BUILD YOUR DOG ADOPTION SUPER HIGHWAY

Increasing engagement
with your community to get
more pets adopted faster.

**PEDIGREE
FOUNDATION**

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A story from Kristen Hassen of Outcomes Consulting

A couple of years ago, I was scrolling through social media and saw this skinny, brown dog with one ear up and one ear down. The photos of her made me stop and read the post. It was just before a winter storm and the forecast was warning of temperatures in the single digits. The description read, **"Zora and her pal had a rough start when they were abandoned and found themselves at the shelter. Since her friend was adopted, Ursula has been a little scared but shelter staff and volunteers are making sure she's loved. She would love to go for a walk then curl up in your lap. Stop by and meet Ursula today!"**

"The more full the shelter is, the more we have to reach out to the community and invite them in. We have to meet our community where they are and accept the help that they are offering to give us. Engaging our community is the single most important component to lifesaving." – **Misty Valenta, Director of Williamson County Regional Animal**

I was not in the market for another dog but something about her worried eyes caught my attention and I asked my wife if we could just go and meet her. As soon as we arrived at the shelter, we were welcomed by several volunteers, who gave us directions and helped us find her among the hundred or more dogs. They leashed her up, walked us to a yard, and told us a little more of her story. They left us in the yard and went to walk other dogs, coming back to check on us after about 15 minutes.

We immediately bonded with her, but we told them we were going to leave her there and see if anyone else adopted her that day. They were really nice about it and told us to come back anytime. I refreshed the adoption page listings every hour for the rest of the day and to my surprise, she was still there by the next morning. As the freezing weather approached, we drove back to the shelter, this time to bring her home. We completed the adoption paperwork, and I was a little worried we'd be denied because we had not brought our other dogs to meet her and one of our existing dogs was due for annual vaccines. Luckily, the adoption process was simple and straightforward, and they focused on making sure we knew her medical history and how to contact them if we had any questions in the future.

We were able to take her home that day and she was so happy to be warm and cozy. She immediately cuddled up to one of our other dogs on the couch and slept through most of the winter storm. **Today, she brings us so much joy and we can't imagine life without her.** The volunteers still remember her and we occasionally send them updated pictures, which they respond to happily and thank us for giving them

reminders of why they volunteer. I'm forever grateful to Bastrop County Animal Shelter and I tell everyone I know to adopt from them.

Looking back, I remember how kind and patient everyone was, and how several people went out of their way to stop and say hello and share something they liked about Zora or just thanked us for coming. I could see how much they all cared for the animals and I felt welcomed, like they would have let me sit there all day with this little dog on my lap or maybe even invited me to join them walking some other dogs. **I often wonder, "What if it could always be like that?"**

When people are looking for a new dog or puppy, they have more choices today than ever before. They can purchase a puppy online or in a store, get a dog from a friend or family member, find a dog or puppy on a social media platform, or adopt from your shelter or rescue. Luckily for us, most people are willing to choose dog adoption if we consider four things potential adopters want to feel - **welcomed, informed, respected, and celebrated.**

What do feelings have to do with increasing adoptions? Pet adoption is something people choose because among other reasons, they want to do something good. They want to help save a life. They're making a choice to forgo getting a free pet on Craigslist or buying a purebred puppy in order to adopt from a shelter or rescue. It's up to us to show them they've made the right choice and we do this through our words, actions, policies, and procedures. If we get it right, our adopters will go home with a pet (or two!) and feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves and will tell everyone about their great experience.

This toolkit is designed to be used without additional staff or funding, though in many cases, animal shelters still need to increase the resources allocated to adoption and foster programs. Engaging adopters and letting them know they are needed and valued has never been more critical.

We have an opportunity to change the future, and it takes only the will, some courage, self-reflection, and to use the proven strategies that have shown time and time again that people are the solution.

What is going on with shelter dog adoptions?

One question that comes up a lot lately is "Why do things feel so hard for medium and large dogs in shelters?" To answer this, we need to consider the data, understand larger social and economic challenges, and most importantly, evaluate our own practices and how they are impacting adoption and foster placements.

The data shows us animal shelter intake is returning to pre-pandemic levels, while outcomes are falling behind. That means more animals are entering shelters and fewer are leaving and this is especially true for medium and large dogs. The length of stay of dogs in shelters has gone way up, which means dogs are staying in shelters longer, taking up a kennel that could have been used for another dog to come in. Shelters and rescues are full, leaving animal welfare professionals worried about the future.

