

**OKC Animal Welfare**

**Transfer Program Manual**

**City of Oklahoma City**

**Animal Welfare Division**

**2811 S.E. 29th Street**

**Oklahoma City, OK 73129-8305**

**(405) 297-3100**

**(405) 297-1491 Transfer Coordinator**

**awtransfers@okc.gov**

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**Welcome!**

Welcome to the Oklahoma City Animal Welfare Transfer Program!

Oklahoma City Animal Welfare is the largest animal shelter in Oklahoma caring for up to 25,000 animals a year and providing assistance to over 600,000 individuals each year.

We are very proud of our programs and services and are excited to have you partnering with us to save lives!

**Mission**

The mission of OKC Animal Welfare is to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of pets and people in OKC.

The division intends to reduce the total number of animals euthanized by increasing the live exits (adoptions, reclaims, and transfers) and decreasing the number of incoming animals (spay/neuter, ID programs, etc.). It is the goal of the division that of 100% of incoming animals, all of the healthy ones leave the shelter alive.

The shelter provides services to the citizens of Oklahoma City by supplying a pet food bank, free identification tags, free spay and neuter program, and a volunteer program.

**History**

Oklahoma City’s Animal Welfare was founded in the early 1950s when a citizen donated a tract of land and a house to the Humane Society for the care of unwanted pets. The house had a basement and three wings, which were later converted into animal kennels. In the early 70’s the Humane Society turned all operations over to the City of Oklahoma City and the city has operated the shelter since that time.

In 1979 an administration building was added to the facility and in 1995 an additional animal care facility was constructed on the same site. This facility included expanded clinic operations and shelter offices.

In the year 2000, the old shelter facility was torn down and replaced with new animal care areas, an employee break room and individual holding pens, rather than group kennels. During the same year, voters generously approved a bond issue to construct a building to house cats separately from dogs to provide a safe area for small exotic animals, birds and “pocket” pets and to renovate the barn and corrals. On May 1, 2001, the bonds were sold, providing the division with 2.15 million dollars for the much-needed addition and renovation. Renovation was completed in 2008 and established a new cattery, barn, get acquainted rooms, and administrative offices. In 2015, the City provided money to update and replace the dog kennels and seal and paint the kennel floors. In 2017, the parking lot at the facility received a much needed renovation that resulted in an additional entrance/exit being added, more parking spaces and landscaping to the grounds.

In an effort to increase our live release rate, we partnered with the ASPCA in 2007 and with Petsmart Charities in 2011. Since those partnerships, we have added several new positions including the Volunteer, Foster, and Transfer Coordinators. We have also been steadily increasing our live release rate each year since.

**Funding**

The City’s animal shelter is funded through City sales tax and private donations. Donations to the shelter are tax deductible.

Donations are used for off-site placement events, direct animal care, veterinary medical care for sheltered pets, enrichment items (such as toys and better caging), and for a variety of activities and animal-related services which benefit animals and the animal-owning community.

Patrons of the OKC Animal Shelter, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, helps raise funds to help OKC Animal Welfare achieve goals beyond the scope of what its current budget allows. The group and the OKC Animal Shelter work collectively on pet adoption programs, behavioral testing, enhanced lost and found services, transfer programs, medical services, vaccinations, spay/neuter programs, outreach, marketing, public education, pet owner services, volunteer programs and fundraising.

**Facts about the OKC Shelter**

* The OKC Animal Shelter is a part of the Development Services Department of the City of Oklahoma City. Most of the shelter’s funds are raised by city revenue and taxes. The shelter has several funds set up for donations so all donated funds go directly to help the animals.
* The OKC Animal Shelter is an “open admission” shelter. This means we are required to take every animal that is brought to us from within the Oklahoma City limits. We also have contracts to house animals from Tinker Air Force Base, the Town of Valley Brook, and the City of Del City.
* We can house over 700 animals at a time during the busiest seasons.
* The Animal Welfare Division is involved in providing funds and expertise to low cost spay and neuter programs and other community programs such as a pet food bank and community cat program.
* All adoption animals are spayed or neutered before going to their new home.

