



Conversation-Based Adoptions & Transportation Programming

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Conversation-Based Adoptions

What Are Conversation-Based Adoptions?

The conversation-based adoption approach (*previously referred to as 'open adoption'*) involves removing barriers and creating a welcoming, non-judgmental culture that encourages people to adopt. Conversation-based adoption is an approach rooted in respect, inclusion, trust, and working to get to “yes” with every adopter. Research has proven that lengthy pass/fail applications including practices such as home checks, reference checks, landlord calls, income requests, and more have no positive impacts on how animals will be cared for by their adopters or return rates. Conversation-based adoption rejects discriminatory practices, and relies on conversation, providing resources, building relationships with adopters, and adoption follow-up.

Sample Process

1. Potential adopter inquires about a particular animal or adoption in general
2. An adoption counselor collects primary contact information but does not request additional personal information. Resources may be provided in multiple languages based on the most common languages spoken in your community. They begin a conversation with the potential adopter to learn about their wants and needs in a pet with the goal of finding them an appropriate match and identifying opportunities for **education and support**.
 - a. Education and support could include clarifying preconceived notions from the potential adopter’s point of view about specific animals that are not factually correct and providing additional resources.
3. The adoption is finalized and post-adoption support is offered to ensure success.

This sample process excludes some of the previous practices that are not needed in a conversation-based adoption approach such as:

1. Collecting many applications for a single pet to find the “perfect” match
 - a. “Perfect” matchmaking takes time away from a pet having a loving home and instead keeps a pet housed in a shelter long term, taking that space away from others who may need it
2. Home inspections
 - a. This eliminates the bias towards individuals with yards or individuals that rent vs. own their homes and/or apartments
3. Employer, personal, or landlord references
 - a. This eliminates any potential bias towards higher economic status, individuals who work from home, or other subjective reasoning



Common Misconceptions

- **Myth:** *Conversation-based adoption means there is no adoption counseling or effort to find the right fit.*
Fact: The opposite is true. ‘conversation-based adoptions’ means getting to know each potential adopter as an individual. Conversation-based adoption means engaging adopters without judgment, removing barriers to adoption which may otherwise keep animals in the shelter instead of homes. While traditional adoption programs rely on rigid applications requiring “yes/no” answers designed to disqualify adopters, ‘conversation-based adoptions’ uses conversations with potential adopters to create a non-judgemental, relationship-based approach to help them find an appropriate pet that fits their lifestyle and situation.
- **Myth:** *Conversation-based adoption counselors can't deny or say “no” to potential adopters.*
Fact: ‘Conversation-based adoption’ is based on the knowledge that most human-animal relationships can be successful, and a belief that potential adopters are there for the right reasons. However, there will be times when an adoption isn't in the best interest of the pet or the potential adopter. In these cases, the conversation-based approach can be very effective in helping the potential adopters come to this realization themselves. Because the adopter hasn't been exposed to judgment, the potential adopter may wait to adopt a pet until they are ready, or be open to the best potential fit for them. Even if the adopter isn't the one to realize that adoption is not the right choice, if the conversation has been based in honesty and respect. Counselors will be in a better place to say “no” or “what can we do instead,” or “not at this time”.
- **Myth:** *A conversation-based adoptions program does not provide post-adoption support.*
Fact: The goal of any adoption program should be to place as many animals as possible into homes to provide long-term care for the animals’ physical, emotional, and social well-being. ‘Conversation-based adoption’ is no exception, and post-adoption support to new pet owners is essential to successful placements. Taking the resources that were used to administer restrictive adoption policies, like home visits or landlord calls, and reinvesting the resources in support during and after the adoption process is a major benefit to embracing a conversation-based adoption program. Putting support in place when animals go to their new homes will support community connection and the best interest of the animals in your care.
- **Myth:** *There is only one way to conduct conversation-based adoptions.*
Fact: ‘Conversation-based adoption’ is an approach that focuses on removing barriers to adoption, but how an organization implements that approach is entirely up to them. There is no ‘Conversation-Based Adoption Police.’ Some organizations use a questionnaire to



start conversations, while others use minimal paperwork. Each organization is unique in their needs, values, communities, and the number of animals in their care.

Conversation-based adoption approaches can, and should, reflect each organization's uniqueness.

What Challenges are Conversation-Based Adoptions Trying to Solve?