Sadly, euthanasia of dogs in shelters is on the rise, mostly due to lack of space in shelters. Wonderful, family dogs of all sizes, ages, and breeds are at higher risk of euthanasia today than they have been in the past five years. For reference, see data from Best Friends, Shelter Animals Count, and Pethealth Inc..

Shelter professionals and volunteers are worried about these trends and levels of burnout and staff turnover are high. Despite economic and housing factors that may be slowing down adoptions, there are still many things shelters can do today to increase live outcomes and reduce the length of stay of dogs.

Data Tips

🐾 Intake and outcome types should represent the animals entering and exiting your shelter system. Check out this data dos and don'ts from Shelter Animals Count for more information about data collection and reporting.

🐾 Reduce the number of statuses in your shelter or rescue and get rid of the ´rescue only´ status. The ones you need are: available ´as of´ (end of stray period), unavailable with the reason (eg. Unavailable - bite quarantine), and evaluate (for the few number of animals that need medical or behavioral information before making available).

🐾 Review your intake and outcome data (broken up by species and intake/outcome type) every month. Compare the month's data for the same data over the same period for the previous five years. Most of the software systems make this easy so just ask your provider to help you create this report. Doing this will help you see how trends are changing over time so you can see both positive and negative impacts of changes in the community and changes to shelter policies.

When it comes to the impact of economic and housing challenges, there is no doubt that shelter intake is related to larger economic factors. We saw this after the 2008 housing crisis and we're seeing now as the impacts of the Covid pandemic continue to be felt worldwide. On the bright side, we are not experiencing a national crisis in shelter pet intake or a return of ´pandemic puppies.´ In fact, people are actually surrendering slightly fewer animals than they were in 2019, the year before the pandemic.

Even though these factors outside of our control do exist, this does not mean we should give up. On the contrary, there are more ways than ever we can work to increase adoptions and reduce the length of time dogs spend in shelters.

TEAM ACTIVITY: Imagine This

Until the early 1980s, it's estimated that 15 to 20 million animals died in animal shelters, compared to about a million today. **On a white board or large poster paper, brainstorm as a group what your shelter or rescue would be like if this were the 'old days' of the dog pound**, before foster care was the norm, or volunteer programs existed. What would it be like if the only purpose of your organization was rabies control, and every animal seen walking around or unlicensed was immediately impounded? What if you did not have any staff dedicated to adoption or foster care and you were not even open to the public? This was the reality for most animal shelters before our predecessors came along and changed things.

What changes do you think have been the most impactful to animal shelters? What changes do you remember happening at your organization that have had a big impact?

Find the employee who has been at your shelter or rescue the longest and ask them to talk about 'the old days.' Most animal shelter history is not written down so you may be surprised by some of what you learn!

Finally, list five things that could be different 10 years from now. What might we look back on that we do now and realize it was harming animals, not helping them? Is anything on your list something you can work towards changing now?

PART 2:
Welcome, Inform, Respect, and Celebrate
The Easy Recipe for Adoption Success

In some ways, animal shelters and rescues are no different than other businesses: We are one of many choices people have for acquiring their new pets. People come to the shelter because something about our mission and brand inspired them to act. If people have a positive experience with our shelter or rescue, they'll tell their friends and write a positive online review about us. If they have a negative experience, they will tell their friends about it and potentially write a bad review about us. If we make potential adopters feel great, they'll remember it and if we are unhelpful or rude, they'll remember that too.

For most businesses, the results are more or fewer sales, increases or decreases in revenue, and ultimately the survival of the company. For animal shelters and rescues, what's at stake are the lives of the animals who are counting on us. There is nothing more important than how we engage the public because it takes the entire community to save lives. As you read more about the recipe for increasing adoptions, consider the following questions: does this sound like your organization? If not, why not? In which area do you excel as an organization and in which do you need the most improvement?

