in foster care or the adoption should not be finalized until the sterilization is complete. If an animal is found to be permanently unhealthy, a letter from a veterinarian must be obtained detailing the animal's permanent health problem that would prevent it from being sterilized.



All cats and dogs at least 8 weeks old and two lbs. must be spayed/neutered prior to adoption unless a veterinarian finds conditions to prevent it.

Spay/neuter prior to Adoption Philosophy

Nationally the rate of spay/neuter after adoption, even in the case of a deposit or prepaid surgery, is less than 50%. If we do not want to be part of the pet population problem, we must be vigilant in guaranteeing that all pets are sterilized. Pediatric spay/neuter is safe and easy with no related health issues that are proven by research.

Basic Daily Health Checks

Appropriate health care, including routine and preventative care, must be provided to all animals (see medical protocol section). Basic health exams should be performed daily. Volunteers can perform the head-to-toe touch exam, feeling for any abnormalities. Pay attention to anything “out of the ordinary” or “not normal,” as this is a common indication of an issue.

Things to look for:

- Defecating and urinating normally (appearance, odor and frequency)
- Eating and drinking normally
- Showing any signs of disease or illness
- Showing signs of pain or distress

Common signs that indicate disease or illness:

- Sudden behavior changes
- Excessive licking/scratching
- Changes in gum color from normal pink (white or gray gums indicate a life-threatening emergency; seek immediate care)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, constipation or straining
- Unexplained or sudden weight loss
- Limping
- Not eating/drinking or increased appetite
- Lethargy/listlessness
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Coughing
- Prostration
- Skin lesions
- Open wounds
- Abnormal hair loss
- Evidence of fleas, ticks or other parasites
- Increased or decreased respiration/labored breathing
- Changes in bodily functions



Basic health checks should be performed daily.

Rescues should seek advice and care from veterinary experts, prevent the spread of disease, safeguard the public, including foster homes, and isolate any animal showing signs of having a contagious disease. The rescue should have medical contact information in place for all foster care homes in case of an emergency.

Behavior

Rescue groups are not expected to conduct temperament tests on animals in their care, especially since such tests have been proven to be unreliable. They *are*, however, **expected to understand each animal's behavior** as much as possible prior to the animal becoming available for adoption.

In order to do this, most dogs must be in a safe, stable environment for an average of 10 days or more. Cats may take as long as a few weeks (and in some situations, a few months) to get comfortable enough where they show their true personality in a new environment. Properly integrating a cat into a new home with other animals often requires patience but is integral to maintaining a happy relationship between other animals and humans. If not introduced properly, it could set back the cat's personality, making it harder for it to get adopted.

It is the rescue organization's responsibility to educate adopters on how to read their dog appropriately and recognize distress signals in the dog for safety and happiness of the animal. Rescues must have a strong understanding of things that could elicit a fearful response from an animal and have the education to know the extent and risk of that fear. If a rescue's leadership does not have a strong enough understanding of behavior and the ability to adequately convey that to an



Class Clown - I'm a fun-loving, happy-all-the-time, glass is half-full kind of dog looking for someone who loves to laugh and play around. Must have a great sense of humour and some time to spend with me. I'm a dog on a mission to please you.



Social Butterfly - I think everything is fun, interesting and meant for play, especially you. Anything you do, I'll want to do too. With my own brand of surprises, life with me will keep you constantly on your toes, and the fun is guaranteed.



Energizer Bunny - Want to get more exercise? Action is my middle name. I never get tired and I will keep you motivated to get outside and move. I've got tons of energy; and just like the sun, I'm burning and working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I'll run for miles, chase a ball for hours, and still want to play at the end of the day.



Independant Spirit - Intelligent, confident and clever, I prefer making my own decisions, but will listen to you if you make a good case. We're partners in this adventure. Treat me like one and we'll both live happily ever after. Obedience training is very important for me.



Typical Puppy - Bouncy, playful, full of energy, happy-go-lucky, typical puppy. Still needs lots of training, daily exercise & socialization to become a well behaved adult dog.

adopter so that they know any possible risks they are taking on, then they must employ an expert who can.

Rescue groups **should know** and be able to answer the questions below for every dog in their care and honestly report behavior and needs to potential adopters:

- Does the dog have a known bite history? What was the severity of the bite? (Regardless of the situation in which a dog bites, the severity will be to that degree or worse if the dog bites again. Reference Dunbar Level.)
- Is the dog high-energy, calm, shy, pushy or fearful?
- Is the dog barky or vocal? Target the behavior of the dog. Is the dog demand barking because it wants you to do something or is the barking a reactivity issue?
- Is the dog housetrained?
- Is the dog crate trained?
- Does the dog show any aggression around food?
- Does the dog show any aggression if a toy is taken away?
- Does the dog display aggression toward other dogs?
- Does the dog initiate play with other dogs?
- Has the dog been around cats and, if yes, what is the dog's reaction?
- Does the dog chew on inappropriate items, such as pillows or furniture?
- Does the dog know any basic obedience commands, such as sit, down, come, etc.?
- Does the dog take a treat gently from a human's hand?
- Does the dog show any fear or aggression upon being touched?
- Has the dog had experience around young children?
- Is the dog able to be groomed without an issue?
- Does the dog travel well in a car?
- Does the dog display any separation anxiety?
- Does the dog jump and bite to self-soothe from anxiety? Is it possible the adopter could confuse this with basic or puppy manners and are they aware of the risk they are taking on?
- Is the dog overly appeasing? (Includes repetitive licking, "hugging", leaning into pressure, all with ears back.) Does the adopter recognize that though this appears friendly, it is actually an indication that the dog is avoiding a perceived conflict and can be an indication of human-directed aggression when the "conflict" comes to fruition? (This is common in shelter settings. If someone is pulled over by a police officer they may be overly polite before they are handed a ticket. But if actually given a ticket, it can turn quickly to aggression.)

Rescue groups **should know** and be able to answer the questions below for every cat in their care and honestly report behavior and needs to potential adopters:

- Is the cat friendly or shy?
- Does the cat like to sit in your lap?
- Does the cat cuddle in bed?
- Does the cat hide?
- Does the cat approach people?
- Is the cat comfortable being approached?
- Does it like other cats?
- Does it like dogs?
- Does it like young children?
- Has the cat ever attacked another animal or human?
- Is it an alpha cat?
- Does it scratch or bite?
- Has it ever bitten anyone?
- Does the cat use the litter box?
- Has it ever had any litter box issues?
- Does it like to look outside windows?
- Does it jump on counters or tables?
- Does it climb curtains?
- Does it play?
- What kinds of toys does it like?
- When playing, does it play aggressively or nicely?
- Does the cat know its name?
- Does it meow a lot?
- How active is the cat – does it sleep a lot or require a lot of attention?

The inability to identify and work on these behaviors indicates that the dog or cat has not been with the rescue group long enough for a true assessment and should not be made available for adoption until these questions can be answered.

In cases where more time is necessary to evaluate the animal and an adopter is available and interested, Foster-to-Adopt may be a good option.

Rescue groups must have a plan in place for animals that need behavior modification or rehabilitation. This means that an animal will not be available for adoption until the issue needing rehabilitation has been addressed by appropriately skilled trainer(s). This may be a foster home that has proven experience in dealing with the issue at hand, it may include medical tests to rule out an underlying medical issue or it may require obtaining professional behavioral assistance.



Rehabilitation or training may be needed prior to making an animal available for adoption.

Euthanasia

An inevitable part of operating a rescue group is the need to make a decision on euthanizing an animal. The need for the decision is usually due to one of two factors: health or behavior. And in both cases it comes down to the question, “is the animal suffering – mentally, psychologically or physically – and do we have the resources and ability to fix it?”

When it comes to the subject of euthanasia, the definition of “no-kill” must be understood. It does not mean that an animal will never be euthanized. As stated in the About the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance section of the Michigan Rescue Certification Program, it means that no healthy and treatable homeless cat or dog will be euthanized.

Health Reason

When an animal’s health is compromised to the point that it no longer has a good quality of life, euthanasia becomes not only necessary, but humane. It would be wrong for a rescue to keep an animal on treatment to prolong its life when the animal is clearly suffering and unable to enjoy life. It is important to recognize when it becomes more about the person/rescue than the animal’s need.

Behavior Reason

In cases where rehabilitation is not successful or not an option at all, a rescue group must be prepared to make the difficult decision regarding euthanasia. Contacting an animal sanctuary may be a first option, but they are generally limited and it is unusual that space is available when needed. In worst case scenarios where the animal can harm a human due to uncontrolled aggression and a sanctuary cannot be found, it may be necessary for the animal to be humanely euthanized.

Regardless of the cause for euthanizing an animal, it must be done humanely. This means the animal is taken to a veterinary clinic and a representative of the rescue group is present with it during the procedure. Unless there is a working arrangement with a shelter, it is an unacceptable practice for a rescue group to transfer its problem by dropping off an animal in their possession to a shelter and requesting the shelter to euthanize it. Once an animal is accepted into a rescue, the group must be responsible for the animal and deal with all problems that come with the responsibility.

Use of Boarding Kennels

Some rescue organizations use boarding kennels on an emergency basis, such as when animals are unexpectedly returned by an adopter or a foster care home. It is important to form a relationship with the boarding kennel since both parties are responsible for the animals' care. Many boarding kennels will also allow the rescue organization's volunteers to come spend time with their boarded animal(s). The more interaction, enrichment and stimuli the animals have, the healthier they will be throughout their boarding kennel stay.

Encourage volunteers to take the kenneled rescue dog for a car ride and a walk in a new place, teach them basic commands, lounge and just spend down time with them, etc. Use of an online calendar makes it easier for your volunteers to sign-up for dog walking shifts and to communicate with one another about what they're learning about the dog.



Establish a relationship with a kennel before needing one.

It's important to do your homework and find the right facility for your organization and animals. Referrals are one of the best ways to find a good boarding kennel. Ask a volunteer, another organization, a friend, neighbor, veterinarian, animal shelter or reputable dog trainer for a recommendation. Keep in mind that some animal shelter's policies preclude them from giving specific referrals to privately owned businesses. However, you can also search the Internet and talk with other organizations for recommendations. Once you have names, even ones you received from reliable sources, it's important to do a background check.

Currently, the Michigan Department of Agriculture does not license and/or regulate boarding kennels. However, some local townships, cities and counties have ordinances requiring boarding kennels in their jurisdiction to be licensed. Know the local ordinance and make sure that the kennel you are considering displays a license or certificate showing that the kennel meets mandated standards. If there is an animal neglect or abuse concern, contact the local animal control or police/sheriff's department. To contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture with questions, call 1-800-292-3939 or visit <http://www.michigan.gov/mdard>.

Check, too, with the Better Business Bureau to see whether or not any complaints have been lodged against a kennel you are considering. Online reviews from consumer

websites, such as www.yelp.com, www.tripadvisor.com and www.cityvoter.com, can also be helpful and provide feedback from other customers' experiences.

After selecting a few kennels, speak to the owner or manager about whether or not they can accommodate your organization and can address your rescue's special needs, if any. If you're satisfied, schedule a visit to tour the kennel yourself and make an informed decision.

On your visit, ask to see all the places your rescue pets may be taken.

Things to Look for in a Kennel

- Does the facility look and smell clean?
- Boarding kennel enclosures must be large enough so the animal can sit, stand, lie down and turn around comfortably, with no overcrowding.
- Is there sufficient ventilation and light?
- Is a comfortable temperature maintained?
- Does the staff seem knowledgeable and caring?
- Are pets required to be current on their vaccinations, including the vaccine for canine kennel cough (Bordetella) and canine influenza?
- Is there a quarantine area for pets that unexpectedly become ill?
- Does each dog have his own adequately sized indoor-outdoor run or an indoor run and a schedule for exercise?
- Do outdoor runs and exercise areas provide shelter from sun, wind, rain and snow?
- Are resting boards and bedding provided to allow dogs to rest off the concrete floor?
- Are cats housed away from dogs?
- Is there enough space for cats to move around comfortably?
- Is there enough space between the litter box and food bowls?
- How often are pets fed?
- What veterinary services are available?
- Are other services available, such as grooming, training or bathing?
- How are rates calculated?



