



**County of Los Angeles
Department of Animal Care and Control**

Adoption Partner Program Guidelines

Updated March 2015

INTRODUCTION

The County of Los Angeles Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) operates seven animal care centers in the County of Los Angeles. The care centers are located in Agoura, Baldwin Park, Carson/Gardena, Castaic, Downey, Lancaster, and Palmdale.

DACC is an open-admission animal care center system, accepting all domestic animals regardless of their age, health, or temperament conditions. Consequently, animals that are impounded in our care centers may be very old or very young (unweaned), recovering from an illness or injury, or have behavioral concerns that limit their placement options. Other animals are highly adoptable and have many adoption opportunities.

DACC values the assistance offered by animal rescue groups, known as Adoption Partners (AP), that work cooperatively with the Department to provide additional placement opportunities for homeless animals. This manual and the policies and procedures in it are provided to ensure a viable, sustainable, and successful AP program.

PURPOSE OF ADOPTION PARTNER PROGRAM

The AP program exists to provide additional opportunities for placement of unwanted pets. While DACC can often find homes for young, healthy, or purebred animals, many of the sheltered pets do not fit into these categories and may be more difficult to place. APs play an important role by adopting those animals that require additional assistance and marketing. DACC discounts the cost of adoptions to APs for those animals that have been overlooked by the general public in order to support the APs' efforts in this area.

BECOMING AN ADOPTION PARTNER - QUALIFICATIONS

DACC welcomes applications for the AP program. To become eligible for the AP program, an organization must:

1. Be a nonprofit (as defined in Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code) animal rescue or adoption organization.
2. Be organized and operated for the purpose of animal adoption.
3. Have no criminal or administrative violations regarding animals.
4. Be in compliance with all laws relating to animals.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Organizations interested in becoming APs must submit the following information in one complete package:

1. A completed application form, provided by DACC.
2. A copy of the organization's IRS determination letter.
3. A copy of the organization's Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, and on-line status report from the Secretary of State.
4. AP's statement of purpose, indicating the primary breed/species the organization adopts.
5. A current copy of the adoption agreement used by the AP in adopting animals to new homes.
6. A list of all individuals authorized to adopt animals on behalf of the AP. The list shall include their full legal name, home address, their telephone number(s), e-mail address and a copy of their government-issued photo ID.
7. A current list of the AP's board of directors.
8. References from two current APs, one veterinarian, and one animal care and control agency or open-admission humane society/SPCA with which the applying AP has done business.

DACC will review the application and supporting documents. Normally the review process takes between six to eight weeks. APs will be notified regarding the approval of their application when the review is completed.

ADOPTION PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

The following expectations are in place to ensure the efficient and effective operation of this program. Failure of an AP to comply with these expectations could result in the revocation of their adoption privileges as an AP. APs are expected to:

1. Work cooperatively and professionally with DACC staff and volunteers.
2. Submit regularly monthly reports by the 15th of each month as provided by the Department.
3. Manage the volunteers authorized to adopt animals for their organization and ensure they follow all program and DACC policies, including maintaining a current and accurate list of authorized representatives with DACC.

4. Ensure the safe and humane treatment of animals in their care.
5. Only place animals adopted under the AP program into private homes and not transfer them to other rescue groups without DACC's advanced authorization.
6. Adopt animals from DACC on the animals' available dates without delay.
7. Advise DACC of any changes in the AP organization, such as new board members, new housing locations for their animals, and other material information that could affect the understanding between the AP and DACC.
8. Allow unannounced inspections of AP facilities by DACC.
9. Keep records of subsequent adoptions of DACC source animals for at least three years and provide copies of these records to DACC upon demand.
10. Spay or neuter all animals prior to placement in a permanent home.
11. Have an emergency plan for animal care and housing in the event of natural or manmade emergencies such as fires, earthquakes, and evacuations.

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The goals of the AP program are to provide a safety net for animals that would otherwise be euthanized, expand adoption opportunities for DACC animals, and work cooperatively with nonprofit animal rescue organizations to reduce the population of animals in DACC care centers.

DACC has implemented the following AP Policies and Procedures to provide a standardized and equitable adoption program, maintain a healthy animal population in the care centers, and maximize the efficient and effective use of limited DACC resources.

