**Screening Questions to Find Homes for Homeless Cats**

* “Is the cat for you or someone else?”
  + If the cat is for someone else, then tell the caller that you need to speak directly to the prospective adopter. A gift of a live animal for another person can be a terrible mistake. If the pet is for a child, tell the person that the dog or cat needs to be seen as a family pet, not exclusively the child’s pet. The parents must be willing to take on the responsibility for the day-to-day care of the animal for the rest of his/her life. Many pets are turned in to shelters because the children lost interest.
* “Can I come to your home, to see where the cat will be living?”
  + If they are unwilling to let you visit, you should cross them off your list.
* “Will the cat be allowed to go outside?”
  + If yes, explain that our policy is to only adopt out to homes where the cat will be indoors.
* “Do you have other pets at home? Would you tell me about them?”
  + Their answers can help you to determine whether the pet you are placing will fit into this household.
* “Are other cats in your home negative for feline leukemia and AIDs? Are they vaccinated? Can you provide vet records or your vet’s phone number?”
  + If no, cross them off your list.
* “How many hours would the cat be alone during the day?”
  + If they have no other animals, this could become a problem. Explain that even cats get lonely and the stress it causes can make them destructive to furniture, carpet, etc. A follow up question could be: “What do you do if your cat chews up or urinates on your belongings?”
* “Have you had pets before? If so, what happened to them?”
  + Listen for history of pets being hit by cars, poisoned, stolen, dying at young age.
* “Do you have children? If so, how old are they?”
  + Young children and puppies/kittens often don’t mix. Follow up question might be: what would you do if the cat/dog accidentally scratches or nips your child? If they answer surrender to a shelter or euthanize, not a good fit.
* “Do you rent or own? If own, does your lease allow pets? Can I have your landlord’s number?”
  + Not being willing to give you landlord’s number is a red flag.
* “This cat is not declawed. Are you okay with that?”
  + Best answer is yes.
* “If your cat does something bad, how do you punish it?”
  + Right answer is not punishment, but avoidance techniques like squirt bottle, can with coins or other noisemaker to discourage cat. Hurting the cat in any way – cross them off your list.
* “What would you do if your cat starts refusing to use the litterbox?”
  + The right answer is: take it to the vet. Wrong answers are: put it outside, punish it, surrender it to the shelter, euthanize it.

**If you need to turn down the person, don’t feel you have to say why.** If the answers are not answered to your satisfaction, or you have a bad feeling, move on. Simply say that the cat you have is not going to be a good match for them. You don’t have to go into any more detail than that. If they are insistent, you can refer them to the local shelters to adopt an animal.

**Agreement**

Thank you for adopting a rescue kitty.

**Who we are:** We are private citizens who volunteer with ACPS to catch/neuter/release feral cats and foster cats from the shelter. Every few months we also find homeless cats. This is how we found your cat.

All homeless cats we adopt out have been evaluated by our vet, Dr. VetsName, VetsOfficeName, 1234 Vets Street, Jacksonville, FL 322xx, (555) 555-555. All of our cats are tested for feline leukemia and AIDS, neutered/spayed, and vaccinated. We do this out of our own pocket.

We charge a $50 adoption fee. This fee does not recover the costs we’ve incurred so far. We consider our time and money toward this effort as our gift to the cats. Preparing them so they get a good home is our #1 priority. Your willingness to pay this adoption fee shows us that you’re willing and able to care for the cat financially.

**What we need from you:** Pet ownership is a lifelong commitment. We want your new cat to live its entire life with you. We are very serious about finding our cats a forever home. We need your commitment to giving this cat a good home FOR LIFE.

**By adopting one of our cats, you agree to the following:**

* **I will assume responsibility for my cat’s vet bills going forward.**
  + We do not provide financial assistance after you adopt the cat. If you feel you cannot afford a cat, please let us know and we’ll take him back.
* **I will consider my cat as a family member, and will assume responsibility for my cat’s health going forward.**
  + We look for homes that will treat the cat as part of the family. That means taking the cat to the vet when it’s sick, not eating, not using the litter box, etc.
* **I will get my cat vaccinated for rabies every year (or three years if you buy the three-year dose).**
  + Rabies is a deadly disease. If your cat contracts rabies, it will die. There is no cure. People who are bitten by rabid animals and don’t receive rabies shots die. Please take this seriously.
* **I will also get my cat vaccinated every year for feline leukemia (FELV).**
  + This is not always included in routine vaccinations, so you need to ask for it. FELV causes early death in cats, and is very contagious to other cats.
* **I will get my cat microchipped and register him online.**
  + This helps vets and shelters locate you if your cat gets lost.
* **I will keep my cat indoors.**
  + Outside cats get hit by cars, attacked by animals, etc. They live far shorter lives than indoor cats. Our policy is to adopt to an owner who will keep their cat inside their home as a family member.
* **If for any reason I cannot keep my cat, I will try and find it a new home. I will not take my cat to a shelter. If I can’t find a home, I will contact YourName.**
  + The shelter is the **WORST** place for your cat. **You put your cat at risk of getting sick and possibly being euthanized.**
  + Do not take your cat to a shelter. Try and find it a good home.
  + **If you can’t find one, contact us and we will take the cat back.** Please call, text, or email us.