WELCOME adopters by being accessible, friendly, helpful, and positive. Shelters that welcome adopters usually demonstrate most or all of the following:

- They're open on weekends and in the evenings during the week.
- Their website puts adoption front and center and has friendly, inviting language.
- You can walk through the kennels and visit the animals.
- There are people at the shelter to greet visitors and people seem genuinely happy to see you.
- You learn about how to volunteer.
- The staff and volunteers helping you seem to want to learn more about the kind of pet you're hoping to adopt.
- They speak positively about the animals and the people at the shelter.
- They have familiarity with at least some of the dogs and can tell you about them.
- You can meet available dogs without having to first complete an application or show identification.
- You can adopt a pet and take it home the same day and most dogs are available for foster or adoption.
- No one pressures you, but you know that the people helping you will be grateful and excited if you do choose to adopt.

Do you have a greeter? This is one of the most important volunteer positions, yet many shelters still have no one to greet and welcome the public. Create a welcome station inside the front door or even better, outside in front of the building and recruit volunteers to staff it. Volunteers can tell visitors about individual animals, answer common questions, tell people how to donate, show them where to go, and be a friendly, knowledgeable face of the organization. This job is often filled very easily because it does not require special training or skills except basic knowledge of the shelter, a friendly demeanor, a welcoming smile, and a desire to help. Greeters and all volunteers are essential to welcoming visitors, informing them, and celebrating their adoptions!

INFORM adopters by telling them the things they need to know. Shelters that inform adopters usually demonstrate most or all of the following:

- 🐾 They provide positive marketing about the dogs in the shelter on their website and social media accounts.
- 🐾 They explain the adoption process up front and are flexible with adopters, recognizing that every person and animal is an individual.
- 🐾 They help potential adopters meet available dogs, and answer any and all questions.
- 🐾 They really listen, and look for ways to find a great match for every potential adopter.
- 🐾 They provide counseling to adopters, telling people everything that the shelter knows about a particular dog, using objective, commonly-understood terminology and putting any medical and behavior information in context.
- 🐾 They tell the adopters how the dog entered the shelter, how long it's been there, and anything else known about it's time in the shelter, including if it went to foster care.
- 🐾 They model safe, humane handling procedures to adopters and show them the tools, resources, and equipment that can help them be successful adopters.

RESPECT adopters by trusting that they are there to help and giving them the benefit of the doubt. Shelters that respect adopters usually do most or all of the following:

- 🐾 They look for ways to get to ´yes´ by helping adopters find a great match.
- 🐾 They empower people to make their own decisions about the pet or pets that are right for them without imposing their own beliefs and assumptions.
- 🐾 They give adopters objective information about the pet, are fully transparent, and support the adopter in making the choice to adopt or not adopt.
- 🐾 They encourage people to review their rental or HOA agreement if they have one, but do not conduct background checks or landlord checks.
- 🐾 They inform adopters about the vaccination status of the pet they're adopting, but do not require all pets in the home be up-to-date on vaccinations or sterilization status. They recognize the adopter has many choices about where to acquire a pet and they provide information about spay/neuter or vaccine resources if the adopter is open to it.
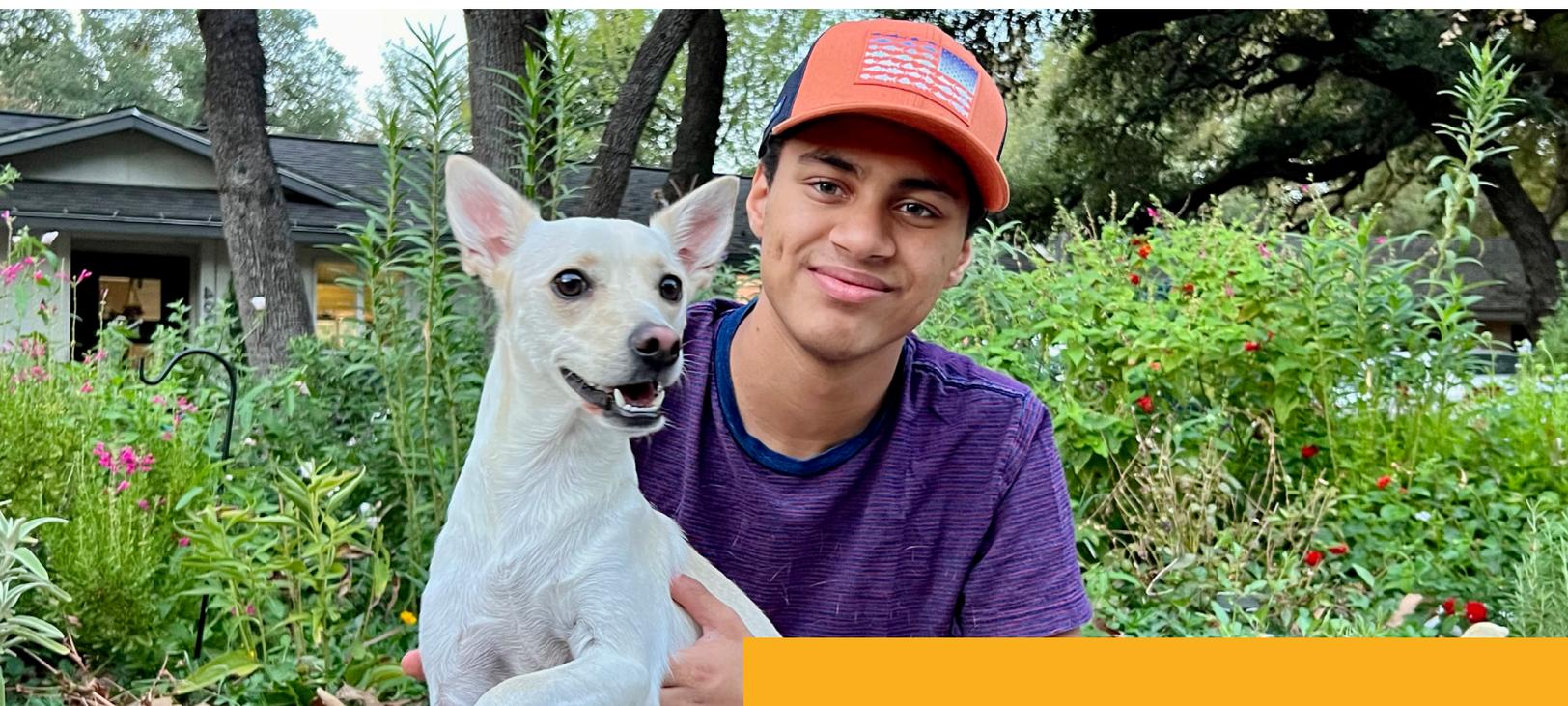
CELEBRATE adopters by acknowledging their choice to help save a life and telling them they are valued and appreciated. Shelters that celebrate adopters usually do most or all of the following:

- 🐾 They introduce adopters to volunteers, staff, and/or foster caregivers who cared for the pet they're adopting.
- 🐾 Everyone who sees an adoption happening says ´congratulations!´ or cheers or shows they are happy and excited for this newly created family.
- 🐾 They provide contact information and resources for the adopter in case they need support or have questions during the time the dog is acclimating to their new home.
- 🐾 They say thank you and tell the adopter how important they are.
- 🐾 They ask the adopter to send photos or a story about their pet or tag the shelter on social media.
- 🐾 They invite the adopter to future events and encourage them to volunteer, foster, and donate.
- 🐾 They tell the adopter what it means to have them save a life and speak from the heart.

Keep in mind, the items under each category are just a few of the ways you can demonstrate welcoming, respect, informing and celebrating adopters.

TEAM ACTIVITY: How do we make our adopters feel?

On a white board or large sheet of paper, **create four columns** with one of the four words heading up each column: Welcome, Inform, Respect, and Celebrate.

Starting with just the words and one-sentence descriptions, **ask your team how you currently demonstrate welcoming, respect, informing, and celebrating** and write the answers on the board under each column heading.

Is one column more heavily-weighted than the others? If so, what does that tell you? What else do you notice?

Are there any areas in which you tend to do the opposite of the word? Are there things you do to make adopters feel excluded or unwelcome? Dispected? Do you do things that leave them confused or in the dark? Do you make them feel like a burden instead of a lifesaving partner? **Tip:** You can do this part by making another four-column grid or simply talking through the ways you may be giving the wrong message.

What else could you do to celebrate potential adopters and adopters?

This activity can be as short or as long as you want and you can use the four terms to create a whole new adoption pathway!

Ask for Help, Make it Easy
Clearing the Path to Adoption

It's time to re-open!

During the early days of the Covid pandemic, many animal shelters reduced their adoption hours or moved to appointment-based hours. Others stopped allowing the public to walk through their shelters.

"We have to think like a potential adopter and let people see and advocate for the animals." – **Molly H.**

Today, it's imperative that shelters reopen because people need to see and interact with pets in order to fall in love and take them home.

