
Adopting from an Animal Shelter

Animal shelters are your best source when looking for a pet. Not only do they have a great selection of adult animals for adoption, but many of them also have kittens, puppies and purebred animals. On average, purebreds account for about 25 to 30 percent of a shelter's dog population.

Did You Know?

Many pets at your local shelter are waiting for new homes because they were obtained by someone with unrealistic expectations of the time, effort, and money required to sustain a lifelong relationship with their pet. National figures indicate that about half of the animals in shelters are euthanized for lack of homes. Animals at your local shelter are just waiting for someone like you to give them a new home.

You can depend on responsible shelters to assess the animals' health and temperament in order to make the best adoption matches possible. When animals are relinquished by owners, the shelter staff makes every attempt to collect a thorough history of that pet. Then, while caring for animals, staff and volunteers try to learn as much as they can about these animals, as well as those who come to the shelter as strays.

Waiting for Just the Right One

Don't be discouraged if, when you first visit the shelter, there are no animals of the breed or type that you want. Shelters receive new animals every day. Your shelter may also have a waiting list and can call you when an animal matching your preference becomes available. Before choosing your pet, you can even speak with an adoption counselor about whether your choice of a particular type or breed will be best for you.

Shelter Advantages

In an effort to make good matches between people and animals and to place pets in lifelong homes, many shelters provide adoption counseling and follow-up assistance, such as pet parenting and dog-training classes, medical services, and behavior counseling. Or they may be able to refer you to providers of these services.

Another advantage to shelter adoptions is that the fees are usually much less than the purchase price of an animal from a pet store or breeder. And your new pet is more likely to be vaccinated, dewormed, and spayed or neutered.

To locate your local animal shelter, check the Yellow Pages under "animal shelter," "animal control," or "humane society." Or go online — many shelters have websites that feature animals available for adoption. Some sites even allow you to download adoption forms and plan ahead by providing tips on responsible pet care. In addition, many shelters promote their animals for adoption on national websites such as Pets 911, Petfinder, and Adoptapet.com.