Availability of Animals

DACC care centers are public facilities paid for by the taxpayers of the County of Los Angeles. Consequently, the public is provided with the first opportunity to adopt animals from DACC care centers. Members of the public may place a Commitment to Adopt (CTA) on animals not yet available for adoption, signifying that they will adopt that animal on its available date. Adoption Partners may place CTAs on animals after the animal has been made available to the public for placing a CTA for at least one full business day. For example, an animal that arrived on Monday will be available for members of the public to place a CTA throughout Tuesday. Therefore, an AP may place a CTA on the animal beginning Wednesday. Only one CTA per animal is allowed. When an animal is still within its holding period, APs and other interested members of the public may indicate an interest in the animal by asking to be listed as an Interested

Party. An Interested Party (“IP”) is someone who has expressed an interest in adopting an animal that already has a CTA, or to list themselves as a last resort before an animal is euthanized. Adoption Partners may be placed as Interested Parties over the phone for any animal, at any time.

The purpose of establishing IPs is to increase adoption opportunities, decrease euthanasia by giving customers an opportunity to adopt an animal that already has a Commitment to Adopt (CTA) in case the CTA does not meet their commitment, and to establish a safety net for unwanted animals so they may be adopted into new homes.

Adoption Partner Fees and Trust Deposits

The adoption price is reduced for APs, except that Adoption Partners will pay the current standard full adoption price for animals that have been prepared for a special upcoming adoption event including, but not limited to, some or all of the following activities: groomed, altered, vaccinated, microchipped, or medically treated. If the animal is not adopted at the intended event, the Adoption Partner may later adopt it for the reduced Adoption Partner price.

Adoption Partners will pay the Adoption Partner adoption price if they are a CTA or an IP.

The requirement for a spay/neuter deposit may be waived if the AP is registered with DACC and is in good standing, the AP provides all DACC required monthly reports by the 15th day of the following month, and keeps all AP contact information current. Failure to provide monthly reports two months in a row or ten or more times within a 12-month period may result in suspension of trust deposit waivers until the AP demonstrates compliance with the above provisions. Ongoing failures of the AP to satisfy the conditions above may result in permanent revocation of trust deposit waivers.

Holding Animals for Adoption Partners

DACC is an open-door animal care center and accepts all domestic animals brought to the Department. Therefore, there is constant demand for animal housing space. Housing animals for APs past the animals’ available dates causes a warehousing situation in which the health of animals is placed in jeopardy. Exceeding the animal care center’s capacity for care is unfair to the animals and can lead to disease outbreaks and/or unsanitary conditions. DACC cannot hold animals for APs or private individuals until it is convenient for them to redeem them. Animals must be adopted on their available date.

Euthanasia of CTA and IP Animals

At times, an animal still within its holding period may become ill or injured. If it is irretrievably suffering, the medical staff may authorize euthanasia even if an AP has expressed interest in the animal. Although DACC will make every effort to contact the

AP before euthanasia to develop an alternative outcome for the animal, there may be times when such action would place the animal in further jeopardy. In these circumstances, DACC reserves the right to euthanize an animal for humane reasons. Alternatively, if there is a possibility that an AP can take the animal and provide the necessary care, the AP will be given an opportunity to adopt the animal. In these situations, it is expected that the AP come to the animal care center immediately to redeem the animal.

Use of AP Adoption Privileges by Third Parties

DACC only allows registered APs to adopt under the AP program. APs may not extend their adoption privileges to third parties, who may be adopting for private purposes or for another rescue organization not registered with DACC as an AP. When an AP adopts an animal from DACC, they are responsible to ensure all AP policies and applicable laws are followed regarding the adoption and care of the animal. Failure by the AP to properly monitor and control their adoption of DACC animals can cause an AP's adoption privileges to be suspended or revoked.

Authorized Representatives of APs

Animals may be adopted only by those persons authorized by the primary contact person for the AP. Each primary contact person shall provide a current list of all authorized persons who may adopt animals on behalf of the AP. The use of temporary representatives or "one-time pulls" is not permitted. The AP is responsible for ensuring the reliability of their representatives. Representatives that fail to follow the AP program policies may cause the AP's adoption privileges to be suspended or revoked.

Selection of Animals for AP Program

DACC makes all dogs and cats available for participation in the AP program, with the following exceptions:

1. Animals that are irremediably suffering.
2. Unweaned animals. However, they may be fostered under DACC's foster program. AP volunteers interested in fostering animals must complete a DACC foster program training class and enroll as a foster volunteer.
3. Owner surrendered dogs with a documented history of aggression.
4. Dogs determined to be Potentially Dangerous or Vicious by a judicial or hearing officer pursuant to Los Angeles County Code 10.37.110.

Adoption Partners may adopt any animal species that is consistent with their organizational mission and as stated in their articles of incorporation. If the organization

is organized to adopt a specific species (dog, cat, rabbit, etc.) then that is the only type of species that will be made available to them under the AP program.