Kennel conditions should be inspected prior to use.

Once you're satisfied with a boarding kennel's condition and operation, your organization and the kennel should form an agreement, a meeting of the minds as to what each party is responsible for regarding:

- How long can an animal stay?
- What is the rate the rescue is expected to pay and when?
- How many animals can your organization kennel there at one time?
- What happens on days the kennel is closed, such as holidays?
- Who provides the food and other supplies?
- What supplies are allowed, such as a bed or toys?
- Does the kennel need copies of each animal's veterinary records?
- How will veterinary care be handled, including emergencies, injuries, illness and routine vaccinations?
- If an animal is currently taking medication, may the animal board there? If so, who will be responsible for administering medication and recording it?
- Can volunteers walk and spend time with the kenneled rescue animals? If so, when? Are there specific blocks of time or days when this is unacceptable?
- Who are the points of contact for the kennel and for the rescue?
- Is obedience training available? If so, at what cost? Is it the type of training your organization is comfortable with? Who manages the animal's training plan?
- Is grooming available? If so, at what cost?
- Are there other rescues that currently board there?
- When will the current agreement be reviewed again?
- Under what circumstances would an animal be asked to leave the kennel? And, how is that handled?
- Under what circumstances would a volunteer be asked to no longer come to the kennel? And, how is that handled?

It is important to communicate to the boarding kennel which basic commands the animal knows and how well socialized he/she is with other animals and people. The staff at the kennel is going to learn more about your rescue pet, so it's important that an exchange of information and line of communication is established in the beginning. The information the kennel staff learns can help you more quickly and accurately find an adopter or foster care home and write a more detailed, descriptive animal bio. It is also important to set-up reoccurring calls or check-in dates so that the kennel never thinks the animal has been abandoned or forgotten about and so that the rescue organization is always aware of the animal's situation.

Standards for Local Transport

The following guidelines have been developed for transporting animals locally, such as driving a rescued animal to the vet's office or taking animals to an adoption event. For long distance transports, see our online Resources section. Each rescue is responsible for training volunteers and foster families how to responsibly and safely transport animals using these guidelines. The first six items listed are minimum transport guidelines. The advanced safety items are also ideal; however, it is recognized there may be constraints to implement all ideal steps.



Transport Best Practice

1. Each animal will need to use a size-appropriate crate or canine auto safety harness, such as Bergan or Solvit brands. Cats must use a crate or carrier.
2. All animals should be transported in the back portion of the car or van. If an airbag is deployed in the front seat, it can crush a crate and kill an animal. Only transport an animal in the front seat if the air bag can be reliably disabled and it is the only option.
3. Transporting animals in the back of a pickup truck or on top of a car is an inappropriate mode of travel and does nothing to protect the animal and keep it safe.
4. Keep the leash on the animals when they are in the crate or canine auto safety harness. If the animal bolts, you have a better chance to catch him/her. Sometimes animals get frightened, as they don't understand what is going on and will bolt. A best practice is to get into the back of the car and close all the doors BEFORE opening crate door or releasing a harness. Please be very careful when you open the crate or release the animal from the harness. Be prepared.
5. When transporting in crates, line the crates with towels or some other form of crate bedding. Make sure you have enough detail on the animal's behavior so that you understand the appropriate type of crate lining for each animal. For example, don't use blankets for an animal known to shred and ingest them.
6. When transporting multiple animals, do not use canine auto safety harnesses. Multiple animals in one vehicle must have crates so they are separated from each other.

Advanced Safety Precautions

- Put a note in your wallet (next to your driver's license), stating the names of the animals you are transporting, noting that they belong to <rescue name> and contact info for your rescue's directors.
- Additionally, attach a note stating this info to the crates and note that <rescue name> will reimburse for any and all vetting that the animals need should they be injured in an accident.
- The transporter can put a note on each crate or harness with the information below in case of an emergency, such as a traffic accident while in transit:
 1. Animal's name
 2. Foster care parent's name and phone number
 3. Any special needs
 4. Animal's medical history/records
 5. Organization <rescue name> and contact information
 6. Current medications the animal is to receive, dosage and timing

Suggested supplies for local animal transportation

- Cleaning materials: wet wipes, paper towels, disinfectant
- Collars, leashes and tags
- Towels or small rugs to line crates, plus extras
- Several plastic bags for garbage
- Waterless hand sanitizer
- Ginger or ginger snaps for motion sickness
- Honey or NutriCal for low blood sugar

Standards of Care at Events

Many rescues choose to participate in community events. It allows rescue organizations to build a relationship with the public and to promote the mission of the rescue. Adoption events can also provide a venue to network with other rescue organizations and give adoptable animals additional exposure. The key to successful adoption events is to always do what is in the best interest of the animals.

Standards include:

- Train volunteers and fosters to recognize signs of stress in animals (see Recognizing Signs of Stress section) and how to handle it.
- Only healthy and appropriately tempered animals should attend events. Use good judgment when determining which animals can attend events. Some animals may have an overall good temperament, but do not handle the stress of events well.
- Do not stack crates.
- Animals should be monitored very closely at adoption events.
- Protect both the animals and the public from any uncharacteristic behavior, which can occur when an animal is stressed.
- The rescue organization should be clearly identified with any of the following: T-shirts, banners, signs, business cards, etc.

- Having the appropriate number of volunteers is important and will depend on the requirements of the animals at any particular event. Medium and large dogs at an event will probably require a higher number of volunteers to provide needed exercise and bathroom breaks than cats, kittens or puppies.
- Specify which volunteers can handle animals.
- The public should not handle animals unless a volunteer is present and can monitor the situation one-on-one. Some rescues may choose not to allow the public to handle animals at all at adoption events.
- Identify animals by posting basic information on their crates, such as name, age, medical history, personality and temperament. Unless an animal is a purebred or the rescue has proof of breed lineage, it is recommended that a generic description, such as medium mixed breed be used. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that guessing at breed make-up based upon physical characteristics is highly inaccurate even when performed by professionals in animal welfare.
- Use only appropriately sized crates and enclosures that allow animals to stand up, lie down and turn around comfortably, including crates for cats that have litter boxes.
- Animals should be kept in separate enclosures unless normally housed together.
- Dogs and cats or any other species are crated separately even if from the same household. Litters of puppies or kittens can be housed together in exercise pens or enclosed playpens.
- Crates and enclosures are kept clean and dry throughout the event.
- Urination and defecation is quickly cleaned and disposed of appropriately.
- Remove any animal from the premises immediately if they display any signs of stress or sickness.
- Ensure there is sufficient food, if appropriate given the length of the event and animal's needs, and water for animals.
- Animals must have appropriate exercise and bathroom breaks outside of their enclosure (at least once an hour is recommended).
- All animals are actively monitored.
- Provide antibacterial gel, hand sanitizer or hand wash stations with signage for the public to utilize. Disease can be spread to your animals from the previous animals the public has touched.
- Create and use "Don't stick fingers in enclosures" and "Please use hand sanitizer" signs.
- Weather and animal protection should be closely monitored during outdoor events.
- Use cardboard or blankets between crates to minimize stress, as necessary.
- Minimize stress via strategic placement of crates and cages (example: dogs can get stressed looking at the dogs across from them).
- Consider the length of time of adoption events. A maximum of four hours is a good rule of thumb. If the adoption event is eight hours, consider splitting up the animals into a.m. and p.m. shifts.

- Make sure you are prepared for disasters, including location of the closest veterinary hospital, inclement weather protocol, etc.
- See Local Transport section for appropriate transportation standards to and from events.
- While at outdoor events, animals are kept in crates and completely in the shade or fully covered with shade tarps.
- Animals need more water and more time out of crates for exercise and bathroom breaks during outdoor events.
- Protect the animals from hot surfaces, like asphalt, that can burn their feet during high temperatures. The animals should also be protected from any other inclement weather, such as heat, cold, sun, wind, rain, snow, sleet, etc. Never put the animals at risk.
- An animal should be contained (whether on a leash or in an enclosure) and should not be a nuisance or a threat to the public or other animals.
- Remove an animal from an event immediately if it is a nuisance or a threat. Again, some animals are not equipped to handle the high traffic at adoption events. Exercise keen judgment and have a back-up plan in case an animal needs to leave an event before it ends.
- Rescues and rescue volunteers should be responsible and professional in their dealings with the public.

**Prudent Judgment:
doing what is BEST for
the animals:**

If there is a severe snow storm warning for the area and multiple animals are coming from multiple locations, cancelling attendance is acceptable because the safety of the animals and volunteers is the rescue's primary focus.

Cancelling attendance at an event because a rescue 'doesn't feel like going' is not an acceptable reason. This is not acting responsibly and professionally in dealings with the public.

Adoption Event Checklist

1. Transportation to/from events
2. Volunteers on-site to transport while at the event
3. Volunteers to help during event, as well as set-up and tear-down
4. Crates and enclosures
5. Blankets, newspaper, towels, rugs for crates
6. Toys for animals
7. Water
8. Dog/cat food, as necessary
9. Clean bowls
10. Signage: "Do not stick fingers in crates," "Please use hand sanitizer," banners, etc.
11. Cardboard or blankets for animal separation
12. Cat litter boxes to fit inside crates
13. Cat litter and scoopers
14. Paper towel
15. Bleach and cleaning supplies
16. Hand sanitizer and/or anti-bacterial gel
17. T-shirts or name tags for volunteers
18. Information cards/bios for each animal
19. Vet records for each animal
20. Marketing materials: brochures, pamphlets, business cards, information on rescue
21. Leashes and collars for each animal
22. ID tags on all animals at the event
23. Large plastic garbage bags
24. Small waste garbage bags
25. Tables and chairs
26. Pens
27. Adoption, foster care and volunteer applications
28. Well-tempered animals
29. A smile and a professional appearance!

Recognizing Signs of Stress - Body Language – Do You Know What a Dog Is Saying?

Recognizing some common canine stress signals makes supervising the interactions between kids/adults and dogs much easier. If your dog or any dog shows one of these signals, it is time for you to intervene and suggest an alternate activity. Just because a dog is showing signs of stress, doesn't mean that she's on the verge of aggression. But all behavior deteriorates under stress – both our own and dogs' behavior – so it is important for us to be able to recognize when our dogs need a little help.

Remember that you need to analyze not only the human's intention, but also the dog's perception of every interaction. For example, hugs are intended kindly, but few dogs enjoy them. From their perception, they are being restrained. In the case of a child hugging a dog, that restraint is usually accompanied by fast movement and squealing.



Yawning

This is often mistaken for contentment or sleepiness. For example, the dog is surrounded by kids and she lets out a big yawn. Isn't that sweet? Nope, it's a sign that she's in over her head, feeling stressed and would appreciate your help.



Turning Away

Often, owners think a dog turning away is "blowing them off" and they intensify their demands on her, which is exactly what the dog is trying to avoid. Listen to the dog. She is communicating, "I need some space."



Shaking Off

Compare this to a reset button. The dog is doing a full-body shake-off, as if she were wet. It often happens just after a stressful interaction. Pay attention. It happens more often than you might think. Reboot!



Half-Moon Eye

When a dog is calm and relaxed, you don't usually see much white around her eyes. The "half-moon" refers to the white arc that is often seen when a dog is stressed and trying to hold it in.



Lip Licking

When a dog is anxious, she will often quickly stick out her tongue and lick her lips. It's usually just a fast, little flick. Watch your dog; this is one of the most common signals that a dog is stressed.