In animal welfare, potential adopters are often overlooked based on bias, stereotyping, discrimination. Unrealistic obstacles created for adoption often drives adopters away from adopting animals at shelters or rescues. The recent understanding of the adoption demand and imbalance in supply creates unique opportunities for positive change. Conversation-based adoptions eliminate unnecessary barriers to adoption and create equal opportunities for the animals available for adoption to find loving homes, creating more space for other animals in need.

Getting Started

Staff and volunteer buy-in and support is critical to having a successful conversation-based adoption program and should be your first step. Informative and engaging training is imperative. Allow plenty of time to provide examples of success stories and address any questions or concerns from your team. Schedule meetings and/or town halls with staff, volunteers, and fosters to discuss the changes and why.

- Make a firm commitment at an organizational level to embrace and trust your community, and to create a welcoming, non-judgemental, inclusive environment for adoption.
 - Many organizations root this approach in their core values, or you can create a position statement of your organization's commitment.
 - Examples:
 - [APA Adoptions Protocol](#)
 - [APA Dog Program Adoption Philosophy](#)
 - [APA Cat Program Adoption Philosophy](#)
- Hold organization-wide meetings or “town halls” to discuss this commitment.
 - Share research, relevant national resources, and successful adoption stories with your stakeholders.
 - Hold conversations with your team to identify and remove preconceived notions of an “ideal home.”
- Recognize and discuss that people within your organization wouldn't qualify with the current requirements and barriers in place.
 - Organize a meeting with your team to run through this [Conversation-Based Adoptions Interactive Exercise](#).
 - This exercise will help your organization view your adoption process from the eyes of a prospective adopter.



- Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity ([CARE](#)) has produced a powerful video that demonstrates this exercise in action: [Are we looking for reasons not to adopt?](#)

Self-Assessment and Promoting Change

- Consider changing the name of your adoption “application” to an adoption “questionnaire” or “survey.” This will create a more welcoming environment.
- Review all current adoption questionnaires/surveys with your team.
 - Identify existing barriers to adoption and any exclusionary verbiage within the paperwork.
 - [Here are 27 common barriers to adoption.](#)
 - Compare this list with your current adoption process. What can be changed?
 - Examples: Fenced-in yard required, reference checks, indoor cats only, etc.
- Identify any restrictions locally or regionally that you cannot change. As you move through the process, consider any and all creative solutions.
- Re-frame questionnaires to support open-ended questions that lead to conversations with adopters.
 - Remember, the questionnaire should be short and viewed as a jumping-off point to a bigger conversation.
 - If your adoption questionnaire is more than one page, that is a good indication that there are unnecessary questions that can be omitted.
- Provide staff with the appropriate verbiage to have open and honest conversations with adopters. Great customer service can be the deciding factor on whether an adopter takes home a pet that day or not! Here are some helpful training guides:
 - [Conversational Adoption Counseling](#)
 - [ASPCA Conversational Adoptions Slides](#)
 - [Maddie's Fund Adoption Manual](#)
 - [Best Friends Animal Society Adoption Training](#)
 - [Best Friends Adoption Training](#)
- Don't forget about the restrictions that may be labeled on the animals in your care! This can also lead to restrictive practices.
 - Examples: Large dogs can't live in apartments, yards are required, “no men” blanket policy if an animal previously showed disinterest or other behaviors towards one man.
 - Once adopted, provide follow-up services to help adopters post-adoption through handouts, alumni social media pages, behavior helplines, or other options your organization can accommodate.
 - Example: [Options For Help to Keep Your Pet](#)



- Share the necessary changes to the organization's adoption policies with your community. Invite your community to adopt, and remember, a welcoming environment is cultivated even before the adopter gets to your door.
 - [Sample press release](#) - Share the great news with your community!

Technology and Personnel Needs

Technology

- Your shelter's website and all social media platforms should be up to date. Information on the adoption process should be current, clear, concise, and easy to find.
 - Example: Dallas Animal Services: [DAS Adoption Page](#)
 - Ask volunteers if anyone would be willing to provide translation support for public-facing items such as adoption documents, signage, and websites for members of your community whose primary language is not English.
- Utilize technology to conduct virtual adoptions via computer, tablet, or phone.
 - Keep in mind that some potential adopters may not have access to ANY technology.
 - Staff and volunteers should be trained and prepared to use paper forms with in-person conversations and animal visitation when needed.