"I fought to reopen our kennels to the public and we finally did, which immediately resulted in adoptions getting back on track. We are in crisis so it doesn't make sense to me for shelters to be closed." – **Ramona G.**

If your shelter still has Covid restrictions in place, it's time to reevaluate. In order to maximize adoptions, you should be open and accessible to the public. Some organizations now offer both appointments and walk-ins, having added a new service in addition to their regular open hours. One of the easiest, most impactful changes you can make today is to open your doors and welcome the public. **People are eager to help, and it's our job to let them!**
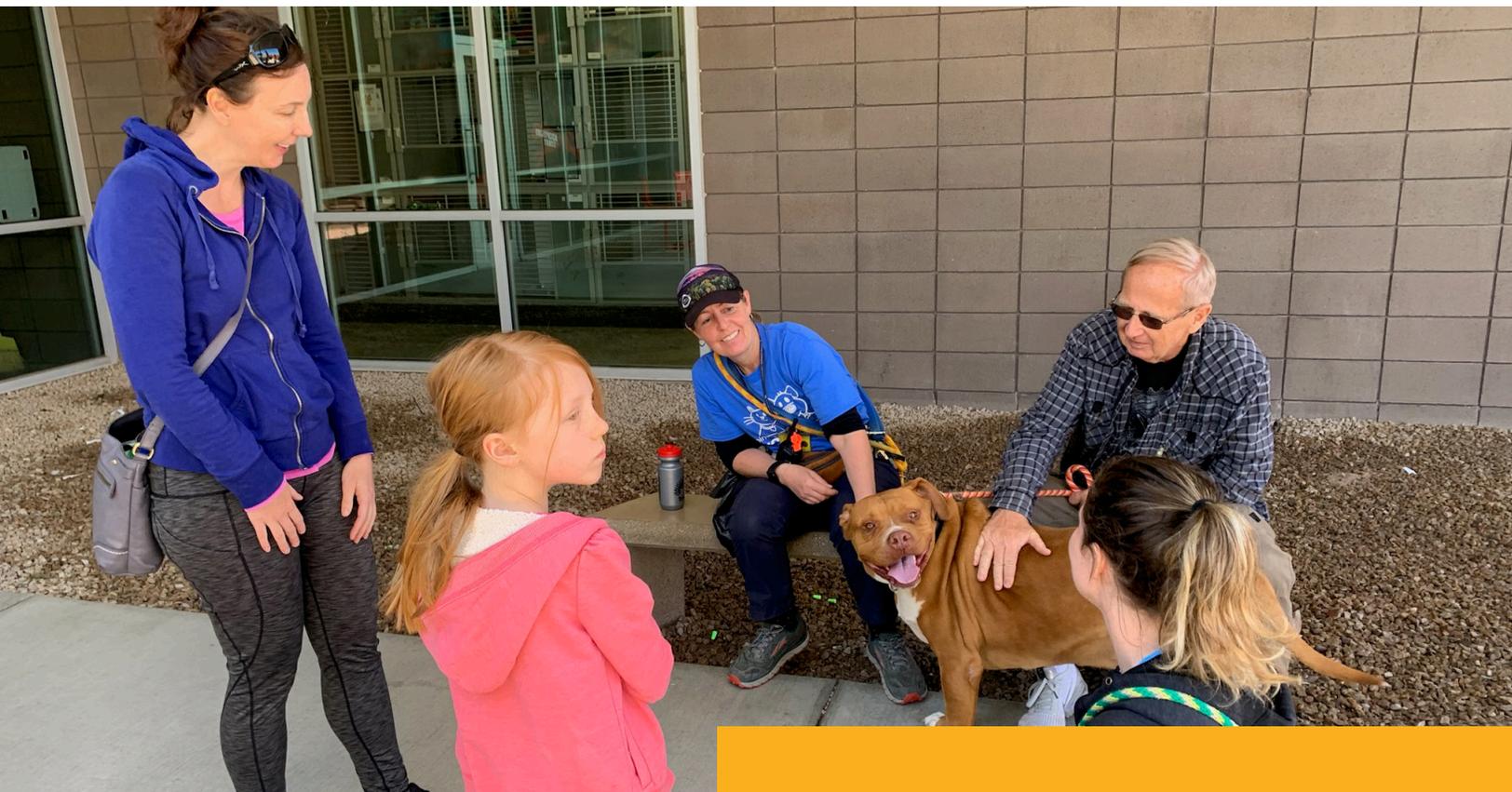
When asking the community to adopt, it's important to make it easy and fast for them to help. Be transparent when explaining the problem and use stories of real people and animals to inspire action. Make a specific ask, set a goal, and remember to cover the what, where, when, how, and why so the public has a clear understanding.