Freezing

Watch out! Dogs typically freeze right before they snap or bite. That may sound obvious, but most owners don't recognize it. A real-world example, "Lucy loves to have kids hug her. Look how still she is." That's a heart-stopping moment. Lucy, thank goodness, did not bite, but she was definitely not enjoying the experience.

Organizational Standards

Rescue organizations need an organizational structure that legitimizes the organization as an operating corporation in Michigan and provides the ability to either effectively fundraise as a 501 (c)(3) or have sustainable funding support from an umbrella organization, such as a breed club 501(c)(7). The following addresses the various components necessary for a non-profit organization.

Public Description & Purpose

The general public should be able to access or obtain a description of the rescue organization, including its purpose. Examples are available at www.michiganpetfund.org. The description should include:

- Mission statement
- Bylaws or operating documents
- Narrative description of the rescue organization

Board of Directors

Choosing a Board of Directors is as much an art as it is a science. Having individuals who bring diverse talents and skill sets to the organization will prove helpful in the long run. For example, find an organizational/management professional, financial whiz, veterinary, grooming, photography professional, and/or marketing guru. It is important for the Board of Directors to have a contagious enthusiasm for the organization and mission but a contributed skill set to offer is just as important. Many grassroots organizations have a Board of Directors who also manage the day-to-day operations. Please see the section on Compassion Fatigue and recognize the signs within your organization.

IRS Charitable 501(c)(3) Organization

Many municipal and non-profit shelters in Michigan require rescue organizations to be 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(7), which grants non-profit status and tax exemption, as a requirement to intake or “pull” animals from shelter to rescue, to waive adoption fees or to establish collaborative agreements. Rescue organizations without a source of funding outside of rescue operations cannot sustain long-term operations on adoption fees and personal funds.

Designation as a charitable organization operating under a Board of Directors by the IRS as described under Section 170(b)(1)(A) as eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions from the public is an important component in fundraising efforts and a critical component for long-term sustainability. Such a designation is also required to qualify for foundation grants and certification.



Most shelters require a rescue organization to be a designated non-profit by the IRS as a requirement to collaborate with them.

Animal rescues classified as charitable organizations qualify for exemption from federal income taxes if they are able to fulfill all the IRS requirements. In order to become a charitable 501(c)(3) organization, a rescue group must follow these steps:

1. File in the State of Michigan. Instructions located here: https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-61343_35413_35426-120068--,00.html
2. Form 502 is used to file the Domestic Non-Profit Articles of Incorporation. The cost to incorporate in Michigan is \$20 for normal processing times (expedited are available). Form 502 can be found at: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/502_08-15_527692_7.pdf
3. Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Application can be made at: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>
4. Once the organization is incorporated and has a EIN, application for IRS charitable 501(c)(3) status can begin. This is done by following the instructions for IRS form 1023 or the streamlined 1023EZ at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1024.pdf>. Appropriate filing fees must be made.
5. Once non-profit status has been granted by the IRS, visit the Michigan Attorney General website to either file for a license (CTS-01) or an exemption (CTS-03) from licensing for the Charitable Solicitation License. We recommend getting a license if a group wants to become a Certified Rescue as the SECC program requires it to receive donations through this annual benefit. This license is free but does need to be renewed annually (CTS-02.)
6. Remember to file your annual business license to remain in good standing with the State of Michigan which is currently \$20/year.

Breed Club 501(c)7 Rescue Organizations

Breed clubs, which are usually classified as a 501(c)7 organizations, differ from 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations in that only the contributions of their members are eligible as charitable donations. However, the club, which serves a number of purposes, often supplies the funding for the rescue operation. Some breed club rescues may only serve as an operation for their members who are having difficulty placing an animal or have a dog returned from an adopter. However, some also take dogs of their breed from shelters and owners that are not associated with the club.

Insurance

It is recommended that each rescue group maintain current liability insurance for its directors, officers and volunteers. The limit and deductible are at the discretion of each individual rescue group. Resources for insurance programs are listed in the Appendix.

Financial Records

As a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, it is essential that the 501(c)(3) stay in good standing with the IRS, state and local governments for financial and tax purposes. Good standing requires filing a 990, 990-EZ or 990-N on an annual basis. Additional requirements may include annual or periodic reports to the Secretary of State, Attorney General, Department of Agriculture & Rural Development or some other state agency, including directors' and officers' information, annual reports and financial reports. It may also include reports annually to local government like Personal Property Tax reports, even if exempt. If a certified rescue experiences a change in the 501(c)(3)'s good standing, they must notify the Certification Committee immediately of the change.

Not for Profit organizations must file a 990 each year with the IRS.

Sound administration and accounting records are not just recommended but are required by law. It is required that annual registrations and financial reports are complete and accurate. Detailed accounting records must be maintained for all aspects of the 501(c)(3) organization's finances, including revenues and expenditures. It is important that financial books and records are kept in an organized format; it is also recommended that organizations use online accounting software or maintain digital/electronic records of all finances and accounting. Remember that income needs to be specific – adoption fees, donations, fundraisers, sales of products, grants and bequests. Adoption fees are not donations unless they are listed as such and are optional. Expenses should also be specific – administration, pet supplies, medical costs, programs, etc.

It is also necessary to maintain contribution records, which will include at a minimum the following information: date, name, address, donation amount, what was donated and was anything given in exchange for the donation. Funds should never be commingled. Personal funds must always be kept separate from the 501(c)(3) organization's funds without exception.

Though it is not required for basic certification, we highly recommend that 501(c)(3) organizations use an accountant and/or CPA to maintain and/or prepare financial records. Depending on the level of donations, the IRS may require an outside independent audit completed by a CPA.

The IRS also requires that the 501(c)(3) organization prepare and have available an Annual Financial Report for the public. This information is required to be given to

anyone who asks for it. Including an annual 990, 990-EZ or 990-N directly on the 501(c)(3) organization's website is a good way to achieve transparency with the public. This document details how money is raised and spent.

It is also highly recommended that the 501(c)(3) prepare an annual budget. Steps to do this are as follows:

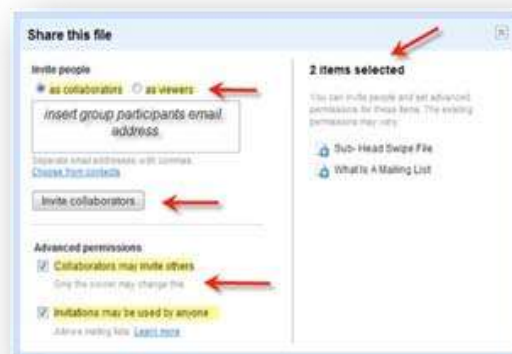
- Start the budgeting process early, at least two months in advance of the upcoming year.
- Review the previous year's budget or programs versus actual income/expenses to determine financial outcomes.
- Determine if there are any new expenses in the upcoming year not currently accounted for on the current budget.
- Estimate increases in expenditures: inflation, increases in rent, etc.
- Estimate income: contributions, adoption fees, sales of goods and/or grants.
- Have the Board of Directors review budget for approval.
- Review the budget and make changes as appropriate.

It is important to keep copies of financial records. Back up files often. These documents should be kept with a back-up system (physically and/or digitally) for at least seven years.

As 501(c)(3) organizations grow and mature, so does the amount of reporting that is required. Best practices suggest that non-profit rescue organizations meet at least annually with an accountant or CPA so that records and processes are performed to current standards and requirements.

Animal Records

Digital record summaries, which can be a simple spreadsheet shared by appropriate rescue personnel, should be maintained for all aspects of the rescue, including intake/surrender forms, veterinarian records, adoption records, foster records, volunteer records, etc. A digital file is more accessible to multiple people that may need the information, can easily tabulate information and can summarize key data that may be needed without thumbing through paper records, which must be stored at a single location.



Digital record summaries can be easily shared.

At a minimum, digital records should be kept for each animal taken into the rescue, including:

- Surrender/intake information:
 - Where obtained
 - Date obtained
 - Type of animal
 - Male/female
 - Spayed/neutered, date if known
 - Approximate age
 - Medical history

Outcome information (where the animal went):

- Adopted, euthanized, transferred, died, lost, RTO, TNR
- Name, address, phone number of where animal went
- Date animal left rescue

Medical information:

- Scanned vet records
- Or a single place where medical information is kept, such as Shelter Manager (www.sheltermanager.com) or an Excel spreadsheet

Animal's photo – the animal's photo may be kept solely on Petfinder if all of the following conditions are met:

- The animal is recorded using a unique ID number (containing letters, numbers and/or special characters)
- That ID number is also used in all of the animal's digital records
- The Petfinder listings are never deleted, but rather moved to "Adopted" and retained in the system

There are several options available at no or very low cost to accomplish digital record-keeping, such as:

- Google documents (free)
- Shelter Manager (free), www.sheltermanager.com
- Windows/Mac storage (free)

Best practices are not limited to these digital storage solutions.



All key personnel can access records stored online.

Operational Standards

Animal Intake

Each rescue organization decides where and how it will obtain homeless pets for rescue and rehoming. However, there are legal requirements, as well as acceptable and unacceptable sources for obtaining animals, which rescues must abide by.

Strays

A stray is defined as: A domestic animal that is wandering at large or is lost.

According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, strays are to be held by local animal control for a required, minimum number of days (four business days for untagged / unidentified animals and seven business days for tagged / identified animals). Local ordinances may vary and some may require longer times. Rescues that find or intake stray animals must first scan for a microchip, then contact the local animal control or police department to provide information and receive direction on how to handle the stray animal. Some animal controls may allow rescues to care for the stray animal during the hold period provided they supply information about the animal, including a description, where the animal was found and the date it was brought in. Animal control is required to post found animal information for the public to allow owners the opportunity to find their lost pets. Animal control can require that the rescue bring the animal to their facility to be held for the minimum period of time.



Michigan law requires strays to be held four days if untagged and seven days if tagged. Some local ordinances may be longer. Local animal control must be contacted when a stray is found for instructions on what to do.

Rescues cannot adopt out stray animals that have not gone through the animal control system and that have not been held the required, minimum amount of time.

Obtaining Rescue Animals

The Michigan Certified Rescue Organization Code of Ethics prohibits organizations from obtaining dogs and cats from breeders, brokers or auctions. Obtaining animals from these sources keeps them profitable and in operation. If the operation is profitable, it will continue and more animals will be bred for sale at future auctions and puppy mills. It is recognized that in the short-term it is difficult for a rescue

organization not to respond to a homeless animal in need of placement; however, relieving breeders and brokers of what they consider “excess stock” supports the operation and perpetuates the crisis.

One purpose of the Michigan Certified Rescue Program is to advance Michigan to become the first No Kill state. To accomplish this, we must first end the homeless pet crisis in Michigan before we can help other states with their crisis. Importing homeless animals from out of state contributes to the homeless animal problem in Michigan and is a violation of the Michigan Certified Rescue Organization Code of Ethics.

Importing animals from out-of-state sources, such as other shelters or rescues, is different than transferring animals within an organization, but across state lines. Transferring an animal from one organization’s chapter rescue to a chapter rescue of the same organization in another state is allowed and is not considered importing. When a multi-state rescue moves animals into or out of Michigan, it is a transfer of an animal already in its care rather than a new import of an animal into the rescue. **EXAMPLE:** A multi-state rescue organization transfers an animal from an Ohio foster care home to a Michigan foster care home, but the animal remains within the same rescue organization. Multi-state rescue organizations will obtain the required Department of Health certificates.

