



Supported Self-Rehoming Rehoming Resources and Field Services

Overview

Field Service Officers frequently act as the first point of contact for a community member seeking help with a pet and have a unique opportunity to evaluate a situation holistically and provide recommendations. If a pet owner is unable to keep their pet long-term, regardless of support provided, officers should provide pet owners with information on how to self-rehome.

Self-rehoming allows pet owners to be active in the adoption process as they know their pet best and can advocate for their interests, quirks, needs, and more. In addition, self-rehoming allows for more flexibility for pet owners to remain involved in their pet's life, if they choose, after they have been rehomed.

Providing Self-Rehoming Resources

Providing rehoming support through field services may look different for each scenario. Consider integrating a mix of the following options into protocols to accommodate different situations.

1. Share [basic rehoming information communications](#) on social media or other public-facing communication channels. Include answers to common questions you may get asked such as:
 - a. **How long does self-rehoming take?** *Sample text: Timing may vary due to many variables including species, age of pet and how responsive pet owners are to inquiries. The more time a pet owner can devote to rehoming their pet, the more likely it is the pet can be successfully rehomed. Due to the variable timeline, pet owners should start the self-rehoming process as soon as they know they need to rehome their pet.*
 - b. **Do you have any food or supplies that can help me care for my pet while I try to rehome them?** *Tip: Here's where you can provide them directly with*



- supplies, set them up with a recurring supply pickup/dropoff, or direct them towards a consistent local food pantry that services pets.*
- c. **Can the local shelter help pet owners do meet and greets with potential owner's pets, children, or others?** *Tip: Here's where you can work with your local shelter to find the answer to this question!*
 - d. **How do I select a new owner for my pet?** *Sample text: You know your pet best! Have an in-depth conversation with any potential adopters to discuss your pet's care needs and preferences to see if it's a good match for them and your pet.*
2. **Provide information about online [rehoming platforms](#)**, such as [Rehome by Adopt-a-Pet](#) or [Home to Home](#), including website links and basic information, and sample adopter screening questions such as:
 - a. [PASS screening question template](#)
 - b. [KC Pet Project Rehoming Playbook](#)
 - c. [Cat Adoption Questionnaire](#)
 - d. [Dog Adoption Questionnaire](#)
 - e. [Transfer of Ownership Agreement](#)
 3. **[Provide owners with basic pet care resources](#)** that can help them ensure their pet is set up for success in the rehoming process. This may include vouchers for medical care (*vaccinated and spayed/neutered pets may be rehomed faster!*), printed resources detailing basic behavior-based techniques for pets experiencing things like separation anxiety or reactivity on-leash to help the current owner manage any current concerns they have with caring for the pet, flea/tick and heartworm prevention, enrichment supplies, and more.

Promoting Pets Available for Rehoming

Field Services may take support one step further by promoting pets available for self-rehoming through an official website or social media pages alongside pets available for adoption at the local shelter. This process increases the pet's visibility and may lead to a more efficient, quicker rehome process for pet owners. By taking proactive steps to bring visibility to pets available for rehoming, you reduce the chances of a pet owner needing to surrender their pet directly to the already full shelter.

Examples of promoting available pets in need of rehoming:

- During **in-person interactions**, if a community member shares an interest in adopting a new pet, share information about pets available on rehoming websites or, if known, specific pets available for rehoming in the area (in addition to how they can adopt pets at local shelters).
- Utilize [social media](#) and other public-facing platforms to highlight pets available through rehoming in your service area. This may include sharing a photo collage of available pets with links to the website they are available on or contact information for the owner.
- While attending or hosting **community events**, share rehoming resources with community members and highlight available pets in the area being rehomed.

Supporting Research and Resources

Supported Self-Rehoming (General)