TRY THIS GREAT IDEA: Unique adoption events

Recently, the folks at MSPCA-Angell in Boston, Massachusetts were facing a crisis. Long-relied-upon as a transport destination for crowded shelters in the South and other places, they found themselves in the same position of the shelters that were trying to help. They were at capacity and their length of stay was increasing, which meant they could not receive new animals from shelter partners in need. They put their heads together and came up with an idea for a big adoption promotion. **Here's what Director of Adoption Centers Mike Keiley shared about the effort:**

"As dog adoption interest decreased the number of dogs staying in care increased significantly, threatening the viability of continuing in community surrenders as well as out of state transports. Our staff was bound and determined to continue to be there for the animals and launched a full summer-long campaign focused on the current national dog crisis to increase public awareness of the issues and to increase adoptions to insure we did not let our community or partner shelters down.

Our operations team planned out a series of monthly adoption events that will focus on providing relief to in shelter capacity throughout the summer and our PR, social and development teams are continuing to prioritize awareness of the need. So far, we´ve adopted out 200 dogs which has allowed us to take in the animals in need in our own community and increase our upcoming dog transports to include more adult large breed dogs!"

At Pima Animal Care Center, adoption events have become a source of community pride. From Paws on Parade to the popular Halloween ´Trunk, treat, and adopt´ event, they think of creative ways to draw in the public. **Here is what Michele F. had to say about it:**

"My favorite was probably Midnight Muttness, where we kept the shelter open until midnight, had food trucks, activities and movies in our multi-purpose room for kids, and a DJ out front. So many people showed up and it was like a big, lifesaving party! More than 60 dogs went home that night and it was a lot of fun for the staff and volunteers as well."

Conversation-based adoptions are the future.

Sadly, most of us know someone who has been denied the ability to adopt a pet from a shelter or rescue. **Every day, good people who want to help are flatly rejected by pet adoption agencies.** When we think about how many options people have for getting a new dog or puppy (pet stores, online puppy sellers, breeders, social media, etc.) and knowing that there are almost 250,000 adoptable dogs living in shelters today, it's hard to imagine turning anyone away who wants to help save a life.

Our toolkit builds on the foundational work of the Humane Society of the United States' Adopters Welcome manual which teaches animal shelters how to move from barriers to conversation-based adoption and foster practices. This manual was written

"In 2002 I was turned down for an adoption in such a mean way that I went home and sobbed. Luckily we found a low-barrier rescue the next day and adopted the best dog ever, but I will never forget what that first rejection felt like." – **Kelly D.**

about a decade ago and is still relevant today. Along with our toolkit, the Adopters Welcome manual can serve as a training tool for all staff and volunteers. They point out that adopters worry about adoption processes being too difficult or cumbersome and also that people take pride in helping to save a life by adopting. In other words, the public wants to choose adoption, but they need to know they'll be welcomed and that the process will be manageable.

When we reject adopters, they will usually get a dog or puppy from another source, and they'll walk away from your organization with hurt feelings and a negative impression.

Conversely, when we embrace everyone who comes to our door and help people find their next dog or puppy, we build trust with people and ensure they're getting a pet that is vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and has identification.

"Luckily, the first shelter I worked at and adopted from was very progressive and had a few restrictions. I adopted my first pit bull dog when I was 18 and my second at 19. I suffered from severe depression at the time and they truly saved my life. It hurts to think about the fact that the majority of places would have rejected me solely because of my age and the fact that I was a college student when pets are dying in shelters on a daily basis due to lack of space." – **Amanda**

Conversation-based adoption and foster practices are also more rewarding for staff and volunteers. If you've ever taken a moment to learn about a potential adopter - why they came to your organization, what kind of pet they're seeking, what they loved about their previous pets, what adopting means to them - you'll discover a whole world of amazing moving stories, inspiring acts of kindness, and fascinating information. **Our adopters have something to teach us and when we listen, we can translate that directly into social media content, outcomes, fundraising, and volunteerism - the things we need the most right now!**

TEAM ACTIVITY: The stop sign checklist

Here are some practices that put 'stop signs' in the way of making great matches between pets and people. How many did you check? You can use this checklist to review adoption barriers with your teammates.