The following list indicates acceptable and unacceptable sources for certified rescues to obtain companion animals for rehoming:

1. Animal Shelters		
a. Municipal shelters / animal control in Michigan	Yes	
b. Humane society / private shelters in Michigan	Yes	
c. Out of state		No
2. Strays		
a. Running at large	Yes ¹	
b. Abandoned in a home / Realtor calls	Yes ¹	
c. Live trapped (private property TNR)	Yes ²	
d. Disaster response and recovery	Yes ³	
3. Owner surrenders (with relinquishment form)	Yes ²	
4. Abandonment (with transfer of ownership form)		
a. At an animal hospital or veterinary clinic	Yes	
b. At a grooming facility	Yes	
c. At a boarding kennel	Yes	
5. Returned adoptions	Yes	
6. Born in rescue	Yes	
7. Other rescue organizations		
a. Transfer, swap or trade animals	Yes	
b. Intake overflows, specific breed or special needs	Yes	
c. Broker rescues		No
d. Out of state		No
8. Law enforcement (raids or busts)		
a. Abuse / cruelty	Yes	
b. Fighting rings	Yes	
c. Animal hoarders	Yes	
d. Puppy mills / backyard breeders	Yes	
9. Breeders		
a. Kennel permanently closing	Yes	
b. Kennel downsizing		No
c. Retiring breeding animals		No
d. Unwanted / "no longer useful" animals		No
e. Brokers		No
f. Auctions		No
g. Flea markets / fairs		No
h. Breed clubs	Yes	
10. Pet Stores Selling Intact Dogs, Cats, Puppies and Kittens		
a. Unwanted: ill, old, didn't sell		No
b. Pet store permanently closing	Yes	
11. Stealing From Bad Owners		No
12. Online Purchases		
a. Craigslist		No
b. Yahoo groups		No
c. Newspaper and online ads		No

¹ Must comply with stray hold laws

² If puppies or kittens are surrendered by an owner (or TNR), it is imperative and should be conditional that the rescue will intake the puppies or kittens as long as the mother is spayed in order to prevent future births.

³ Training and official deployment is required to rescue from disaster situations and all laws and legal requirements must be followed.

Compliance with State and Local Laws/Ordinances

Rescue organizations should be knowledgeable of federal, state and local laws pertaining to what they do with companion animals, and obtain any required licenses, permits or deviations. Local laws often detail the number of allowable animals per household and may include breed restrictions. It is important to know these restrictions when adopting animals to homes in different cities, townships, counties and states.

Applications, Manuals, Contracts, Criteria, Job Descriptions

Best practices dictate that organizations have comprehensive written policies that guide their operations. For rescue organizations, written policy is reflected in applications, manuals, contracts, criteria and job descriptions. The website www.mirescuecertification.org contains several samples of various forms for download.

Adoption Program

Creating a successful adoption program requires substantial thought and planning. Items to address in policy documents include:

- Will you only adopt to a specific geographic region?
- How will you process incoming applications?
- How much time will it require to respond to an applicant?
- Where will you perform adoptions?
- Will you provide pending periods or adjustment periods before finalizing an adoption?
- What are your adoption fees and what do they include?
- Will you require all household members to meet the pet?
- Will you require that animals be returned to your organization if the adopter can no longer honor his commitment?

The volunteers responsible for adoptions need training, knowledge and experience. Determine who should run the adoption program, including follow-ups once the animal is placed.

Breed Labels

Visual breed identification of dogs is unreliable and usually inaccurate. When rescues and shelters assign a breed label, they are only guessing at predominant breed or



Written policy will describe your adoption program for your volunteers and the public.

breed mix. Best practice is to get to know each dog as an individual and to do your best to describe each dog based on personality, not by breed label.

Why is labeling a dog such a big deal? A label will stick with a dog for the rest of its life. A label can mean discrimination, losing its home or even death. Labels are a problem for the dogs when we, as the local experts on animals, allow adopters, politicians and community members to think that the label we assign can predict who that dog is or how it will behave.

Examples:

Identify these mixed breed dogs (pdf)

(https://www.entoutesecurite.com/.../38862585_Pit%20Bull...)

Now, compare these canine DNA results with the survey responses to see that dog breeds cannot be visually identified, not even by the experts.

(<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/.../dna-results/>)

Although online adoption websites like Petfinder.com and Adopt-a-Pet.com push for rescues to breed label their adoptable animals, it is recommended to use the mixed breed labels unless an animal's lineage and breed make-up are indeed known.

Adoption Application

Rescue organizations must screen applicants through an application process. The short form that applicants complete should include basic information, while the follow-up phone call to the applicant should include open-ended questions and a conversation. The information gathered should assist the organization in *appropriately matching* an applicant with an adoptable animal. It is unfair to both the applicant and animal to not invest the time in matching and *recommending the right fit* for everyone. For example, a 90-year-old who lives alone may not be physically capable of caring for a high energy puppy, but a senior pet may be a good fit. It is no longer standard operating procedure to perform vet checks, home checks, background checks, property ownership checks and/or rental/landlord checks on adoption applicants.

Adoption Criteria

Rescue organizations should use set criteria for determining whether or not an applicant can adopt, keeping in mind the animal's best interest at all times. Following the No Barriers to Life Saving philosophy, rescues should avoid blanket restrictions, such as "all adopters must have a fenced yard" or "all adopters must own their home."

Organizations must remember that if a person wants a pet, they are going to get a pet one way or another. By establishing a relationship with a rescue organization, the person now has a lifeline for assistance and resources should they need it. And, they

will have a pet that is vaccinated and altered. Education is key and must play a role in every animal placement.

Denying an adoption should be a rarity. Organizations should be approving far more applicants than denying them, while focusing on matching versus approval/denial. It is recommended that organizations consider whether or not the applicant has made responsible decisions for past pets, which can only be learned through conversation-based adoptions, not on a form. It is fair to analyze whether or not this is the best time for the applicant to adopt. It is the organization's responsibility to ensure that the adopter will provide a safe, healthy, permanent home. Established criteria should include age minimums for adopters, standards of care to be provided for the pet and intended use of the pet. Some criteria should be imposed case-by-case, based on the animal's specific needs.

It is important that criteria be **reasonable** and **balanced**. Overly strict criteria or waiting for the "perfect" home keeps the animal in foster care longer, leaving the foster home unavailable for new homeless animals, which might result in conditions where shelters must euthanize for space.



Adoption criteria needs to be reasonable and balanced focusing on finding a good "match" for the animal.

Consider the following for each applicant:

- History with past pets – what happened to them? If they've given away past pets or their last several dogs have all been hit by cars, how will you handle that?
- Where the pet will live – inside, outside, garage, outbuilding, anywhere it wants – which answers are acceptable to your organization?
- Vet care for current and past pets – one of the greatest predictors of future behavior is to look at past behavior – if they don't keep their dogs on heartworm prevention or vaccinate or spay/neuter – what quality of vet care will their new pet receive?
- Existing pets – are they neutered? If the applicant hasn't and isn't making responsible decisions that are in the best interest of current pets, why would they start making them for their new pet?
- Cosmetic alterations – is debarking or declawing acceptable to the applicant?
- Reasons for adoption – which reasons for wanting a new pet are acceptable, such as family pet, playmate for another pet, guard dog or gift for someone else?

- Future plans – what will they do with the pet if they have to move residences or if they experience a life-changing event?

Education is critical for all placements.

Adoption Materials

Adopters want to provide their pet with the best care they can. Many times, they simply don't know how best to do that. Some of the most common reasons for animal surrenders and returns are behavior issues, moving, allergies and new baby. Provide information from the get-go to prevent these problems from emerging. Organizations should provide adopters with all medical records for their adopted pet, as well as information regarding proper care and behavior.

Consider providing adopters with any of the following information:

- lists of poisonous plants and foods
- quality pet food ratings and how to choose a quality food
- how to choose a boarding kennel
- how to keep pets safe in heat and cold
- how to avoid holiday hazards
- at-home training and commands
- obedience training courses
- animal care information
- pet first aid and emergency information
- allergy information
- preparing a pet for baby's arrival
- moving with your pet
- lost pet prevention guide – what to do
- health and medical information, including parasites and routine care
- resources for estate planning to include pets
- when a pet is lost, importance of collar and tags, microchip information
- dangers and consequences of declawing and debarking
- behavior handouts and helpline phone numbers
- force-free or science-based, positive reinforcement techniques and information; dangers and consequences of shock collars and punishment



Providing adopters with pet care information, such as pet first aid tips, can assist with a smoother adjustment

Behavior information to consider including for dog adoptions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puppy housetraining • puppy nipping and rough play • development stages of puppies • puppy chewing • positive reinforcement • importance of educating your dog • re-housetraining an adult dog • crate training • escape artist • digging issues • dog toys and how to use them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and dogs • introducing your new pet to resident pets • canine rivalry • overcoming fears • stress relief • separation anxiety • understanding canine body language • nothing in life is free and understanding dog behavior |
|---|---|

Behavior information to consider including for cat adoptions:

- starting out right with the litter box
- solving litter box problems
- destructive scratching
- development stages of kittens
- positive reinforcement
- how to safely allow cats outdoor time
- escape artist
- cat toys and how to use them
- play with your cat
- children and cats
- rough play
- introducing your new pet to resident pets
- overcoming fears
- stress relief
- minimizing allergy response

Adoption Contracts

Organizations must require and enforce adoption contracts. Adoption contracts must spell out exactly what is expected of the adopter and of the organization, including how to handle animal returns and how to handle contract breaches or violations. The contract should spell out the consequences for contract violations.

Adoption Fees

Adoption fees must be consistent. Certified rescues cannot promote one adoption fee, then change it for a specific animal. This is known as “bait and switch” and is an unethical practice. Materials should detail what is included in the adoption fee and what types of payment are acceptable. Organizations cannot subsist solely on adoption fees. Donations and fundraising are a must. It is rarely a successful strategy to charge an adoption fee equal to the expenses the organization invested in the animal.

Pet Retention

As an animal rescue professional, you will undoubtedly receive phone calls and emails from individuals who are looking to surrender their animals to your organization. It would be easy for a rescue to simply respond with a Yes or a No and move on to the next activity for the day. But it is important for rescues to take the next steps and dig deeper about why someone thinks he or she needs to surrender their animal. Why? Because the surrender of the pet may be preventable by offering resources and/or education. Often, shelters are already busting at the seams with animals and more are coming in everyday that need a rescue’s more immediate attention. It is in everyone’s best interest to figure out what the needs are of the surrendering owner of the animal before accepting or denying them into your rescue. Let’s work together to keep animals out of the shelter, to prevent them from being surrendered to rescues and to stay in their homes when owners only need help with resources. By establishing a pet retention program within your rescue, you can educate and assist owners with resources available to them to help them keep their animal if that is ultimately what they desire.

There are a number of different scenarios that you may encounter with individuals wanting to surrender their pet. Sometimes an owner is just looking to get rid of their pet or has had a serious life change and no amount of education or resource assistance will change that. Other times, the owner feels hopeless like there are no other options but to surrender their pet.

Veterinary care: Sometimes an owner is facing financial hardship when their animal becomes sick or injured and needs veterinary assistance that they cannot afford. Offer veterinary assistance as your organization’s resources are available. This could be in the form of payment directly to a veterinarian, discounted care at the organization’s veterinarian or vouchers. Get to know the various organizations in the area that offer

veterinary assistance to owned animals. Link the owner into veterinary hospitals that offer low-cost or discounted services. Sometimes the issue is merely that they cannot afford *their* veterinary office, but another lower cost veterinary office would be within budget. Offer assistance directly from your organization, if available.

Training: Speak to your local trusted trainer and come up with an agreement for them to assist an owner with an owned animal at a fixed or discounted cost. Many people who are at wits end with training issues have not contacted a trainer because they do not believe they can afford it or they are not aware that trainers even exist. Perhaps your organization can pay for the first training session. People who meet with a trainer and receive hope that they can fix behavior issues are more likely to continue with training.

Resources: Sometimes an owner needs assistance with things as simple as food, flea/tick preventative, or cat litter due to a life change, job loss, etc. Establishing a resource bank of extra items donated that your rescue cannot put to immediate use is very helpful to share with the general public needing resource assistance.