Personnel

- Staff and volunteers should reflect the diversity in your community.
- Focus on building partnerships with community centers, local businesses, churches, and other community-based organizations to spread the word and welcome everyone to adopt.
- Run a zipcode analysis of where most of your adopters are coming from.
 - There are most likely areas of your community that you're not reaching with adoption! [Host adoption events in these areas.](#)
 - For your organization to remain inclusive, it is important to evaluate these gaps and create an action plan on how to improve.
- By embracing a conversational-based adoption model, organizations have the opportunity to reallocate staff and volunteer time.
 - You will see significant time savings when staff are not doing home, landlord, vet, and reference checks, and adopters are not having to answer multiple questions and fill out lengthy adoption applications.
 - Staff resources should be reallocated to having meaningful conversations with adopters and providing them with the best support.
 - This shift will also provide your organization the opportunity to create exciting new volunteer roles such as greeters, matchmakers, and adoption support specialists, just to name a few!



Benefits of Conversation-Based Adoptions

- **Support of diversity, equity, and inclusion:** It's important for all organizations to do a self-assessment and to look through their adoption processes and requirements through a DEI lens.
 - Conversation-based adoptions create equal opportunity for individuals in the community as well as ensure there are options available to everyone that is looking for support, without barriers.
- **Improved customer satisfaction:** Conversations should start from a place of mutual respect and trust.
 - These interactions build a relationship between staff and adopters, creating a positive adoption experience shared throughout the surrounding community.
- **Saved money:** Conversation-based adoptions increase the number of animals adopted.
 - Increased adoptions will decrease the length of stay and, subsequently, decrease the overall cost of care. This will allow for more money to be used on additional support services instead.
- **Increased impact of staff time:** The time spent enforcing adoption barriers can now be used to provide the support adopters need to transition pets into a new home successfully.
 - You make more of an impact with an hour of adoption support than with an hour spent confirming previous veterinary status!
- **More community engagement:** By fostering conversation-based adoptions and having those relationship-building conversations, you increase customer satisfaction, enhance public perception and reputation, reach more people in the community, grow volunteer support, and increase public support.
- **Improved morale within shelter:** Increased adoptions and decreased length of stay create a sense of accomplishment for staff.
 - Staff witness fewer euthanasias due to time and space, have fewer animals to care for in the shelter, and more positive interactions inside and outside the organization.
- **Increased marketing and media engagement:** The process of conversation-based adoptions will result in more adoptions overall, leading to more success stories and positive narratives to share.
- **Increased fundraising and grants:** Positive public perception in the community generates more financial support.
 - Following data-driven best practices qualifies organizations for more grant opportunities.
- **Keeping more people and animals together and reducing intake:** Providing post-adoption support keeps families together and directly reduces unnecessary intake.



HUMAN ANIMAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- Increased adopter satisfaction will create a stronger bond between shelter/rescue staff and adopters and build trust to continue seeking support when needed.
- **Increased live release rate:** Through open-adoption policies, organizations increase their live release rate by adopting animals out faster than animals are being relinquished.
- **Improved humane care in shelter:** Through open-adoption policies, organizations reallocate staff time from unnecessary practices and instead toward improved care of the animals in the shelter by providing enrichment that may not have been feasible previously.
 - Additionally, more staff time means more time to provide individualized, quality care for each animal, therefore getting to know each animal's personality traits and providing more perspective to potential adopters.
- **Promotion of responsible pet ownership and increased public safety:** Conversations with adopters create a more fruitful relationship built out of respect, and a better foundation to provide resources and education at the time of adoption.
- **Enhanced reputation of pet adoption in general:** Positive interactions with the community create great word-of-mouth!
 - A positive community reputation will continue to build your organization's reputation as a place of quality character and support.

What Does Success Look Like?