🐾 We make dogs unavailable because they're on a stray hold or have not yet been spayed or neutered.
🐾 We keep all of our kennels locked.
🐾 We require potential adopters to have an appointment to meet pets.
🐾 We do not do same-day adoptions.
🐾 We require an application be completed or potential adopters be 'vetted' prior to meeting pets.
🐾 We require dog-to-dog meet and greets at the shelter or require every family member to be present to meet the dog.
🐾 We hold pets in the shelter after they've been adopted.
🐾 We require every other pet in the home to be up-to-date on vaccines and microchips.

Can you think of three other practices in your shelter that are 'stop signs' to potential adopters? Not sure? Read your adoption and foster web pages and spot the barriers. We guarantee you'll be surprised at what you find, because barriers tend to creep in and we're not always even aware of our own organizational barriers.
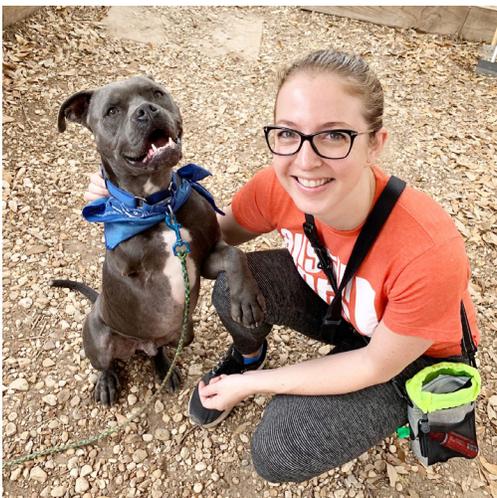
"Embracing an open adoption policy and coming from a place of education has allowed us to welcome a wide array of loving homes for our animals. It would be a disservice to the animals in our care if we waited for the 'ideal' home setup. People are the solution, and by giving them a chance, we have witnessed countless success stories of animals finding their people...Removing barriers and focusing on education is not just a goal; it's a commitment to ensuring that every animal gets the chance to experience love, care, and a happy home." - **Erin M.**

TEAM ACTIVITY: Build relationships for the best adoptions

At a staff or volunteer meeting, ask everyone in the room to stand up. Tell the group each person represents a potential adopter or foster caregiver. Tell them you're going to ask a series of questions and the first time they respond "Yes" to a question, they should sit down. Here are the questions:

- 🐾 Do you rent or lease your home/apartment?
- 🐾 Do you have children living in your home?
- 🐾 Do you have a fenced yard with a six-foot high fence?
- 🐾 Do you have any pets in your home who are not licensed?
- 🐾 Do you have any pets in your home that are overdue for vaccines?
- 🐾 Do you have any pets in your home that are overdue for heartworm or flea and tick preventatives?
- 🐾 Are you away from your home eight hours or more on most days?
- 🐾 Do you have visitors to your home on a regular basis?
- 🐾 Do you attend community college or college?

By this time, most of the people in the room will have sat down and only a few will be left standing. **Ask the group what they think this exercise represents and what they noticed.** At this time, you can invite those who are left standing to sit down. Here are some questions that can guide your discussion following the exercise:

- 🐾 What are some barriers or restrictions we have at our organization?
- 🐾 What would be the risks and rewards of removing these barriers or restrictions?
- 🐾 What words, statements, or policies on our website might deter potential adopters?
- 🐾 What messages do we give directly or indirectly to potential adopters to encourage or discourage adoptions?
- 🐾 How can we make adopters feel more welcome?

Finally, break up into groups of four or five and assign each group to act out a hypothetical scenario, first modeling high barriers and restrictions, then modeling a conversation-based approach. One scenario could be a mom and her six-year-old, rambunctious child come to adopt a formerly stray dog with a slight skin allergy that is strong on a leash and loves treats. What other scenarios can you come up with? Use several different ones so each group can put on a unique performance and take time at the end to discuss what you learned.

