Policies and Procedures

Policy: Adoption Partner Program

POLICY:

Animal Services seeks approved Adoption Partners to accept adoptable or treatable animals that are not adopted through County Animal Services. Animal Services employees will work proactively and cooperatively with Adoption Partners to ensure the greatest number of animals are adopted and animal euthanasia is minimized.

Definition: Adoption Partners are nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) registered charities with an organizational purpose of animal adoption. Adoption Partners accept transfers of animals from County shelters and in turn, adopt the animals into permanent homes. Adoption Partners usually adopt dogs and cats, but some adopt livestock, exotic pets and other animals. Adoption Partners may include private rescue groups, breed specific rescue groups, Humane Societies, and/or SPCA facilities.

PROCEDURE:

A. Qualifications for Adoption Partners (AP)

To be eligible for our Adoption Partner Program organizations must be:

1. A nonprofit animal rescue or adoption organization (as defined in Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code)
2. Be organized and operated for the purpose of animal adoptions.
3. Have no criminal or administrative violations regarding animals.
4. Be in compliance with all laws related to animals.
5. Be in good standing with the local animal control agency.

B. Approved Adoption Partners

1. Adoption Partners must be approved prior to any animals being released to the group. Santa Barbara County Animal Services requires the following information on file for each Adoption Partner group:
   a. A completed SBCAS Adoption Partner Application Form.
   b. A copy of the organization’s IRS determination letter.
   c. A copy of the organization’s Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, and on-line status report from the Secretary of State.
   d. The AP’s mission statement or brochure, indicating the primary breed/species the organization adopts.
   e. A current copy or the adoption agreement used by the AP for adopting animals to new homes.
   f. A list of all individuals authorized to transport animals on behalf of the AP. The list shall include their full name, address, and phone number.
g. A list of authorized foster homes used by the AP agency. The list shall include the full name, address, phone number, and the number of foster animals allowed at that location.

h. A current list of the AP’s board of directors.

i. References from one veterinarian and one animal care and control agency or open admission humane society/SPCA with which the applying AP has done business (preferably the local animal control agency).

j. A statement of financial viability

2. Upon approval, the new Adoption Partner will execute an Adoption Partner Agreement.

3. Adoption Partners are approved for participation by the Animal Services Director or designee.

4. Fees for Adoption Partners are set in the Animal Services Fee schedule and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

4. Adoption Partners that are authorized to transfer animals at the special rate will have the designation of **AD PARTNER** in the status screen. Adoption Partners will comply with all animal related laws and regulations including, vaccination, licensing, zoning, and permit requirements.

5. Dogs placed in foster homes within Santa Barbara County for over 30 days by Adoption Partners must be licensed to the Adoption Partner.

6. Licenses for adopted animals must be obtained within 30 days of when the new owner takes possession of the animal.

7. Adoption Partners will maintain accurate records of animals transferred from Santa Barbara County Animal Services and provide Animal Services with monthly status reports. Adoption Partners will also provide the adopter name, address, phone number, and microchip number within 30 days of the animal being placed.

8. Adoption Partners will be responsible (liable) for the animal(s) until new owner information is submitted to Animal Services.

9. Adoption Partners must renew their adoption partner paperwork and agreement every two years, if their information changes, or as requested by Santa Barbara County Animal Services.

C. Approved Animals

1. Animals eligible for transfer to approved Adoption Partners must be approved for transfer by the Shelter Supervisor prior to Adoption Partner group(s) being contacted.

2. Animals that are under the mandatory stray hold period may not be transferred to an Adoption Partner until the hold period has ended.

3. Adoptable animals will be available for public adoption at least 3 days beyond the stray holding period prior to being released to an Adoption Partner.

4. Volunteers may recommend to the Shelter Supervisor or designee animals to be referred to Adoption Partners.

5. Healthy adoptable animals or animals with treatable medical or behavioral issues may be offered to Adoption Partners.

6. Animals with severe behavioral issues or a history of a bite incident may not be offered.

7. Adoption Partner interest will not be a priority over an animal that a member of the public is interested in adopting.