When conversation-based adoption is implemented, your organization will improve the quality of life of animals in your care and support your overall community to create equal opportunities for adoption and pet support. Success includes, but is not limited to:

- Better customer service
- Shortened length of stay for animals in your care
- Increase in number of adoptions
- More staff time for adoption follow up and support
- A network of community support post-adoption
- An inclusive and equitable adoption process
- 100% response rate to adoption inquiries
- Better adoption matches
- Community perception that shelter pet adoption is the easiest, best option for adoption
- Awareness and ease of adopting through shelters and rescue organizations.
- Volunteers support with all aspects of adoptions, including marketing and post-adoption support.
- Increased adoption representation across all demographics in your community
- Staff and volunteer reflection of your community members
- Accessible adoption for everyone no matter what resources they do or do not have, such as technology, transportation, etc.
- A culture of yes



Success Story

Brittany and her family participated in the field trip program at **Humane Society of Western Michigan** and quickly fell in love with a dog named Anna. Feeling that their home setup (Four dogs) may prevent them from getting approved for adoption, they kept taking Anna out on day trips to give her a break from the shelter. One day Brittany received an email that Anna was discovered to have advanced kidney disease and was considered a hospice case. With this news, Brittany felt even more compelled to bring Anna home. From Brittany:

"I almost talked myself out of contacting the Humane Society. I thought there was no way they would let us bring her home since we had other dogs. It would require them to really trust that we had Anna's best interest at heart. I thought they might think I was crazy for wanting to add a fifth dog to the family. Maybe if we just had one dog at home they would consider it... but four?! No way they'll let us adopt Anna. I reached out anyway and to my surprise they considered it! They had questions about our plan, of course. They wanted to make sure we were the right fit for Anna. And soon, Anna was ours! Anna came home just in time for the holidays. She finally had a family to call her own. She was warm, comfortable, and SO SO loved. She got all the butt scratches her heart could desire. She got up with us on Christmas morning and opened presents with us.... A memory close to my heart. Not everyday was easy. Watching Anna get sicker was extremely hard. But I felt so blessed that the Humane Society trusted us to take care of her during this phase of her life. We had no prior hospice experience but they could see how much we loved Anna and they were always there for me to ask questions and give me any support I needed".

Supporting Resources

- [Adopters Welcome HSUS](#)
- [Adopters Welcome Research Cited- HSUS](#)
- [BFAS Adoptions Training Playbook](#)
- [Maddie's Fund Open Arms Adoptions](#)
- [ASPCA Pro: Conversational Based Adoption Counseling](#)
- [Million Cat Challenge: removing barriers to adoption](#)
- Sample Adoption Questionnaires
 - [Harbor Humane Society Cat Adoption](#)
 - [Harbor Humane: Dog Adoption](#)
 - [Monadnock Humane Society Adoption](#)
 - [PACC Dog Adoption](#)
 - [PACC Cat Adoption](#)
- [Example Job Descriptions Folder](#)

Pet Supply and Demand Transportation Programs

What are Pet Supply and Demand Transportation Programs?

Shelters and rescues operate transport systems connecting pets far and wide with resources and adopters. Each day thousands of pets are on the move through these channels. A thriving Pet Supply and Demand movement matches receiving communities with the outbound community needs. Supply and demand will ensure animals going from one community to another, or one organization to another, is in the best interest of the community, animal, and organizations.

Transport programs may transport pets from a shelter to a rescue, a community in crisis to a more stable community, from a shelter that is facing the decision to euthanize for space, and more. Animals will be transported from one location to another in an attempt to save lives and meet adoption demand.

What Challenges are Transportation Programs Trying to Solve?

Although animal welfare has made great improvements when it comes to lifesaving, there are over a million healthy shelter pets euthanized for lack of resources or available space every year.

Some regions experience the opposite problems of long adoption and foster waitlists and fewer animals available for adoption in shelters than people interested in adoption. People wanting to help are turned away from organizations that have an overabundance of offers.

Research continues to show there are more people willing to foster and/or adopt for the number of shelter pets euthanized. Still, pets across the country are not distributed evenly, with some regions overwhelmed and others searching for pets.

One of the biggest challenges that exists in our field is the prohibitions organizations deal with when moving pets from one region to another. We hope to pilot solutions for these common challenges to bring more shelters into the international pipeline of transport support.

In order to find a solution, the following challenges must be considered:

1. There is **insufficient data**: A robust data set will allow us to explore these inequities and understand how transport can guide long-term change.
2. There is a **lack of shared information**: Consistent sharing of best transport practice resources to any interested parties can increase the number of organizations operating transportation programs. This includes resourcing, medical and behavioral protocols, regulatory compliance, etc.



3. The potential need and impact of a **National Transport Network**: Understanding the need and potential impact of a large-scale coordinated transport network. The ideal National Transport Network would offer educational tools for operating within regulatory frameworks. Continual incorporation of state-of-the-art technologies may enhance the value of the network. Logistical and financial barriers need to be reworked for all affected parties.