Accountability and Responsibility: If all attempts at education and surrender prevention fail, educate the pet owner on how to rehome the pet on their own. They know their pet the best and, in most cases, want to see it end up in a loving environment. When an owner can rehome a pet, it saves space and resources in shelter and rescue organizations. Suggest they try <https://rehome.adoptapet.com/> for a set amount of time and follow up to see if they've had success.

Overall, be sure to scratch beyond the surface for why someone needs to surrender their animal. Sometimes it is something that a rescue can provide or can direct them to the place where resources can be provided. The rescue needs to be able to educate the general public because resources available to owned animals are often limited in their advertisement. Do your due diligence on who and what is available in your area with resources available and provide this education to individuals who call asking for surrender or assistance.

Also, this is an excellent grant idea to start an innovative program within your organization to keep owned animals in their home.

Foster to Adopt

Foster-to-Adopt is a policy that allows a pet to live with the potential adopter while still being technically “owned” by the rescue organization. Foster-to-Adopt may be used when a potential adopter is a good match for the animal, but a condition exists where it is not advantageous to finalize the adoption. For example, the animal cannot yet be spayed/neutered or the animal is undergoing treatment the rescue is financially responsible for or perhaps there is concern for the animal’s adjustment with other household animals. A Foster-to-Adopt contract spells out the expected length of time

and required event (such as an animal becoming healthy enough for spay/neuter) of care before the organization will finalize the adoption and transfer ownership.

Volunteer Program

Animal rescues must have volunteers. They are a non-profit organization's life-blood and backbone. Discover volunteers' passions, skills, experiences and abilities to make the most of their volunteer experience. Provide them with resources and training. Offering training to your volunteers makes them feel wanted, involved, confident and part of the team. Volunteers want to help and just need someone to show them how. The more your volunteers know, the more they can help your organization and make a difference for the animals. Consider tracking foster care and volunteer "hours" or "credits" and rewarding or recognizing outstanding volunteers.

Consider creating an organizational chart to visually explore a communication and reporting structure for your volunteers. In most organizations, one person can't be the point person for all volunteers. If you offer various programs and services, recruit coordinators to manage them.

Potential volunteer roles to consider:

- foster care
- events
- fundraising and grants
- animal intake
- animal behavior and training
- animal photos and video bios
- medical care
- transport
- adoptions
- adoption follow-up
- TNR
- accounting
- legal issues
- supply inventory
- website and graphic design
- marketing and PR
- social media
- internal communication
- partnerships and collaborations
- customer service
- volunteer recruitment, retention and training



Volunteers need to be trained, held accountable and appreciated.

Volunteers must be provided with detailed job descriptions so they can serve the organization and animals appropriately. Job descriptions give your volunteers their best chance for success in the role you're asking them to fulfill.

Value your volunteers, but remember it's OK to dismiss volunteers who are not meeting the needs or goals of the organization. Your worst volunteer is your best reputation. One disruptive, uncooperative or combative volunteer can cost you reliable, committed volunteers. Consider providing a complaint process, so volunteers are heard and can express concerns.

Volunteer Application

An application, liability waiver and conversation are necessary in order to match a volunteer to an appropriate role. An application and conversation help the organization determine how best the rescue and the applicant can benefit from a relationship. The application also gathers necessary contact information and animal handling experience/knowledge. List the volunteer roles you offer, but make suggestions as to where you feel the volunteer can thrive. Too many can be overwhelming for a new volunteer. Ask for emergency contact information in case something happens at an event and you need to notify the volunteer's family.

Liability waivers are important as well. Have an attorney draft or approve one for your organization's use. Be sure to address liability waivers for minors versus adults.

Volunteer Criteria

Establishing criteria for volunteering helps you determine your needs and how best to match applicants and volunteer roles. Some roles require Internet access, some require more extensive experience, knowledge or training and some require more people skills versus animal skills. If you allow minors (under age 18) to volunteer, you need to spell out what they're allowed to do and provide a liability waiver to the parents or guardians. Determine how you will handle community service volunteers, as well as unknown minors or school, community and church groups who want to contribute.

Volunteer Manual

The key to a successful volunteer program is arming your volunteers with information as to what is expected of them, how the organization functions and the rules to abide by. A manual provides your volunteers with their "how to" guide to everything about the rescue. It is a critical component of every rescue organization. Make sure every volunteer at every level receives one. It is a good idea to occasionally review and update the manual as the rescue grows and programs change, then distribute those changes to your volunteers.

Content to include in an organization's volunteer manual:

- Mission statement
- Vision and values of the organization
- Who we are and what we do
- History of the organization
- Goals of the organization
- Goals of the volunteer program
- Position statements
- Animal welfare definitions, such as open admission, limited admission, adoption guarantee and No Kill designations
- Sheltering information
- Training opportunities
- Organizational chart
- Contact list
- Volunteer roles and job descriptions
- Policies and procedures
- Expense reimbursement and tax deductions
- Volunteer rights, responsibilities and privileges
- Volunteer recognition program
- Appropriate attire
- Representing the organization in public and with the media
- Reporting grievances
- Injury guidelines
- Recommended reading

Volunteer Contract

Volunteer contracts can make the concept of giving time and energy to an organization real. Volunteering is a commitment and if the organization is investing time and money to train volunteers, it is important to retain them. A contract spells out a meeting of the minds and an agreement between the volunteer and the organization, including what is expected of the volunteers and the organization. Consideration should be given to having all contracts reviewed by an attorney to ensure they are enforceable.

Customer Service Policy

Though most rescue organizations are 100% volunteer-run and rarely, if ever, have any paid employees, it is still essential to run your organization like a business. Having a courteous demeanor, adequate response times to phone calls/emails and a focus on professional dealings with the public are essential. Set the standard within the organization from the top of how to deal with the general public. One bad interaction from a rescue organization with the public can have a negative ripple effect.

Compassion Fatigue

Rescue is tough business. Though many get involved in rescue and animal welfare for the heart-warming, happy endings that we see posted online and on social media, it is these same individuals that deal with the heart-breaking situations that abused, neglected and homeless animals face on a daily basis. This roller coaster of experiences takes an emotional, mental, physical and spiritual toll on even the strongest individuals. Rescuers and advocates feel the trauma and dark pasts of these animals. And people deal with these extremes in different ways.

According to Animal Sheltering, compassion fatigue is not about the exhaustion that comes from rescuing but rather the “decline of a person’s ability to feel and care for others that comes with being in mission-driven work.” People who are involved in animal rescue often are very good at taking care of others and may not be as passionate about taking care of themselves. The way to respond to compassion fatigue is to be actively rooted in self-care and teaching those around you to do the same. Teaching the people within your organization to recognize the signs and to also take personal care of themselves is a must in every animal welfare organization. All rescuers must find balance in their lives and be able to recognize when life is tilting out of balance.

Here are some signs to look for compassion fatigue according to The American Institute of Stress:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Reduced sense of personal accomplishment or meaning in work
- Mental exhaustion
- Decreased interactions with others (isolation)
- Depersonalization (symptoms disconnected from real causes)
- Physical exhaustion

Tips for managing compassion fatigue for the people in your organizations:

Do:

- Find someone to talk to
- Understand that the pain you feel is normal
- Exercise and eat properly
- Get enough sleep
- Take some time off
- Develop interests outside of animal welfare
- Identify what’s important to you

Don’t:

- Blame others
- Look for a new job, buy a new car, get a divorce or have an affair
- Fall into the habit of complaining within your organization
- Work harder and longer
- Self-medicate
- Neglect your own needs and interests

Whether paid employees or wholly volunteer members of organizations, it is necessary for the directors and managers of these organizations to understand,

recognize and respond to compassion fatigue not only in the people you work with, but also in yourself. Spend time understanding what compassion fatigue is and how it can affect your organization. Open the dialogue about compassion fatigue and speak to a person directly in your organization if you suspect they may be suffering from this. Your organization's lifeline is your people, which includes you. It is essential to take care of the humans to continue rescuing the animals.

Sources:

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center

<https://www.stress.org/military/for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue/>

Foster Care Program

Foster care is a necessity for animal rescues. It is a great benefit to an adoption program to be able to gather valuable information about the animals while living in home environments. The downside is that the animal, in most cases, grows attached to the foster family, which can cause a rougher transition to a new home, versus an animal going from a kennel to a home.

Running a foster care program requires constant recruitment to find new and more foster cares homes, as existing ones will need breaks, adopt their fosters, burn out and experience life changes that prevent them from fostering again. It is critical to always be responsive to them and hold up your end of the agreement. Fostering should be a family decision – everyone on board; otherwise, it is unfair to the animal and is bound to cause issues.

Foster Care Application

An application to foster a pet is essentially the same process as applying to adopt, only in most cases fostering is temporary. The applicant must still show that they will provide adequate care and housing. The organization must match the foster care applicant with an animal appropriate for their household. Many fosters later decide to adopt their foster pet, so it is important to consider whether or not they also meet your adoption criteria. An application helps the organization determine that and gathers the necessary contact info and animal handling experience/knowledge, which is then followed up with a conversation.



Foster care varies and just like adoptions, it is important to match the fostered animal with the right foster family.

Foster Care Criteria

Criteria for fostering in most cases will mirror your adoption criteria. It is important to consider whether or not the foster care home applicant meets your adoption requirements. If the foster chooses to adopt, but does not meet adoption requirements, this will seem unfair and create a problem.

Foster Care Manual

The key to a successful foster care program is arming your volunteers with information as to how the foster care program functions, what is expected of them, policies for fostering and the rules to abide by. A manual provides your volunteers with their “how to” guide about the foster care program, as well as important information to help the animals in their care. It is a critical component of every rescue organization. Foster care manuals should include the resources and supplies that the rescue will provide, as well as how the fosters can be the pet’s best ally by providing updated profile information, photos and video.

Content to include in an organization’s foster care manual:

- Volunteer foster care job descriptions and responsibilities
- Foster care contact information
- Medical protocol for foster animals
- Pet Poison Control number
- Emergency numbers
- Spay and neuter protocol of foster animals
- How we place animals into foster care
- Fostering newborn kittens and puppies
- Fostering juvenile kittens and puppies
- Fostering under-socialized animals
- Fostering ill, injured and surgery-recovering animals
- Cleaning procedures
- Animal bites
- Suggestions for completing foster animal bios and foster-to-adopter forms
- Additional education for behavior problems
- Return and adoption of foster animals
- Form: Bio sheet or Intake report
- Foster care contract
- Disease directory

Foster Care Contract

Foster care contracts protect both the volunteer and the organization. Foster care is a serious commitment. The organization is entrusting the foster care home with the health and safety of animals. A contract spells out a meeting of the minds as to what is expected of both parties and an agreement between the foster care home and the organization.

Adoption Events

Rescue groups are encouraged to attend adoption events as their time and funding permits. At this time, a central directory of all area adoption events does not exist; however, an Internet search of ‘pet adoption events in Michigan’ will yield some results.

Throughout Michigan, there are weekend adoption events held inside and outside of pet supply stores. Choosing a pet supply store for regular events may be a better option than other types of venues where visitors are not expecting to encounter animals; this may encourage a spontaneous desire to adopt as opposed to a calculated, well-thought-out decision to bring a cat or dog into the family for life.



Adoption events remind the public there are homeless dogs and cats in need of new homes and provide an opportunity for the public to meet your organization.

Regular adoption events remind families that animals are in need and allow them to easily meet your organization. As adopters become more familiar with websites featuring adoptable pets and with increasing use of social media to feature pets available for adoption, some rescues find increased placement success with these sources than at regularly scheduled adoption events.

