

JOIN THE  
Bring love home.

CHALLENGE



## Open Adoption and Foster Practices Guide

June 2024 | *Bring Love Home Challenge*

You recently registered for the Bring Love Home Challenge and agreed to implement at least one (maybe more!) new Open Adoption practice from June 1-30, 2024. Review the challenge steps and resources below to support your new lifesaving practice. Need additional support? Complete this [contact form](#) and a member of our network team will reach out to you shortly.

### Ready. Set. Challenge!

These steps are our recommendation but if that doesn't work for your organization, that's okay! Do it the way that it works for you, and [we're here if you need support](#).

- **Step One: Create A Plan:** Create a plan to implement your new Open Adoption practices
- **Step Two: Get Buy-in:** Discuss with staff, volunteer and any other stakeholders and get them excited about the Challenge, possible grant, and what this could mean for your org! Having a hard time securing buy-in? Sometimes positioning a new change or program as a pilot can help you secure buy-in with your community or officials; pilots often feel less intimidating because they're time bound and it's clear that if they're not successful, they can be undone. Our hope is that whatever you call these changes, you'll see an increase in lifesaving and decide to keep them in place long-term.
- **Step Three: Communicate:** Use the [Open Adoptions Marketing and Communications Guide](#) to inform the community about these changes. For example, if you're changing your hours, they should be informed.
- **Step Four: Track your data:** Make note of your June 2023 adoption and foster data so you can set your goals to beat those numbers.
- **Step Five: It's challenge time:** June 1, get going and save more lives! We're here to support you along the way.

### Bring Love Home Challenge Open Adoption Practices & Resources

Review the open adoption practices below and the accompanying resources to support your new lifesaving practice.

**Offer same-day adoptions and fostering opportunities**

If you require a waiting period (such as 24 hours) for fosters to pick up or adopters to finalize an adoption, suspend that practice in June. Allow fosters to pick up a foster pet immediately and allow adopters to complete an adoption and take home their pet the same day they start the adoption process. Allow unaltered pets to be sent home to foster or adoptive homes with a signed agreement and/or voucher to bring the pets back for spay/neuter surgery.

[Playbook: Adoptions Training](#)

### **Waive or reduce adoption fees**

Offer free or reduced adoptions fees of at least 25% for all cats and dogs of all ages, breeds, sizes, traits, and medical/behavioral needs.

[Reduced Fee Adoptions; Why They Work](#)

[A Roundup of Resources to Advocates for Fee Waived Resources](#)

### **Increase open adoption and foster pickup hours**

Be open for adoption until 7pm at least 2 weekday evenings and at least four hours on both weekend days for the entire month of June. Not sure which nights would be the most successful? to [make room in the staffing schedule](#) for nights and weekends, but want to minimize adoption impact? Run a report to list the days of the week and time of day of your adoptions for the last three months, then chart them out. Weekday afternoons that perform well would likely support evening hours; weekday times that are slowest may be considered for closure if needed.

[Success Story: Visalia Animal Services](#)

### **Offer pre-availability matchmaking for pets on stray hold**

Make pets available for pre-adoption while they're on their required stray holding period. Pre-adoption allows potential adopters to view, meet, and possibly pay an adoption fee for "stray wait" pets with the understanding that their adoption will be canceled if an owner reclaims during the stray hold period. This practice can dramatically reduce the length of stay of your strays that go unclaimed.

[Animal Flow Playbook](#)

### **Remove Barriers in Adoption Application & Process**

Implement a conversation-based adoption and foster process and remove barrier questions on adoption applications. Barriers could include family restrictions, fence requirements, reference checks, appointments, work questions, veterinary and landlord checks, references, etc.

[Roadblock Free](#)

[Pet Adoptions: Barriers and Solutions](#)

[Adoption Barrier Study](#)

[Dallas Animal Services Adoption Questionnaire](#)

[Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter Adoption Questionnaire](#)

### **Start a foster program or increase your existing foster program**

If you don't already make pets available for foster, start a foster program by June 1. Get at least 10% of your population into foster homes by June 30. If you already have a foster program, send

30% more pets to foster homes in June 2024 than you did in June 2023. To calculate growth, use the formula ((June 2024 Foster - June 2023 Foster) / June 2023 Foster) x 100

[Playbook: Foster Programs](#)

[Manual: Dog Foster Care](#)

[Manual: Cat Foster Care](#)

[Manual: Kitten Foster Care](#)

### **Implement multilingual adoption and foster support**

Implement multilingual adoption and foster applications and provide your customer service staff with electronic translator devices. We can provide recommendations to help you find a high-quality translation device for your organization. *Best Friends will not purchase this device for you.*

[Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#)

### **Remove ID requirement or accept more ID types**

Only accepting a state-issued driver's license or ID card as a form of identification can be a major barrier to potential adopters who are undocumented. One way to make it known everyone is welcome in your shelter is by removing or relaxing the ID requirement. Additional ID types can include a piece of mail from their bank or utility, a gym membership card, or a foreign ID.

[Success Story: Bernalillo County Animal Care and Resource Center](#)

### **Allow fosters to market their pets**

Empower your fosters to write bios for their foster pets, take photos/videos, post on their social media, and get creative. No one knows a pet better than the person caring for them 24/7! Why not let that person promote them for adoption? Plus, it saves you staff time, and your foster parents can reach people in the community that you may not be able to.

[Maddie's Fund® Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide](#)

## **Additional Resources**

**Do you want to explore opportunities to save more lives? Start with a [self-assessment](#).**

Next, use the resources below or reach out to your [regional strategist](#) to make a plan to implement changes and save more lives.

### **Use these resources to achieve your goals.**

- [Playbook: Open Adoptions](#) - Basic considerations and steps that every agency can take to create a well-rounded open-adoption program.
- [Webinar: Place More Pets Now with these Easy Changes](#) – Piloting open adoption and foster practices.
- [Lifesaving Training Module: Client Service & Open Adoptions](#) - Exceeding client service expectations to increase lifesaving.
- [Podcast: Removing Lifesaving Barriers](#) – includes advice for getting stakeholder buy-in.

## Get inspired.

- [Article: Success Stories](#) rescues share after reducing barriers.
- [Success Stories](#): Municipal shelters share strategies for increased adoptions
- [Reduced Fees](#) success stories
- [Blog: Pet adoption policies: More red carpets, fewer roadblocks, empty animal shelters](#) with an example of how barriers and applications can cost pets good homes
- [Expanding your walls](#): Maximize lifesaving with a community-based foster program