Getting Started

[Supply and Demand Transport Terminology](#)

To review common terminology for Supply and Demand Transportation, please refer to the link above. This document includes terminology created by the HASS Supply and Demand Working Group as well as the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement (AAWA).

1. **What are your motivations for transport?**
 - a. What will change in our organization if we move forward?
 - i. For many, transport can alleviate the possibility of euthanasia or simply meet the adoption demand in a community. *How will incorporating a transport program alter the status quo of an organization?*
 - ii. Ask questions such as:
 1. Is staff ready to move animals out and not see them adopted here?
 2. Is staff ready to take animals in and potentially increase adoption traffic flow?
 3. Is my organization ready? How can we get them ready?
 - b. What will change in our community if we move forward?
 - i. Communities have a myriad of responses and emotions to transport programs. It is important to take a pulse of your local area to respond accordingly! Never dismiss the public relations dimension. *How does incorporating a transport program alter public perceptions?*
 - ii. Ask questions such as:
 1. Does our community understand the benefits of a transfer program? Are we ready to discuss it?
 - a. Will our community see animals coming into the shelter as taking the place of other local animals?
 - b. Does our community understand why positive welfare outcomes (adoption, foster, lost pet reunification, etc.) for animals are challenging to find?
 2. Are we ready to move our communities forward?
2. **What does partnership mean to us?**



- a. Honest and transparent partnerships are crucial to transport programs. Organizations should be ready to have conversations about strengths, weaknesses, and gray areas while considering progress and mutual respect. We know some things are out of our control that can and will happen. How will we handle those situations?
- 3. What does success look like?**
 - a. As noted above, success looks different for different organizations! How will you measure your success? *See below for examples.*
 - b. Do we currently have a system that will allow us to easily track and monitor data?
- 4. Start small**
 - a. Think about a small way you can test your program. This could be testing just a few pets and a single partner. These small tests can quickly teach you what you or your partners need to create a scaled program. Time and experience are your biggest allies!

Fundamental Considerations:

- 1. What are your target populations?**
 - a. For **source shelters**, the populations suited for transport are animals that they may not have the resources to support.
 - b. For **destination shelters**, what are your adopters asking for or willing to adopt?
 - c. Ask yourself, is transport best for this animal?
 - i. Consider the distance and needs of individual animals.
- 2. How will our budget be affected?**
 - a. What steps may we need to take to adjust our budget?
 - b. What do we foresee purchasing?
 - i. **Note:** Some organizations *may not* need to buy things such as vehicles, extra vaccines, etc. These can be looked at as shared resources.
 - c. What are resources we may already receive for free through donation programs? What can we ask for?
 - d. What grant opportunities may be out there?
 - i. Consider directly related to transfer and grants that allow us to flex our budget from other programs to a transfer program instead.
- 3. Who will be supporting the program?**
 - a. A combination of volunteers and/or staff members will likely be required to construct and maintain a successful transport network.
 - b. Outline all possible tasks and who needs to be responsible for each.
 - i. If volunteers aren't used at your organization, now is the time to [consider creating a volunteer program](#).
 - ii. Volunteers are essential in achieving the goals of this effort.



- c. ADD foster program
- 4. **What are the local, state, and federal legal requirements?**
 - a. The majority of states have requirements for animal transport, even short distances.
 - b. Before beginning any transport plan, review your local legal requirements for transporting animals.
 - c. Please check our **Reference and Resources** section at the end of this toolkit for possibilities.

Connect with possible partners:

Strong partnerships are invaluable to transport programs. Moving animals can change numbers, but building partnerships opens doors to resources that organizations may not have had. Be honest and transparent, share resources and ideas among staff and volunteers, and remember, challenges happen! Agree to mutual respect and a commitment to working together.

Consider the needs of both organizations:

1. How many animals can a source shelter send?
2. How many can a destination shelter take?
3. Do your target pet populations match?
4. Can either agency support the physical transfer itself (vehicle, driver)?
 - a. How far away are the organizations from each other, and how does that affect requirements and needs?
 - b. Is there an opportunity to partner with a closer organization?
5. Every organization has different parameters of what they can transport. Have open discussions with any potential transport partners to ensure a clear understanding of what those parameters are.