Pet supply stores that sell unaltered cats and dogs (even those pledging to transition to a humane model) for profit will often attempt to give donations to rescue organizations and encourage them to hold adoption events, meet & greets, and conduct other activities in and around their stores. These actions are very self-serving since the store wants to be associated with “rescue” while selling animals from mills or breeding facilities. Most of the time these mass-produced pets are raised in unsanitary and inhumane conditions. For a rescue organization to conduct such activities with the store establishes a partnership and communicates to the public that the rescue condones and supports the store’s activities. It is not in homeless animals’ best interest to promote an animal-selling store, which gives them legitimacy of “helping animals,” provides indirect support of puppy mills, endorses the sale of unaltered animals and exposes rescue animals to potential illness. For a rescue organization to participate in such activities is a violation of the Michigan Certified Rescue Organization Code of Ethics.

Rescues are also encouraged to avoid adoption events at stores that sell other live animals. Animals supplied to pet shops, including birds, puppies and kittens, are often raised in unsanitary and inhumane conditions. Such facilities are little more than

warehouses where animals are bred for mass production. Similar facilities and conditions also exist for reptiles and small mammals. Animals bred by unlicensed "private breeders," also known as "backyard breeders," typically fare no better. Whether they are bred in backyards or at mass production facilities, there is little or no regulatory oversight. Many reptiles, fish and birds are taken from the wild. Some exotic species, including many birds and reptiles, are poorly adapted to captivity and, as such, it is difficult if not impossible to meet their needs in a pet shop setting. Conducting events at such stores supports the continuation of inhumane breeding and exploitation of animals.

Web Presence

Maintaining an online presence is very helpful for gaining exposure for your organization and the animals in your care. There are many free websites available to help you increase awareness and adoptions, solicit donations (supplies and money) and promote fundraising or adoption events. Some of the more common free websites available include:

1. Petfinder (www.petfinder.com) is perhaps the most popular and well-known website that potential adopters use to find a new pet. A veterinarian reference is needed to obtain a free website and profile posting.
2. Adopt A Pet (www.adoptapet.com) is very similar to Petfinder and also provides a free website platform for qualifying organizations.
3. Facebook. *Pages* are recommended for social networking while *Groups* may be more appropriate for staff and volunteer communication.
4. Yahoo Groups. Many rescues are migrating away from using Yahoo groups for staff and volunteer communication and using Facebook groups instead. Yahoo groups only work with Yahoo email addresses.
5. Craigslist. Some groups use Craigslist to post animals and event information. Use caution with Craigslist and other loosely regulated Internet posting sites.

Rescue organizations are encouraged to set-up their own website address, which may result in incurred costs. Consider seeking a website savvy volunteer who may be willing to create and update the website.

The content on your website is very important. Although potential adopters may vary in the amount of information they want to know about your organization, it is probably best to provide as much information as possible so that potential adopters and donors feel comfortable about working with your group.

Suggested information you may want to consider posting on the organization's website:

1. Logo
2. List of adoptable animals, including photo, video, personality and behavior description, most suitable home, age, sex, adoption price and how, when and where to meet them
3. Upcoming events, including dates, times, locations, directions and/or maps
4. Contact information, including names of Board members, phone number and email address
5. Address for the organization: many foster-based rescue organizations use a P.O. Box as a mailing address as opposed to a home address due to concerns about receiving unexpected animal drop-offs or potential adopters showing up at inconvenient times to "look at the animals"
6. Adoption fees and process
7. Non-profit status: are you 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and if not, when are you planning to apply/progress toward receiving it?
8. Mission statement
9. Donate link (i.e. PayPal) or address where donations can be sent
10. Wish list: items needed and locations where they can be dropped off
11. Photos of volunteers and animals, fundraising events (focus on the animals more than the people)
12. News from recent fundraisers, good news stories about recently rescued or adopted pets (Featured Pet).

Contact Information

Best practices require a rescue to have a published telephone number, mailing address and e-mail address for the rescue. The telephone, if answered by voice mail or an answering machine, should have calls returned within three days.

Program Information

Certification Committee

The following individuals meet as the Committee to administer the Michigan Rescue Certification Program. We are grateful for their diligent work to improve the welfare of homeless cats, dogs and other companion animals in Michigan.

Karen Mountz
Board of Directors
Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

Pam Sordyl
Founder
Puppy Mill Awareness of Southeast MI

Courtney Protz-Sanders
Executive Director and Founder
Paws for Life Rescue

Jaime Wolfe
Co-founder
N.B.S. Animal Rescue

Deborah Schutt
Chairman, Board of Directors
Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

A Special Thanks to those who assisted in Designing the Program.

- Linda Gardiner, Board Member of Michigan Pet Fund Alliance
- Mary C. Rupley, DVM Senior Consultant of Humane Society of Huron Valley
- Debbie M. Salinas, Volunteer of Humane Society of Huron Valley
- Kelly Schwartz, Director of Volunteer Programs at Humane Society of Huron Valley
- Mike Segna, President of House of Critters Animal Rescue
- Ellen Stuban, Founder of PapAdopters & Placement Services

Background and Purpose

When this program was established in 2012, more than 100,000 homeless cats and dogs were killed in Michigan shelters annually. Down to approximately 15,000 in 2017, there are still too many healthy or treatable companion animals that could be saved / rehomed if organizations worked together, especially Michigan animal shelters and rescue organizations.

The intent of the Michigan Rescue Certification Program is to share best practices, improve shelter capacity and assure that the rescue organization is reputable.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) is responsible for the oversight of licensed animal shelters in the state. Although MDARD's purview is limited in scope, there are minimum standards that shelters are expected to meet.

Unfortunately, there is no organized structure in Michigan, or nationally, that has established best practices, model documents or a code of ethics as a resource for the rescue community. Rescue organizations, most of which use a home-based fostering system and consist mainly of animal-loving volunteers with a passion for finding new, loving, caring homes

for the animals in their care, are often left to recreate the wheel or learn the ropes through trial-and-error experience.

It is the intent of the Michigan Rescue Certification Program to:

- Leverage best practices and collaborations to eliminate the 15,000+ deaths of homeless healthy and treatable cats and dogs in Michigan shelters
- Provide a code of ethics and best practice resources for rescue organizations
- Assure the public, including adoption event hosts, businesses, donors, adopters and potential volunteers, that certified rescue organizations operate according to the standards set by the Michigan Rescue Certification Best Practices and Code of Ethics
- Assure donors and animal welfare funders of professional capacity
- Improve collaborations and partnerships by assuring shelters and other rescues that certified rescue organizations operate to standards that are reputable and have been vetted for partnerships

The program is wholly voluntary. It is open to all-breed rescues, dog-only rescues, cat-only rescues, purebred rescues and those that rescue small companion mammals, such as rabbits, ferrets, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, mice and rats. However, it should be noted that the program as described in the Best

Practices section of this document is focused on cat and dog rescue organizations. Other species' rescue organizations should contact us to express interest in certification. The certification committee will work one-on-one with the rescue group to address the specifics for that species.

Rescue organizations may apply for certification at any time and the application is available online. When certification is granted, organizations are provided documentation that can be displayed on websites, social media, in printed materials and at adoption events.

Certified rescues will receive added benefits such as grants, educational opportunities, specialized behavior training for volunteers, fundraising opportunities and cost reductions through joint purchases and ventures. For example, in 2015 Michigan Pet Fund Alliance was designated as an umbrella organization within the Michigan State Employees Charitable Campaign (MI-SECC), which allows State of Michigan employees the opportunity for charitable giving to nonprofits via payroll deduction. MPFA has invited Certified Rescue organizations to participate, allowing these organizations to receive donations from state employees.

Ultimately, the purpose of the Michigan Rescue Certification Program is to improve capacity and partnership between the rescue community and the shelter community, so that all healthy and treatable homeless cats and dogs are rehomed.

The Michigan Rescue Certification Program encourages all organizations to be honest, ethical and transparent. It is a positive step toward increasing the value placed on rescue organizations.

About Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

Michigan Pet Fund Alliance, established in 2003, is a not-for-profit charitable 501(c)3 organization:

Mission: end the killing of healthy and treatable homeless cats and dogs in Michigan

Vision: collaborate with Michigan animal shelters and rescue organizations to achieve No Kill through training, technical assistance, education and advocacy

As a statewide organization that works on behalf of homeless cats and dogs with Michigan shelters, rescue organizations and a variety of stakeholders, Michigan Pet Fund Alliance is uniquely positioned to offer this certification program. In an attempt to represent various interests, the original Task Force that prepared this program, along with the Rescue Certification Committee, represents a variety of viewpoints: all-breed rescue organizations, purebred rescue organizations, rescue volunteers, shelters, those working to end puppy mills, etc.

It is intended that the establishment of the Michigan Rescue Certification Program be viewed as a positive step toward increasing the value Michigan residents place on the phenomenal work that rescue organizations, most of which are volunteer-run and

unpaid, accomplish. It is hoped that the rescue community will become even more robust and increase in capacity through widespread implementation of best practices and model procedures, which in turn will benefit all homeless animals. Michigan Pet Fund Alliance encourages all organizations to be honest and transparent in their operations. However, if an organization fails to uphold these goals, an official grievance process has been developed.

Michigan Pet Fund Alliance will provide annual education and training opportunities that Certified Rescue organizations can attend to assist them in learning best practices, networking with shelter and rescue staff from around the state.

It is expected that with the establishment of standardized practices within the Certified Rescue community, shelters will eagerly embrace collaboration with these organizations, which will greatly benefit the homeless pet community.

Finally, with proven success in Michigan, this program can serve as a model for other states and be instrumental in saving more lives across the country.

Michigan No Kill Formula

Michigan animal welfare advocates, shelters and rescues make it about the mission and nothing else.

Michigan citizens hold shelters accountable for their tax dollars and charitable contributions and reject the status quo of sheltering.

All Michigan shelters adopt and implement the programs of the No Kill Equation and 21st century sheltering practices.

Michigan shelters and rescue organizations begin a new era of collaboration, sharing resources and assisting one another with hard-to-place animals.

Michigan shelters begin to collaborate with each other to relieve overcrowding, sharing program expertise and resources.

Michigan rescues work together and collaborate with each other to assist shelters statewide, sharing expertise and resources.

All shelters and rescue organizations spay/neuter prior to adoption, with rare medical exceptions.

High-volume, low cost spay/neuter programs are established throughout the state for low-income residents.

Community cat Trap-Neuter-Return programs are established throughout the state.

Transport into the state from puppy-mill breeders/brokers, auction animals and organized transport from out-of-state shelters are discontinued until such time as all healthy and treatable homeless dogs and cats in Michigan are saved.

Michigan pet and supply stores stop selling puppies and kittens. Instead, retail outlets should provide space for adoptable animals in the care of animal welfare organizations. The care of the animals in the store will be managed by the animal welfare organization.

Requirements

Certified rescues are those that employ *best practices* in their operations, including standards for animal care, preserving animal records and maintaining financial reports for the organization. Certified rescues also operate according to the Michigan Certified Rescue Organization Code of Ethics. These ethics dictate transparency, honesty, respect and operations that further the goal of ending the killing of healthy and treatable homeless cats and dogs in Michigan. Included in this document is the Best Practices. These sections describes in detail the various components of care, organization and business practices, as well as other areas of concern for rescue organizations. In addition, the handbook contains numerous resources. The program website also contains model documents to help standardize rescue practices, but more importantly, to help reduce duplication of efforts throughout the rescue community so that efforts can be concentrated on the primary purpose of rehoming the homeless.