8. The Shelter Supervisor has the discretion to transfer animals to Adoption Partners following the above guidelines.

9. Adoption Partners are required to pick up animals within three days of notification from Animal Services.

10. Since Adoption Partners guarantee spay or neuter prior to placement, animals can be released unaltered to approved Adoption Partners.

11. The following exceptions will not be offered to Adoption Partners:

   a. Animals that are irremediably suffering;
   b. Animals surrendered as Owner Requested Euthanasia; and in the interest of public safety;
   c. Owner surrendered dogs with a documented history of aggression;
D. Contacting Adoption Partners
1. The Animal Services Director will designate the primary point of contact for Adoption Partners at each shelter location.
2. Designated staff contact Adoption Partners and record the contact in the Kennel screen in the Comment area or on a Memo.
3. All known or observed behavior or medical concerns are fully disclosed to the potential Adoption Partner and a waiver must be signed, when appropriate.
4. Staff will contact Adoption Partners for every adoptable purebred dog or cat prior to euthanasia of that animal to give the Adoption Partner group an opportunity to adopt it. The same procedure will be followed for other animals for which Adoption Partners are known, for example reptiles, rabbits and pot-bellied pigs.

E. Transportation of Transfers to Adoption Partners
1. Transportation is normally provided by the Adoption Partners.
2. Transportation out-of-county may be done in a county vehicle driven by a staff member with prior approval from the Shelter Supervisor.
3. Volunteers may transport animals in their personal vehicle.
4. Volunteers may use a county vehicle for larger transfers of animals with approval from the Shelter Supervisor.
   a. An approved travel request is required prior to travel
   b. A copy of the transporter’s driver’s license and proof of insurance must be on file prior to the trip.

F. Release of Animals to Adoption Partners
1. All animals being released to an approved Adoption Partner are scanned for a microchip prior to leaving the shelter
   a. Record the date and results manually on the Kennel Card
   b. This is a second scan to double check for a microchip
2. Copies of each animal’s information will be provided to the Adoption Partner. These records will include:
   a. A copy of the kennel card,
   b. A copy of all medical records,
   c. A copy of the behavior evaluation,
   d. A copy of the owner surrender questionnaire if applicable, with owner information redacted.
       (No owner or finder information will be released to the Adoption Partner.)
   e. If the animal has had a rabies vaccination, a Rabies Certificate must be generated for the animal and provided to the Adoption Partner.
3. The animal is outcomed in Chameleon as Transfer
4. Applicable fees are charged on the day the animal is released.
5. If a balance due receipt is needed, it is mailed directly to the rescue address and a copy provided to the Community Outreach Coordinator on the day of transfer.
6. Animals will only be transferred to persons authorized by the primary contact for the Adoption Partner
   a. A current list of authorized transporters will be maintained by Animal Services
   b. The Adoption Partner group is responsible for ensuring the reliability of their representatives. The use of temporary or “one-time” representatives is not permitted.
c. Representatives that fail to follow the Adoption Partner program policies may cause the group’s privileges to be suspended or revoked.

7. Animals going to authorized Adoption Partners must be picked up within 3 business days of notification
   a. If more time is needed the Adoption Partner will work with the Shelter Supervisor to make arrangements
   b. Animal Services will honor the request for more time as long as the shelter has space and there are no negative impacts on the health or well-being of that animal or other animals.

G. Adoption Partner Relations
   1. Staff will interact with Adoption Partners in a courteous and professional manner.
   2. If an Adoption Partner disrupts shelter operations the Shelter Supervisor will be notified to respond to the problem.
   3. Ongoing disruptive and negative behavior will be reported to the Director for review and possible action.
   4. Nevertheless, shelter staff will always maintain professionalism and a spirit of cooperation with Adoption Partners.
   5. Adoption Partners may not extend their transfer privileges to third parties, who may be adopting for private purposes or for another rescue organization not registered with Santa Barbara County as an Adoption Partner.

H. Applicable Forms (See Approved Forms 2014)
   1. Adoption Partner Application
   2. Adoption Partner Agreement (including approved transporters and foster homes)
   3. Adoption Partner Animal Status Report