

Operation Paws for Homes Rescue
Animal Intake Policy

Updated April 2023

Owner: Director of Animal Welfare director@ophrescue.org

Operation Paws for Homes Rescue (OPH) partners with numerous shelters across the southern United States and other areas of need, including a small number of organizations from our international program. Our goal is to provide a second chance to adoptable dogs and cats of all breeds, ages, and sizes. OPH works closely with shelter partners to ensure that dogs and cats receive a basic level of veterinary care prior to transport to include the following:

- **DOG VETTING**

- Health certificate (state/country specific)
- Rabies vaccine (age appropriate)
- DHPP and bordetella vaccines (age appropriate)
- Spay/neuter (age appropriate)
- 4DX test for heartworm, Lyme disease, Ehrlichia and Anaplasma (species and age appropriate)
- Microchip

- **CONTINUED CARE** - For ongoing medical issues and routine preventative care, our Medical Coordinator manages care and a treatment plan with OPH approved local veterinarians as needed. OPH does not employ or have a resident veterinarian.

- **BEHAVIOR** - Operation Paws For Homes accepts pets that do not have a known history of aggression. Shelter staff from partner shelters have agreed to send video of dogs interacting with other dogs, and interacting with people, without other dogs present.

- OPH shelter coordinators liaise with shelter staff to select rescue candidates for the OPH program based on the aforementioned criteria.
- The shelter staff will provide a signed statement for each dog verifying that there is no history of aggression before acceptance into the OPH program.

- **BITE/AGGRESSION** - Dogs with a bite history and/or known history of aggression prior to joining the OPH program are not candidates for OPH.
 - On rare occasions, an exception can be made by the Director of Animal Welfare,, or a member of the Board of Directors under majority consideration by the Executive Committee.
 - For these exceptions, the dog in question must have a designated volunteer to serve as an ambassador for the dog for the life of the dog while in the care of OPH. This includes circumstances where the dog is returned. The dog ambassador is responsible for fostering the dog,

finding a foster for the dog, or supplying 50 percent of all boarding fees if no qualified foster is available.

- The designated volunteer must sign an agreement acknowledging and agreeing to these terms.
- An exception can be made by the Director of Animal Welfare if the dog in question was protecting puppies or in pain from an active injury or illness at the time of the bite or aggression. A full report of the incident must be submitted, documented in the dog's DMS profile, and disclosed to any potential fosters and adopters via contract addendum.
- Puppies under 5 months of age, with no signs of aggression, are not considered aggressive when play biting.
- **BULLY BREEDS** - Due to current breed restriction laws, which removes adoption potential in many areas that we adopt to, fosters of bully breed dogs must be notified and agree to foster long term as this could be a long term commitment (up to one year or longer).
- **OWNER SURRENDER** - OPH does accept animals via owner surrender. The medical and behavioral criteria for accepting owner surrender animals into the program are the same as previously described.
 - Owners are responsible for completing all vetting prior to intake to OPH. Exceptions can be made with approval from the Director of Animal Welfare.
- **RETURNS** - Return requests to the program are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Bite, aggression, and other behavior exceptions can be made by the Director of Animal Welfare. These cases will often involve behavioral evaluation or consultation. Link document re returns
All bites and aggression must be disclosed to the foster and any potential adopters via a disclosure statement or contract addendum which must be signed prior to a foster or adopter taking custody of the dog.
- **SHELTER APPROVAL** - OPH does not generally accept dogs and cats from shelters that have not gone through our partnering process.
 - Special requests from volunteers to take in a specific USA-based shelter dog or cat, not in the transport albums, must be approved by the DAW
 - All special requests must be approved by the DAW
- **INTERNATIONAL** - Special requests for importing International Dogs must be approved by the DAW
 - Requests for partnerships with additional international entities beyond the established relationships in India and Kosovo must be reviewed by the Director of Animal Welfare then recommendations should be submitted to the OPH Board of Directors for approval.
 - For new partnerships, a team and lead must be identified to oversee imports under the direction of the Desi Program lead and the Director of Animal Welfare.