Dogs with Temperament Defects

Although the Department reserves the right not to make available for adoption aggressive animals that pose significant threats to the health or safety of the public, some dogs that have demonstrated potential behavior concerns during the Department behavior assessment, or have minor incidents on record, may be adopted if an adoption partner is willing to execute a Waiver and Indemnification Agreement Regarding Dog with a Temperament Defect. Only Department-approved adoption partners are eligible to sign waivers and the request must come directly from the primary contact of the AP.

To request a waiver, the primary contact should contact the staff at the animal care center at which the animal is being housed. The animal care staff will request the waiver from the Department's administrative offices. Once the waiver has been prepared, the waiver must also be signed by the primary contact. The primary contact must return a signed copy of the waiver to the animal care center along with a copy of their identification. The primary contact is also required to return the original signed copy of the waiver to our Administrative Offices in Long Beach, either by mail or in person.

Once the animal care center has a signed copy of the waiver on file, the dog can be released to any approved puller for the adoption partner.

Suspension or Revocation of Adoption Partners

An Adoption Partner may have conditions placed upon their privileges, be suspended from the program for a specified period of time, or have their Adoption Partner privileges permanently revoked if they fail to meet program requirements. Examples of failure to meet program guidelines include, but are not limited to, failure to:

1. Properly care for animals
2. Spay/neuter animals
3. Comply with all applicable state laws, ordinances, Department policies or procedures, and program guidelines
4. Accurately and completely account for the whereabouts and location of animals they have adopted from the Department
5. Comply with any agreements, waivers or conditions placed upon the placement of animals adopted from the Department
6. Properly monitor the placement and care of animals in their foster homes or boarding facilities
7. Provide accurate and complete information on all documents.

Review Committee

Adoption Partners may be immediately suspended pending the outcome of an investigation into concerns regarding their activities. They will be notified by the Adoption Partner Coordinator of the suspension.

The concern regarding the Adoption Partner's activities will be presented to the Adoption Partner Review Committee at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting. This committee will review the information presented, and based on the information provided, an Adoption Partner may receive a written warning; be allowed to continue to participate in the program under certain conditions; be suspended for a defined period of time; or have their privilege of participating in the Adoption Partner program revoked.

Administrative Hearing

A. Hearing

If an Adoption Partner is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Committee, they may request that the decision be reviewed by a neutral hearing officer in an Administrative Hearing.

B. Notice of Hearing

The director of the Department shall notify the primary contact of the adoption Partner organization that a hearing will be held, at which time the adoption Partner may present evidence as to why the required conditions, suspension or revocation should not be imposed. The Adoption Partner shall be served with notice of the hearing either personally or by first class mail. The hearing shall be held promptly within no less than five (5) working days nor more than ten (10) working days after the service of the notice upon the Adoption Partner. Service is complete upon deposit of the notice of hearing in the mail or when the notice is personally served.

C. Conduct of Hearing

The hearing shall be conducted as an administrative hearing. The hearing officer may admit into evidence all relevant evidence, including incident reports and the affidavits of witnesses, limit the scope of discovery, and may shorten the time to produce records or witnesses. A jury shall not be available. The hearing officer may find, upon a preponderance of the evidence, that the action taken regarding the Adoption Partner's status is or is not justified, and shall make other orders or findings required or authorized by law and Department policy. The hearing officer may decide all issues for or against the Adoption Partner even if the Adoption Partner fails to appear at the hearing.

D. Administrative Hearing Officer

The Department may authorize its own officer or employee to conduct the hearing if the hearing officer did not participate in the Review Committee that reviewed the Adoption Partner's status, and is not junior in rank to members of the Review Committee. In the alternative, the Department may utilize the services of a hearing officer from outside the Department.

E. Notice of Determination

A written notice of decision shall be served by the Hearing Officer on the Adoption Partner and the Department either personally or by first class mail within fourteen (14) days after the hearing.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

Maintaining open, courteous, and professional lines of communication helps ensure a productive and effective AP program. The following DACC personnel should be contacted in the following scenarios:

Adoption Partner Liaison: Issues/questions regarding AP application or status or to add/remove authorized representatives for the AP.

Animal Care Center Staff: To place an IP on an animal, ask questions regarding a particular animal, arrange for an animal's adoption, etc. Disagreements with a staff member regarding an animal should be forwarded to the care center manager or lieutenant.

Deputy Director: Questions or concerns that could not be resolved by the animal care center manager.

Enforcement Services: Questions or concerns regarding an AP's animal facility license, if applicable.

CONCLUSION

DACC is committed to working with APs to find more positive outcomes for unwanted animals by working together in a professional and mutually supportive environment. A well structured AP program with clear delineation of responsibilities and expectations will ensure a program that is fair for all parties involved - the animals, public, APs, and DACC. DACC thanks all APs for their ongoing commitment to help animals.