When you decide to drop the barriers and start truly welcoming adopters, your whole organization will feel different. **Here's what Maui Humane Society Interim Director Jenny Miller had to say:**

"We've moved from a history of home visits prior to adoption to a completely open adoption policy with zero vetting. It's worked really well for us. Once we learned that adoption barriers resulted in more euthanasia at our shelter and animals languishing with extended lengths of stay, we committed to removing barriers. Because we changed how we operate, we're saving more lives and we have better relationships with our adopters."

PART 4: Back to Basics
High-Impact Practices That Work

When people decide to get a new dog, they have lots of options. They could go to a breeder, buy a puppy online, get a puppy at a roadside sale, or find one on social media. Or, they could come to a shelter or rescue and adopt. If we want people to choose adoption first, we have to make the process welcoming, fun, and simple.

As Dr. Emily Weiss says, **"If we are to elevate the welfare of companion animals in communities, we must start by welcoming all that make the choice to enter our doors. People will get pets no matter what we do. If we welcome them, they can become part of our sphere of influence, but if you choose to say no, they will still get a pet."**

TRY THIS GREAT IDEA: Williamson County's "Best Match" program

At Williamson County Regional Animal Services in Texas, the team has committed to decreasing barriers and making adoption as fun, easy, and accessible as possible. They started a program called Best Match where they provide short lists of big dogs on their websites who meet the criteria many adopters are looking for. This helps reduce the number of available dogs so potential adopters come in knowing the five or six dogs that meet their needs. In the three first months of the Best Match program, every dog listed found an adopter or long term foster placement within two weeks, proving that this program really works.

Wilco, as the locals call the shelter, offers walk-in AND appointment-based adoptions and they are constantly in communication with their community, helping them maintain a live release rate above 90% with a modest budget, small staff, and intake around 8,000 pets each year.

Loki and Nash are both part of the Best Match program!

TEAM ACTIVITY: The dog adoption superhighway checklist

Here are 10 basic best practices that are proven to increase community engagement and speed up the flow of animals through your system. For each practice, ask your team to respond to each line with always, sometimes, rarely, or never. You'll notice after you go through this list that your organization probably lands closer to one side, or you may see that you practice most of these but have never thought of one, which means it could be your next great idea!

☐ The public can meet dogs on stray hold as well as those whose stray holds have expired and are available for adoption.

☐ We allow people to pre-adopt dogs still on their ´stray hold,´ so those dogs can leave as soon as they become available.

☐ We have a greeter at the front or in front of our shelter to welcome the public and answer any questions.

☐ Our adoption web page thanks potential adopters and does not tell people rules and restrictions.

☐ Our kennel cards use icons to tell adopters what dogs have lived with kids, lived with other animals, lived in apartments, are potty-trained and other information that can help them get adopted.

☐ Volunteers and staff members are encouraged to foster pets and to act as adoption ambassadors.

☐ We perform same-day foster placement and adoption.

☐ We tell the public daily about the animals in our shelter and what help is most needed.

☐ We waive fees on adoptions for special events or all the time.

☐ We hold regular, fun adoption events to get the public excited about adoption.

Once you've gone through the checklist, it will be tempting to say, "Well, we don't do this one because of (insert one of a million reasons). **Challenge yourself and your team to instead ask the question, "What would it take for us to do this?"** If you focus on possibility and potential rather than risk and possible negative outcomes, you will find a pathway towards positive change more quickly.

Many of us are wired to say ´no,´ and ´what if....?´ Remember that every action has possible negative and positive consequences so for this exercise, focus only on what it would take to do these things and the possible positive rewards. You can always come back to the ´what ifs´ later! For teams who are very resistant to change, you may start with just one of these things and frame the question as, "If we had to do this thing and make it work tomorrow, what would we do?" Asking this way can help people let go of their bias towards worry and risk and get creative.

A Final Note

When we make adopters feel valued and welcome, we create ambassadors of pet adoption in our communities. For each person who adopts from us feeling valued and supported, we have helped to create an adoption ambassador who will tell friends, family, and co-workers about their great experience and inspire them to adopt their next pet.

As you begin making positive changes in your organization to remove barriers and get more pets home, invite adopters to give you feedback and tell you what they liked best about adopting from you and what they think could be improved about the process. **There is no perfect adoption process, and as you embark on this journey, remember that piloting new ideas and programs is a constant evolution.** If you try something in this toolkit that works great, or not-so-great, let us know about it by sending a message to the Pedigree Foundation Facebook page so we can share your great work with our followers!

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pedigreefoundation.org