Resources Needed to Implement Transportation Programs

1. Clear resources both organizations can provide:
 - a. Resources are vast and varied. While finances play a huge role, we also know that we have talented and creative people on both sides of the transport that can provide alternative resources.
2. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) or agreement:
 - a. The ideal agreement between two parties is one in which both parties benefit and maximize success.
 - b. An MOU can support consistency ensuring things such as:
 - i. Communication framework
 - ii. Agreed upon financial or resource allocation
 - iii. What to do in the event of an emergency



3. A communication framework
 - a. Each organization needs to select a staff or volunteer member as the primary point of contact for partnerships. Consistency in communication is key to developing trust and long-term goals.
 - b. Ineffective communication results in unnecessary work and lost opportunities to move animals.
4. Additional considerations
 - a. Are there opportunities for cross-marketing/fundraising or grants?

Technology (Examples):

1. Shelter Software to track animals in custody
2. Record Transfer Tools
 - a. Dropbox
 - b. Shelter Software
 - c. API/FTP transfer
3. Communication Tools
 - a. Slack
 - b. Trello
 - c. Google Chat/Sheets
4. Transport Recruitment Tools
 - a. Doobert
 - b. Facebook (create a Facebook group)
5. Marketing Pets for Program
 - a. Presentations for Pets/Programs
 - i. PowerPoint/Keynote
 - ii. Google Docs
6. Transport Tracking & Communication Technology
 - a. Geotab (GPS Messenger)
 - b. Garmin in Reach
 - c. Life360

People (Examples):

1. Transport Coordinator
2. Drivers
3. Veterinarian (On staff or through local partnerships)
4. Extra Staff/Volunteers before, during, and after transport
 - a. Animal handling and care
5. Fosters before and after transport
 - a. Animal quarantine (before and after)
 - b. Opportunity for 'home notes'



6. Social Media Manager
 - a. Promote pets and the transport program

Supplies (Examples):

1. Vehicle
 - a. Spare tire and jack
 - b. Crates
 - c. Strapping
 - d. Cardboard
2. Animal Supplies
 - a. Leashes
 - b. Collars
 - c. Disposable litter boxes
 - d. Water dishes
 - e. Sheets
 - f. Blankets
 - g. Pheromone wipes or spray (Reduces stress)
3. Medical supplies
 - a. Distemper booster vaccines
 - b. Dewormer
 - c. Flea and tick preventative
 - d. Heartworm preventative
4. Identification method
 - a. Tab band
 - b. Collar
5. Personal Supplies
 - a. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - b. Sanitizer

Ongoing Evaluation of Your Transport Program

As your organization's and community's needs change, it is important to evaluate your program to make sure you are still achieving desired success. If not, determine what can be adjusted to be successful. It is equally important to continually consider additional organizational problems that transport programming may solve.

- **Your Organization**
 - What support are you providing to the community?
 - Are there measures of success you can track to show if it is changing?
 - How has your funding, staff, medical support, or other organizational sectors changed due to transportation programming being implemented?



- **Your Partners**
 - Are you regularly checking in with your transport partners to make sure your needs and capabilities are aligned?

Benefits of Transportation Programs

The following are potential outputs and outcomes that shelters can use to identify overall impact.

- Move animals through the shelter system faster
 - Decrease length of stay
 - Staff time saved
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Reduction in number of animals housed in the shelter
 - Improvements with humane animal care options
 - Decrease in frequency of common disease
 - Decrease in risk and prevalence of zoonotic disease
- Opportunity to further engage the community
 - Increased volunteer support
 - Shelter morale improvement
 - Increased marketing and media engagement
 - Increased fundraising
 - Connections built between more people and animals
- Measurable and positive community change
 - Programs developed to keep pets with families
 - Focus shifts to pets in the community rather than pets in the shelter
- Supports diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Prioritizing local efforts that keep pets with their people
 - Prioritizing local adoptions
 - Avenues provided to give back to the source community
 - Examples:
 - [St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center](#) provides monetary transport support and has created a give-back [program](#) for all the animals that are transported to them.
 - Many receiving shelters offer to send back in-kind donations such as pet food, medical supplies, and other items.
 - Intellectual capital like SOPs, training, and case support can also be a great addition to some of the programs above.
- Supports human health and wellness
- Supports environmental health and sustainability



What Does Success Look Like?