- [Predictors of successful diversion of cats and dogs away from animal shelter intake: Analysis of data from a self-rehoming website](#) (Ly & Protopopova, 2023)
 - “This study aimed to identify predictors of successful diversion of animals through the AdoptaPet.com ‘Rehome’ online platform. Data for dogs (n = 100,342) and cats (n = 48,484) were analysed through logistic regression to assess the association of animal- and owner-related factors and outcome. Overall, **87.1% of dogs and 85.7% of cats were successfully diverted from animal shelters**, out of which, 37.8% of dogs and 35.3% of cats were kept by their original owner.”
- [Consumer Adoption Survey](#) (Best Friends Animal Society, 2022)
 - **Of the 39% of dogs** that were acquired from an individual, **14%** were acquired from someone the person connected with online.
 - **Of the 37% of cats** that were acquired from an individual, **5%** were acquired from someone the person connected with online.
- [Goodbye to a Good Friend: An Exploration of the Re-Homing of Cats and Dogs in the U.S.](#) (Weiss et al., 2015)
 - “Pets were most likely to be re-homed by being given to a friend or family member (37%) closely followed by being taken to a shelter (36%, Table 1). Being taken to a veterinarian (14%), **given to someone not previously known (stranger, 11%)** and set free (1%) were less likely re-homing options.”
 - “Forty two percent of respondents who re-homed to friends and family also considered a shelter for re-homing, and **18% of those who re-homed to a shelter considered re-homing to someone they did not know**. We hypothesize one of the drivers for shelter relinquishment may be lack of ready access to other options for re-homing.”

Supported Self-Rehoming Meet-and-Greets

- [Preference assessments and structured potential adopter-dog interactions increase adoptions](#) (Protopopova et al., 2016)
 - **Guiding meet-and-greets** between potential adopters and dogs through positive reinforcement training and play with toys can increase the likelihood of adoption.
 - In this study, potential adopters were guided to walk a dog for an elimination break, play with a toy that the dog found valuable, and encourage the dog to lie down with food rewards. Researchers found that the **dogs that participated in these constructive meet-and-greets with potential adopters were 2.49 times more likely to be adopted** than dogs in the control group.
- [When and Why Cats Are Returned to Shelters](#) (Mundschau & Suchak, 2023)
 - “We found that the reasons **cats were returned shortly after adoption were focused on specific issues with the cat, such as behavioral problems or conflicts with other pets**. In contrast, cats who were returned in the long term often had to do with the owner, such as major life changes (births, deaths, illnesses, children) or the cost of owning the pet. Our findings suggest that shelters might need to consider different types of strategies for long-term and short-term returns to reduce the return rates overall.”
- [Intercat aggression in households following the introduction of a new cat](#) (Levine et al., 2005)

- “Among households with multiple cats, **half reported fighting between cats when the new cat was introduced. Approximately half of the people introduced the cats into the home by simply putting the cats together immediately.** Neither age, sex, nor number of cats in the household was associated with current fighting (i.e. fighting that was occurring 2–12 months after the new cat was brought into the household); however, current fighting was associated with individual behaviors (i.e. scratching and biting) during the cats first meeting, outdoor access, and the owner's perception of the first meeting as unfriendly or aggressive.”
- [Evaluation of the relationship between cats and dogs living in the same home](#) (Thompson et al., 2018)
 - *This study emphasizes the importance of ensuring cats are comfortable in cat-dog relationships.*
 - “. . . comfortability of the cat was a stronger predictor of amicability than comfortability of the dog; frequency of the cat appearing uncomfortable with the dog was a better predictor for reduced amicability than the dog appearing uncomfortable in the presence of the cat. **These results highlight the need to attend to the cat's behavior in particular,** along with age of introduction, to promote positive cat-dog relationships.”
- [Introducing a Puppy to Existing Household Cat\(s\): Mixed Method Analysis](#) (Kinsman et al., 2022)
 - “Of the 1211 puppies who had been introduced to the household cat at the time of survey completion, playing (58.9%), being overexuberant or over-excited (56.6%), and chasing (48.6%) were the most common behaviours displayed towards cats. ‘Only desirable’ behaviours were shown by 7.3% of puppies. Multivariable logistic regression showed early (puppies aged <12 weeks), **gradual introductions** and living in a multi-dog household **increased the odds of ‘only desirable’ behaviours.** Qualitative analysis revealed two styles of introductions—owner-led and pet-led. Owners who led introductions anticipated amicable relationships between pets, whilst owners who let pets introduce themselves did not. **Early, gradual, owner-led introductions of puppies to household cats should be encouraged.**”
- [Conflict and affiliative behavior frequency between cats in multi-cat households: a survey-based study](#) (Elzerman et al., 2019)
 - “In multi-cat households, **73.3% of owners noted conflict signs from the very beginning when introducing the cats.** The recent addition of a new cat to the home was correlated with the frequency of conflict signs.”