

Choosing A Partner Organization: Consider This!

Not all animal groups are created equally. It is up to you to perform due diligence in finding a reputable one that's a good match for you.

Business Basics

How long have they been in biz?

Are they a 501c3?

Do they have a presence online (website, fb page, other social media)?

- Do they have contact information and a “real” address?

Are there references or reviews available?

Where are they located?

- Are they in close proximity?
- Do they have a building?

Where do they get their funding?

Does this group have a positive reputation in the community among veterinarians, animal shelters and pet owners?

The People

Who runs the organization? Are there a lot of people, just a handful, or just one or two?

Are they all volunteers? Do some people get paid?

Who fosters for the organization?

What's the general vibe?

- Are folks working together, helping one another or is there in-fighting?
- Are the people genuinely compassionate or just interested in flipping animals for money?

Is there a high turnover?

The Animals

Which animals do they take in? Is it a mix or do they specialize?

- Cats only? Dogs only? Other animals or wildlife?
- Only puppies or kittens? (where are the mommas?) Only specialty or popular breeds?
- Only seniors? Only medical emergencies?

Where are the animals coming from?

- Overcrowded shelters? Surrenders or Strays? Backyard breeders? Puppy mills?
- Local? From another state? From another country?

How many animals do they usually have in their care?

- What is the ratio of animals to foster families?
- Where are the animals kept that are not with foster families?

Do the animals appear fed and healthy, in a clean and organized setting?

Systems & Processes

What is the intake process?

- Are all animals held and evaluated before adoption? What testing do they do (temperament, medical?)
- Are they vetted and are complete records provided?
- Which veterinarians do they use?

Are there medical records and consistent record keeping (including proper paperwork when transporting from another state or country)?

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Systems & Processes (continued)

Are their adoption fees within a reasonable range?
(What's reasonable?)

What is their adoption process?

- Is there an application w/reference checks or adequate screening?
- Do they require home visits of potential adopters?
- Do they do same day adoptions or adopt straight off of a transport?
- Do both parties sign an adoption contract?
- Is a meet and greet required? Are all family members – human and animal – required to participate?
- Are there foster-to-adopt opportunities?
- If the adopter can't keep the pet for any reason, must they return it to the rescue?

Do they spay and neuter before adoption?

- How do they handle spay/neuter of puppies and kittens?
- If they don't spay/neuter pre-adoption, is there a contract?
- How do they follow up?

What are their criteria for foster families?

- Is there an application w/reference checks?
- Do they require home visits of potential adopters?
- Do they require a contract?
- What happens if you want to adopt the animal you are fostering?

Training & Support

What do they supply? (Crate, food, medical care, special training if needed?)

Is there training for foster families? (Formal, informal, written manual and/or resources list?)

How responsive are they to foster questions or problems?

- Do they return texts, calls, emails?
- Do they provide medical or behavioral support?

Do they help promote the animals for adoption, especially if it has been in foster for a long time?

Are there 'interim' foster families, if you have an emergency or a planned trip?

Policies & Expectations

What are their policies (are they in writing?)

What happens if your foster animal bites you – or someone else?

What are foster families required or encouraged to do?

How long are the animals in foster, on average?

Can you choose the length of time you feel you can commit?

Can you choose the breed, size, gender, needs and temperament of the animal you're going to foster?

Do they require periodic reports about the animal(s) in your care? (In writing?)

Do they have regular adoption events?

- Where are the adoption events?
- How often are the adoption events?
- Will you be required to participate?