Examples of modifiable documents include:

Animal Surrender Agreement	Foster Care Application
Foster Contract Template	Volunteer Foster Application
Foster Guidelines Manual template	Home Visit Template
Adoption Application	Intake Template
Adoption Contract	Volunteer Liability Waiver
Adoption/Foster Care Application	Volunteer Manual Template

It is important that those in charge of rescue organizations develop capacity to handle all aspects of the organization in a professional manner. Organization and animal records need to be accurate and complete. Caring for animals and successful rehoming requires good “customer service,” so that the animals get adopted in a timely way. The simple task of promptly returning phone calls and answering e-mails are all components of a well-run organization. Organizations focused on a life-saving mission often find it difficult to set boundaries or say no. Rescuing by its very nature is highly emotional and individually personal. It is especially important for each organization to focus on what they do well, and not spread activities too thin. The chart on the following page identifies the components and best practices for rescue organizations to qualify for basic certification, as well as 5-star certification, which recognizes practices of excellence that go above and beyond. Rescue organizations that demonstrate that they meet the 5-star criteria will be noted in all listings of Certified Rescue organizations and will receive a digital badge. Each of the components listed is described and discussed in detail in the best practices section of this document.

Component/Best Practices	Basic Certification	5-star Certification
Phone number, mailing address and web presence	✓	✓
501(c)(3) or 501(c)(7)	✓	✓
Filing of 990, 990-EZ, 990-N	✓	✓
MI Charitable Solicitation License or Exemption	✓	✓
Complete animal records	✓	✓
Mission statement	✓	✓
Narrative description of organization	✓	✓
Bylaws/operating documents	✓	✓
Standards of care, including environment, diet, exercise, socialization, daily health checks, transport and event care	✓	✓
Medical protocols, including 10-day average foster period	✓	✓
Spay/Neuter prior to adoption	✓	✓
Behavioral rehabilitation plan	✓	✓
Identification and microchipping	✓	✓
Animal intake: obtaining rescue animals	✓	✓
Adoption events (occasional)	✓	✓
Adoption criteria, application, contract, fees (reasonable)	✓	✓
Volunteer criteria, application, liability waiver, manual, contract (reasonable)	✓	✓
Foster application, criteria, manual, contract	✓	✓
Provide annual animal statistics, intake & outtake	✓	✓
Michigan Rescue Organization Code of Ethics	✓	✓
Website		✓
Electronic financial records		✓
Electronic animal records		✓
Liability insurance coverage		✓
Annual budget		✓
Annual consult with CPA/Accountant		✓
Annual continuing education		✓

Items that cause Application Denials	Basic Certification	5-star Certification
Cruelty complaints exist against any person associated with the organization	⊘	⊘
Subject of any complaint and/or being actively investigated by another organization or agency such as the IRS or Michigan Attorney General	⊘	⊘
Found in violation of the program through the grievance process	⊘	⊘
Importing from out of state	⊘	⊘
Spay neuter contracts or deposits	⊘	⊘
501(c)(3) not in good standing	⊘	⊘
Rescue acting as a broker rescues	⊘	⊘

Waiver Provision

It is recognized that the program cannot address all individual circumstances or components of rescue operations. Rescue organizations that meet the majority of the components in the Michigan Rescue Certification Program, but not all, can apply for a waiver in the application.

Application Process

Applications/Renewals – Organizations may apply for initial certification at any time. Every January, Michigan Pet Fund Alliance will call for renewal of certification, which will request prior year's statistics as well as other basic data.

Certified Rescues follow model standards, provide annual statistics, respond in a timely and complete manner, are respected by their peers and, most importantly, accomplish their mission of placing rescued pets into loving homes.

Application Review Process – The Certification Committee Chair will review all applications for completeness. Applicants whose applications are found to be incomplete will be asked to provide missing components. The Rescue Certification Committee will provide the list of recommended rescues for certification to the Michigan Pet Fund Board. The Board will make the final determination for certification. All applicants will be notified of the Michigan Pet Fund Board's determination and, if approved, receive the current year's digital badge.

Review Criteria – The following is a list of the review criteria that the Rescue Certification Committee will use to evaluate applications:

- Meets the model standards of the handbook and best practices
- Can produce documentation, if requested
- Responds to any follow-up information in a timely and complete manner

Issuing Certification – The Michigan Pet Fund Alliance will provide to Certified Rescue organizations a digital badge

indicating the year(s) for which the rescue has been certified, which each organization can display on its website, in printed materials, and at adoption events. A list of all Certified Rescues for each year will be posted on the website in alphabetical order, including the city and website.

Grievance Process

To maintain the integrity of the Michigan Rescue Certification Program, a grievance process is in place. This process helps to ensure that certified rescue organizations are reputable, operate with consistent, high quality standards, employ best practices and perform in an ethical manner.

This certification program is self-regulating, meaning that grievances may be filed against certified rescues by anyone including adopters, shelters, other rescue groups, partner organizations, etc. A grievance may only be submitted against a rescue that is currently certified. Anonymous grievances are not permitted, however, submitter names are not provided to the rescue and grievances are not made public.

Complainant information is provided to the rescue involved in the incident as part of the review and mediation process.

Instructions for filing grievances can be found on the website and grievances may be submitted online or by email to rescuecertification@michiganpetfund.org.

Most grievances result in process improvement recommendations. More serious outcomes or a failure to comply could result in being removed from the program.

Annual Program Evaluation

The Rescue Certification Program is required to perform a yearly evaluation to ensure the program met its goals and to determine if any adjustments are needed.

Application Requirements

A PDF of the Application can be found on the website to review required information.

Code of Ethics

Adhering to the Code of Ethics is crucial to the mission of becoming a No Kill state.

Animal Bill of Rights

1. We believe all animals deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, compassion and kindness.
2. We recognize once an animal is taken into our rescue, we are fully responsible for the animal from intake until final disposition – adoption, transfer or demise.
3. For any reason, we will accept the return of an animal that we have adopted out.
4. At a minimum, animals in our care will have access to shelter, nutritious food, adequate water, a safe environment and receive regular and professional veterinary care.
5. We will address all known illnesses promptly, not adopt out a sick animal and will ensure all treatments are completed (or provide provisions) prior to adoption.
6. We will work diligently to reunite lost animals with their guardians.
7. We will subscribe to the philosophy of “do no harm,” which includes refusal to allow cosmetic alternation of an animal or performance of unnecessary surgical procedures, including but not limited to declawing, debarking, ear and tail cropping.
8. We will exhaust all resources, provide rehabilitation options to an animal, if needed, and seek out animal sanctuaries before choosing euthanasia.
9. We will refrain from adopting any puppy or kitten until it is at least 8 weeks old.
10. We will try to place animals locally to ensure the animal can be easily returned if needed.

Rules of Conduct

1. We will make all attempts possible to be fair, polite and honest with other rescue groups, adopters, donors and related professional organizations.
2. We will respect existing rules, treat others as they'd hope to be treated, consider mediation when attempts at communication fail and, in all our dealings, seek to elevate the reputation of certified rescue organizations.
3. We agree to use standard animal welfare definitions and terminology in all our communications and written materials, as established in the Michigan Rescue Certification Program, in order to educate the general public and elevate their understanding and knowledge of homeless animal issues and welfare.
4. We will help control the pet population by having all healthy dogs and cats, at least 8 weeks or older and two pounds in weight, sterilized prior to adoption.
5. We will not support the breeding industry by any action that would serve to continue their operations, such as participating in events with or at pet stores that sell dogs or cats, buying or taking animals from an auction or relieving a breeder of excess stock.
6. We will not participate in any “pet trafficking” by working with an animal broker or anyone in which the source of the animals is unknown.
7. We will not import animals from out of state and contribute to the homeless animal problem here in Michigan.
8. We will not engage in the practice of “flipping,” which involves obtaining animals for free or at a low cost, then quickly selling those same animals for profit.
9. We will not provide animals for “give-away” to the public, such as puppies/kittens for charity raffles or auctions, dog fighting, racing, research or to brokers who supply research facilities, commercial wholesalers, dealers, brokers, retailers, pet shops or any other person or organization for resale.

10. We will always report suspected hoarding, neglect or cruelty situations to the local authorities, including other “rescues” that are “collecting” animals and owning more than they can humanely care for.
11. We will never take an animal from an owner in an attempt to “rescue” the animal from an unacceptable environment without the owner’s permission and full disclosure as to why the animals are being taken through the use of a signed surrender form.
12. We adhere to our Conflict of Interest Policy and ensure that our board members and volunteers will not financially benefit from the rescue organization.

Adopter Bill of Rights

1. We will fully inform potential adopters about the health, behavioral history, temperament and potential risk factors involved in becoming a specific animal’s guardian.
2. We will fully screen potential adopters for personal and situational compatibility as thoroughly as our rescue group’s resources allow.
3. We will offer consistent adoption fees.
4. We will provide transparency to the public by providing details as to how the funding is raised and spent.

Donor Bill of Rights

1. To be informed of the organization’s mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.
2. To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization’s governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities.
3. To have access to the organization’s most recent financial statements.
4. To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
5. To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition.
6. To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.
7. To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature.
8. To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organization or hired solicitors.
9. To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share.
10. To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.

Training/Educational Resources

Rescue organizations are highly encouraged to seek out and take advantage of training and educational resources. The following is a sample of training/educational opportunities that may be helpful.

Standards of Care

- ASPCA Professionals, www.aspcapro.org
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/20241575/778874386/name/Shelter%20Standards%20Oct2011%20wForward.pdf>

Conferences

- Bi-Annual “Getting to the Goal” Michigan No Kill Conference – Courses are offered to help prepare rescue organizations for certification. Also available are a variety of sessions on animal welfare, www.michiganpetfund.org
- Annual MPAW Conference, www.mpaw.org/events.htm
- Conferences hosted by the No Kill Advocacy Center, www.nokilladvocacycenter.org
- Best Friends Animal Society, <http://events.bestfriends.org/Upcoming/nmhp>
- HSUS Annual Animal Care Expo, www.animalsheltering.org/training-events/expo/

Online Webinars & Workshops

- HSUS Rescue Central, www.animalsheltering.org/resources/rescue/rescue_central.html
- PetSmart Webinars, www.petsmartcharities.org/events-news/upcoming-webinars/
- Hands On Network – Volunteer development, www.handsonnetwork.org/nonprofitgov/training
- Humane Society University, www.humanesocietyuniversity.org
- Best Friends Animal Society, <https://bestfriends.org>
- Maddie’s Fund Resource Library, www.maddiesfund.org

Online Resources

- HSUS educational resources, www.animalsheltering.org/
- Petfinder’s “How to start an animal rescue group,” www.petfinder.com/how-to-help-pets/starting-nonprofit-help-animals.html
- Citizen Media Law Project – forming a non-profit corporation in Michigan, www.citmedialaw.org/legal-guide/forming-nonprofit-corporation-michigan
- Michigan Nonprofit Association, www.mnaonline.org/
- IRS Topics for Charities and Non-profits, www.irs.gov/charities/topic/index.html
- Online website for financial help to rescue animals, www.ehow.com/way_5801154_financial-rescue-animals.html

- Best Friends Animal Society Resource Library, www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/resourcelibrary/index.cfm
- Animal Grants, www.fundsnetsservices.com/searchresult/19/Animal-&-Wildlife-Grants/1/.html
- Humane Research Council – access to research, analysis and strategies to make your organization successful, www.humaneresearch.com
- Community Driven Institute – non-profit library of resources, www.help4nonprofits.com/H4NP.htm

Non-profit Books

- www.nolo.com/products/how-to-form-a-nonprofit-corporation-NNP.html
- www.nolo.com/products/starting-and-building-a-nonprofit-SNON.html

Other Useful Links

Adoption

[Adopt a Pet](#)
[Petfinder](#)

Fundraising/Organization /Grants

[Charity Navigator](#) – charity review site
[GuideStar](#) – list your rescue at no charge so funders can find you
[Network for Good](#) – help with fund raising
[Foundation Center](#) – There is no online access unless you pay a fee. However, you can do custom searches of grants at the Farmington Hills or WSU library. For the Farmington Hills library, you do not have to live there, only provide your driver's license or your library card.

Graphic Design

[Grassroots.org](#) – provides graphic design, website hosting, web building, project consulting, tools and much more for FREE!

