



Supported Self-Rehoming Toolkit

What is HASS Supported Self-Rehoming?

Supported self-rehoming is a way for animal shelters to help people rehome their pets, without those pets needing to enter the physical shelter. In most cases, supported self-rehoming is more humane for people and pets because it allows the original owner to help select, and potentially stay in touch with the new owner, and reduces the number of family pets who have to live in a kennel.

What problem does Supported Self-Rehoming Try to solve?

Approximately [36% of animals](#) entering animal shelters come in under the intake type called “owner surrender.” Many pet owners are willing to rehome their pets directly to another home but are unaware of the resources and tools available to rehome safely and successfully.

Getting Started

1. Evaluate Your Current Operations

- Do you ask every person who comes to surrender their pet if they want to keep their pet but face barriers to doing so?
- Do you ask every person who comes to surrender their pet if they are willing to rehome their pet themselves if they have support and assistance from the shelter?
- Do you tell every person who comes to surrender their pet about self-rehoming through Rehome, Home-to-Home, and social media platforms like Craigslist and Facebook?
- Do you offer people coming to surrender the option to foster their pet until it is re-homed?

2. Explore Your Technology Options and Select Which You Plan to Use

- Refer to [Rehoming Technology At-a-Glance](#) for a full comparison of tools available.



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- Determine which social media platforms you'll encourage people to utilize for self-rehoming. These may include Facebook, NextDoor, Craigslist, Instagram, and others.
- Decide if you'll have a self-rehoming page managed by staff and/or volunteers. The [Austin Pets Alive! PASS Facebook Page](#) and [Dallas Pets Alive PASS Facebook Page](#) are excellent examples of how a self-rehoming page can work!

3. Explain the What and How of Supported Self Rehoming to Pet Owners Needing to Rehome

- Change the name of the website page from 'surrender your pet,' to 'rehome your pet.'
- On the "[rehome your pet](#)" page, explain that surrendering a pet should be the last-case scenario and include information on any [resources](#) they can access that may help them keep their pet.
- Tell people about resources they can utilize to rehome their pet, including the link to [Petfinder's searchable database](#) of rescues and shelters
- Provide people with detailed, step-by-step recommendations for rehoming their pets.
- Tell them how the shelter can support them. Various services you may offer include:
 - Providing a sample adoption questionnaire.
 - Serving as a place where owners can perform 'meet and greets' with potential adopters and their existing pets.
 - Staff/volunteers can [write pet listings](#) for owners and take photos.
 - Providing counseling and services to the new adopter including vaccines, spay and neuter and a routine medical exam.
 - Shelter can post [listings](#) for owned pets who need to be rehomed on their own websites and help market them.

4. Reframe Rehoming to Your Community

- Tell internal and external stakeholders about how you are offering better services to help people rehome their own pets rather than surrendering them to the shelter.
- Create a volunteer position to help people rehome their pets.
- Make sure your website, social media, and communications plan reflect that your organization encourages supported self-rehoming. See our [supported self-rehoming marketing toolkit](#).
- Track your data so you can count all the animals you helped find a new home without them having to enter the shelter.

5. Manage Your Program Effectively

- To manage your program most effectively, start communicating with owners BEFORE they come to the shelter. Read about how [Pet Support Services](#) gives you a proactive approach to helping animals while they're still in their homes and communities.
- Use a [case management](#) approach. In some cases, pet owners and caregivers are facing urgent crises which mean they cannot conduct the rehoming themselves. If



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owners have an emergency or cannot participate in the rehoming process, the shelter will need to take those pets in and should utilize [the HASS Element, intake-to-placement](#), to move them as quickly as possible through the shelter system.

Pro Tips

- **Treat all animals and people as individuals.** Create guidelines to help volunteers and staff provide counseling to owners and caregivers and to make the best decision for each pet. This includes the options of providing resources so the family can keep their pet, supported self-rehoming, or intake-to-placement. Keep in mind, it's important to have an SOP or guidelines to avoid generalizations and stereotyping of particular owners, which can lead to discriminatory practices.
- **If the owner does need to surrender and cannot rehome the pet, you can also invite them to stay connected to the pet by providing a description of what they love about their pet for the new, eventual owner.** You can also ask them if they'd like to be contacted by the adoptive owner and receive updates on how their pet is doing. This approach helps to build a safety net under every animal and can create lifelong relationships between surrendering and adoptive owners!
- **Explore options to provide vouchers for vaccines and spay and neuter services for pets being rehomed, just like you would do if the pet entered the shelter.**