Success is not just about the size of your operation, but also the size of your impact. While success may look different at each organization, a successful Supply and Demand Transportation system will achieve the following:

1. Increase positive outcomes for animals by connecting and sharing resources.
2. Create organizational partnerships in both your community and throughout the country, opening doors for communication and learning.
3. Create a pathway for discussion with our constituents on systemic issues that affect animals in our communities.
4. Improve our ability to support our communities by relieving the cycle of overcapacity in some shelters and increasing adoptions in others.
5. Humane and efficient transportation for animals with consideration to their physical and mental comfort and safety.
6. Animals in destination communities are not displaced or turned away upon arrival.

Success Story

The Power of Coalitions (California Humane Animal Transition Team - CHATT)

In 2018, Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) had a strong rescue program, receiving animals from local shelters as well as dozens of other shelters in California. As part of the WeCARE coalition of six animal welfare organizations in Santa Clara County, HSSV and our partners worked together to improve our coalition save rate from under 80% to 92% by 2018. With this improvement, HSSV now had the capacity to help other shelters and began to focus on new partners in less populated areas.

A new coalition, California Humane Animal Transition Team (CHATT) was formed between three destination shelters (HSSV, San Francisco SPCA, and Marin Humane) in the San Francisco Bay Area and three source shelters (Fresno Humane Animal Services, Tulare County Animal Care & Adoptions, and Kings County Animal Services) in California's Central Valley. It started with a simple weekly call to figure out what dogs would be transported, and in the beginning, animals were transported once or twice a week halfway to the Bay Area and picked up by the destination shelters. CHATT applied for and received two grants from PetSmart Charities to fund the establishment of the coalition and fund initial transportation costs.

Over the next year, CHATT agreed upon basic protocols for documentation and vaccinations, and in 2019, established a Coalition Memorandum with agreements on responsibilities, expense coverage, transport guidelines, communication, data capture, and other processes. Over time, the transport model shifted to the destination shelters picking up animals multiple times a week,



coordinated across the three source shelters, now transporting over 4500 animals per year with over 1,000 of them requiring medical care (parvo, broken bones, etc). For HSSV, this transport model was supported by a Petco Love (formerly Petco Foundation) grant for a new rescue vehicle. The coalition has also moved beyond transport, helping with other needs such as vaccine clinics, installation of fence barriers, behavior best practices, and shelter medicine consultations. Over time, the members or participation level can change in the coalition as needs and capacity change, and in fact, a fourth source shelter was added in 2020 during COVID (Madera County Animal Shelter and Control).

By working together, the coalition was able to consistently and reliably transport animals out of the Central Valley to help with their capacity and improve their save rates. All three source shelters saw increases in save rates, varying from +6 to +28 points. With a reliable transport program to provide breathing room, the Central Valley shelters have been able to add other partners, help other smaller shelters in the area, start a new spay/neuter clinic, and provide disaster support during California fires – even offering to be an evacuation location for the Bay Area shelters. Today, HSSV continues to actively support both the WeCARE and the CHATT coalitions, and over time as these shelters build up their capacity, HSSV will be able to add new partners.

Supporting Resources

Best Practices and Continued Learning

- [The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement: Companion Animal Transport Best Practices](#)
 - [AAWA: Transport Best Practice in COVID](#)
 - [The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement Learning Center: Best Practices Webinar Series: Companion Animal Transport \(2019\)](#)
- [American Heartworm Society: Help Stop Heartworm Travel Plans](#)
- [National Federation of Humane Societies: Transport Best Practice](#)
- [American Veterinary Medical Association: Non-Emergency RELOCATION of DOGS and CATS for ADOPTION within the UNITED STATES Best Practices.](#)
- [Best Friends Animal Transport Volunteer Playbook | Best Friends Network Partners](#)
- ASPCA Pro: [Shelter Guidelines: Animal Transport](#)
- ASPCA Pro: [Relocation & Transport](#)

Networking with Transport Partners

- [Best Friends Transport Connection Map](#)
- [Doobert.com](#)
- [Best Friends Podcast: How to Establish and Grow Transport Partnerships](#)
- [AmPA Shelter Rescue & Support Facebook Group](#)



HUMAN ANIMAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- American Pets Alive!: [Transport Programs: How to Find & Cultivate Successful Rescue Partnerships](#)

Legal Requirements

- [USDA: Animal Welfare Act](#) - Relevant information begins in Chapter 54
- [Interstate Animal Movement Requirements](#)
- [USDA State Regulations](#)

Sample Documents:

- [Supply and Demand Samples](#) - MOUs, SOPs, sample questions, and more