Insurance

[Petfinder Animal Welfare Insurance Program](#)
[Nonprofit Risk Management Center](#)
[Nonprofits Insurance Alliance Group](#)
[Prince Associates Inc. Insurance Managers](#)
[Philadelphia Insurance Cos.](#)
[Insurance Group USA](#)
[Great American Insurance Group](#)
[John O. Bronson Co.](#)

Lost and Found Pets

[Pet Harbor](#) – post lost, found and adoptable pets
[Oliver Alert](#) – post lost and found pets
[Pets911](#) – post lost, found and adoptable pets
[Lost Dog Database](#)
[Facebook For the Love of Louie](#) – Facebook page dedicated to reporting lost and found Michigan animals

Photographs

[Stock.xchng](#) – professional photos at low cost or free

Product

Diatomaceous – food-grade diatomaceous earth is a natural pest control for both external and internal use in animals for fleas, ticks, mites and worms.

Rescue

[Pet food bank](#) for rescues
[TNR Training](#)

Software

You can use these sites to generate adoption forms, foster sign-up forms, etc. There are versions that are free, as well as options to upgrade to a paid service.

[www.jotform.com](#)
[www.response-o-matic.com](#)
[www.emailmeform.com](#)
[www.freedback.com/features.php](#)
[www.techsoup.org](#) – donated and discounted software for non-profits.
[www.petpoint.com](#) – animal management software.

Volunteer

[Energize Inc.](#) – retention and recognition for volunteers
[VolunteerMatch](#) – find volunteers in your area

Website

[Firestats](#) – tracks website statistics (if your hosting provider doesn't provide them for you)
[Wix.com](#) – easy website hosting and website design for DIY'ers

Document Revision History

Version Number	Date	Revision Author	Description
1.0	8/7/12	Certification taskforce	Initial creation
2.0	9/11/2018	Certification committee	Updated program document

Appendix

Additional program information, samples and references are available on the website

Terms and Definitions

Adoption Guarantee: a limited admission rescue organization that does not euthanize animals for any reason other than irreparable suffering and untreatable aggression; only method of euthanasia used is humane injection.

Asilomar Accords: A nationally recognized set of definitions to facilitate data collection and assure consistent reporting across agencies.

Healthy: The term healthy means and includes all dogs and cats 8 weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, a congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future.

Treatable: The term treatable means and includes all dogs and cats who are rehabilitatable and all dogs and cats who are manageable.

Rehabilitatable: The term rehabilitatable means and includes all dogs and cats who are not healthy, but who are likely to become healthy, if given medical, foster, behavioral or other care equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community.

Manageable: The term manageable means and includes all dogs and cats who are not healthy and who are not likely to become healthy, regardless of the care provided, but who would likely maintain a satisfactory quality of life, if given medical, foster, behavioral or other care, including long-term care, equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring owners/guardians in the community; provided, however, that the term manageable does not include any dog or cat who is determined to pose a significant risk to human health or safety or to the health or safety of other animals.

Unhealthy and Untreatable: The term unhealthy and untreatable means and includes all dogs and cats who, at or subsequent to the time they are taken into possession:

- 1) Have a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that poses a health or safety risk or otherwise makes the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and are not likely to become healthy or treatable even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community; or
- 2) Are suffering from a disease, injury, congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the animal's health or is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future, and are not likely to become healthy or treatable even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community; or
- 3) Are under the age of 8 weeks and are not likely to become healthy or treatable, even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community.

Animal shelter: facility housing adoptable animals that is open to the public

EIN: Employer Identification Number, assigned by the IRS

Euthanasia: the merciful act of taking an animal's life through humane injection for the sole purpose of ending the animal's irreparable suffering.

Flipping: a person who or organization that, for money-making purposes, obtains pets for free or at a low cost, usually by responding to ads in newspapers or Craigslist or by purchasing animals at an auction. The flipper then advertises those same pets for sale on Craigslist or other venues for a higher price.

Foster care: housing animals in a volunteer's home as if they are their own.

Hoarding: mental illness of "collecting" animals and owning more than one can humanely care for.

Intake source: where the homeless animals comes from.

Killing: the act of taking an animal's life in an inhumane manner and/or for any reason other than to end an animal's irreparable suffering.

EXAMPLES:

- 1) ending an animal's life through humane injection but for the reason of time and space is killing, not euthanasia
- 2) ending an animal's life through gas chamber or electrocution is killing, not euthanasia

Limited Admission: an organization that may or may not maintain a physical sheltering location and does not accept into its shelter every animal brought to its facility; some animals are turned away based on adoptability and/or time and space; may choose to use any method of ending the animal's life.

No Kill: an open admission shelter that maintains a physical sheltering location, does not turn animals away and does not euthanize animals for any reason other than physical, irreparable suffering and/or untreatable aggression; only method of euthanasia used is humane injection and saves 90% or better of the total intake. (This term ONLY applies to open admission shelters)

Open Admission: an organization that maintains a physical sheltering location and accepts into its shelter every animal brought to its facility (usually responsible for a geographic area or may require some conditions) – none are turned away; may choose to use any method of ending the animal's life.

Owner surrender: type of relinquishment of an animal that was owned.

Pediatric spay/neuter: the accepted veterinary practice of sterilizing kittens and puppies at 8 weeks old and weighing at least 2 lbs.

Rescue Group: Rescue groups are often a non-profit 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(7) organization. A rescue group is not usually shelter-based, but shares the same goal as animal shelters – to place homeless pets with adoptive families. Animal shelters are characterized as having a physical location open to the public and dedicated to housing and caring for many different types of animals; whereas, most rescue groups work with specific breeds or types of animal and have volunteers who keep the animals in their homes until adoption, also known as foster care.

Rescue groups often obtain animals from local animal shelters, with the larger of these groups often transporting animals from locations that have a high number of homeless animals to locations where animals are more in demand. Some rescue groups are tied to national breed clubs for a given type of animal. Most rescue organizations work to prevent abuse and treat its results. Overpopulation, especially through reckless breeding, is a major cause of animal neglect, so rescue organizations work actively to advocate spay and neuter, often through community education programs and "spay days."

RTO: Return To Owner – usually referred to the act of reuniting a pet with their owner after it has been lost or escaped.

Stray: an animal found running at large, with or without identification.

TNR: Trap Neuter Return – a program to humanely trap unsocialized/feral cats, neuter and recover them, then return them to their original location where a source of food and shelter must be provided by a caregiver.

Transfer: the act of reassigning ownership/guardianship and relocating of a homeless animal from one organization to another organization usually to take advantage of expertise, relieve capacity or increase chances of rehoming.

Animal Rescue Organization Definitions

By Species

Breed Specific Rescues: Many organizations, out of necessity, devote themselves to one species or breed. The needs of a dog are obviously vastly different from the needs of a rabbit. And some animals have breed-specific behaviors, which can be made worse by inbreeding or abusive conditions, that are best handled by specialists. Some rescue groups are tied to national breed clubs for a given type of animal.

Cat Rescue: A cat rescue group is dedicated to finding new homes for homeless cats and kittens. Types of cat rescues include breed specific (Siamese cat rescue), mixed breeds, all cats and kittens, exotic cats or kittens only.

Dog Rescue: A dog rescue group is dedicated to finding new homes for homeless dogs and puppies. Types of dog rescues include breed specific, mixed breeds, all breeds, small breeds or puppies only.

By Intake Source

Animal Broker: An animal broker often works as a middleman between other rescue groups, shelters, dog auctions or breeders, usually between states. They may pull animals from a high kill shelter and place them with a variety of rescues in another state or region. Sometimes a puppy broker will front as a rescue organization, deceiving the public into believing the puppies have been rescued, when they really have been purchased for resale. Often the source of the animals is unknown or not provided to the rescue receiving the animal. The difference between an animal broker and a transporter is that the broker pays for and takes possession of the animal, then rescues pay them directly for the animal. Transporters simply deliver the animal with fees paid only by legitimate sources.

Breeder Rescues: Some breeders also rescue animals that they specialize in. They may take back animals they have previously sold and rehome them. If the breeder is not set-up as a non-profit, this is referred to as "re-selling" versus "adopting."

Owner Surrender Intake: Rescue organizations that rehome animals received from their current owner/guardian, who is relinquishing the animal due to any reason, such as life circumstances or animal behavior/medical issues.

Shelter Transfers: Rescue organizations that obtain homeless animals directly from licensed animal shelters, usually because the animals have been deemed unadoptable by the shelter or the animals have run out of time and space.

Stray Intake: Rescue organizations that intake stray or found animals.

By Situation

Greyhound Rescues: Greyhound rescue groups typically help dogs that have been retired or deemed too slow to be lucrative for racing.

Hoarding Case Rescues: Rescue organizations that intake animals directly from hoarders or from a law enforcement agency that has intervened in a hoarding situation.

Pit Bull Rescue: In recent years, pit bulls have been vilified, especially due to dog fighting and media sensationalism. Pit bull rescues focus on finding homes for these breeds, which are often hard to place and are discriminated against.

Puppy Mill/Auction Rescues: Some rescue groups primarily obtain their dogs from dog auctions, especially in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri and Wisconsin. Dog auctions are organized for commercial-type kennels and serve as a major distribution channel for buyers and sellers from multiple states. Some rescue groups join other breeders/brokers in bidding on dogs and end up being the biggest “customers” at auctions, adding to the profitability of the puppy mill industry.

Temporary Housing Rescue: A rescue organization that provides temporary housing for an animal that will eventually be returned to the original owner/guardian. Circumstances include services provided to military personnel, individuals escaping domestic abuse and violence, individuals whose housing is subject to foreclosure or eviction, victims of natural disasters or other life events and crises.

By Housing

Animal Protection Shelter: A facility operated by a person, humane society, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals or any other non-profit organization for the care of homeless animals. (S.B. 474 definition)

Animal Sanctuary: A facility where animals are brought to live and be protected for the rest of their lives. Unlike animal shelters, most sanctuaries do not seek to place animals with individuals or groups, instead maintaining each animal until his or her natural death. In some cases, an establishment may have characteristics of both a sanctuary and a shelter; for instance, some animals may be in residence temporarily until a good home is found and others may be permanent residents. The mission of sanctuaries is generally to be safe havens, where the animals receive the best care that the sanctuaries can provide. Animals are not bought, sold or traded, nor are they used for animal testing. The resident animals are given the opportunity to behave as naturally as possible in a protected environment.

Foster Care-based Rescues: Foster homes provide healthy environments for homeless animals and those recovering from abuse or neglect. They allow the animals to get used to living with a stable, caring family. In cases of neglect or abuse, a foster care home may help the animal regain its strength or health. Additionally, some animals need to go through a period of mourning for their former owners, even if those owners were neglectful. A foster family can also help with areas of training that the former owner may have overlooked. Fostered pets can be socialized, better adjusted and more adoptable.

Non-adoption Rescue-related Groups

Animal Importer: An animal importer is a person/organization that brings dogs or cat into the state for the purpose of offering such dog or cat to any person for sale, adoption or transfer in exchange for any fee, sale, voluntary contribution, service or any other consideration.

Animal Sanctuary only: A facility where unadoptable animals are brought to live and be protected for their remainder of their natural life.

Trap Neuter Return (TNR): A rescue that works to improve the quality of life for feral cats and reduce the intake of kittens to a shelter by trapping, neutering and returning feral cats to their original location. Often the rescue will find adoptive homes for domestic cats that may have joined the colony due to being lost or abandoned and intake younger kittens that can be socialized.

Transport Rescue: Transport rescues provide transportation to homeless animals, relocating them to underserved areas in order to increase the possibility of their adoption. Transport rescues can operate locally, regionally, long distance and/or internationally. PetSmart Charities Rescue Waggin’ takes animals from high-kill shelters and transports them to destination shelters. Transport rescues are used during natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina. Other transport rescues operate to increase spay/neuter by participating in low-cost clinics.