**Transfer Partner Requirements**

* Must have and retain a 501c3 with the United States Federal Government.
* Must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, standards, codes, ordinances, administrative regulations and all amendments and additions pertaining to the harboring, keeping, placement and/or care of animals.
* Must care for animals in a manner consistent with professionally recognized standards of humane care and restraint, including appropriate housing for the size, number and species of the animals in its care: providing each animal with a nutritious diet of species appropriate food and clean water: providing necessary veterinary care and grooming to prevent adverse health effects: and providing appropriate socialization.
* Must ensure all individuals representing the group adhere to the previous statements including but not limited to foster homes.
* Must agree that animal(s) transferred shall be adopted or otherwise placed from the Transfer Group as companion animals only.
* Must maintain records on adopted or otherwise placed animals, and upon reasonable notice, make such records available for inspection by appropriate OKC Animal Welfare staff for a period of three (3) years from the date of adoption. Such records shall include the original transfer from for the animal, sterilization information about the animal, and the disposition of the animal, including when and to whom such animals were adopted or otherwise placed.
* Must allow OKC Animal Welfare representatives to inspect and visit the facility in which the transferred animals are housed at any reasonable time upon request of the Superintendent or his or her designee. This includes board members, employees, and foster families homes as well as any facility maintained by the transfer partner.
* Must be solely responsible for all cost and expenses incurred during the conduct of its business including, but not limited to transportation, sterilization, food, grooming, and veterinary medical care.
* Must surgically sterilize dogs, cats, and rabbits before placing up for adoption.

**Application Process**

Organizations that are established as an animal shelter, animal welfare organization, animal rescue organization, or veterinary hospital may be eligible to participate in the Transfer Program. Organizations can contact the Transfer Department at awtransfers@okc.gov to receive an application. The organization’s president, or owner of veterinary clinic, must submit a completed application along with all required documentation for review. The Transfer Department will review the materials and contact the potential partner with notification of its status.

Interested parties must provide the following information and documentation as part of the application process:

1. A completed Transfer Partner Application. Any applications that are not signed or that are illegible will not be considered. Included in this application will be

* The names, phone numbers and email addresses of any individuals in the organization (president/director and a maximum of four others) who will be working with OKC Animal Welfare Transfer Staff.
* The name and phone number of the licensed veterinarian who serves as the organization's primary provider.

2. A copy of the organization's 501(c)(3) status or veterinary business license.

3. A copy of the organization's articles of incorporation and by-laws if applicable including their spay/neuter process and adoption process.

4. A copy of the organization's adoption application and agreement.

5. A copy of the organization’s foster application and agreement, if applicable.

**Animal Eligibility**

The decision to place an animal with a Transfer Partner is solely at the discretion of OKC Animal Welfare. Transfer employees will consider the best interest of the animal and the community, the individual animal's needs, and the needs and goals of OKC Animal Welfare and the safety of our community.

OKC Animal Welfare recommends that Transfer Partners carefully consider all medical and behavior information that is available prior to deciding whether to accept an animal for placement. OKC Animal Welfare does not guarantee the condition of the animal or exact age/information/behavior and does not warranty any medical/behavior problems/complications/illnesses that may arise with a particular animal.

Animal eligibility for placement through the Transfer program may be as follows:

1. Animals that have completed their holding period(s) but are not candidates for public adoption through OKC Animal Welfare due to medical and/or behavioral conditions may be eligible for transfer placement provided that the animal:

* Does not have a medical condition deemed to pose a significant risk to public health.
* Does not have a behavioral condition deemed to pose a significant risk to public safety.
* Does not have medical and/or behavior conditions that significantly compromise the animal's quality of life.

2. Animals still within a stray holding period may be placed in foster with transfer partners with the intention of transferring said animal to that partner, provided they have signed a Foster Agreement and have been approved by the transfer partner to foster. Dogs who are under 6 months of age and all cats or animals that a veterinarian has deemed not healthy enough to stay in a shelter atmosphere for the duration of the holding period may be candidates for such placement; legal and cruelty holds are evaluated on a case­ by-case basis and will be decided upon by the Unit Operations Supervisor or designee.

* The Transfer Partner signs a foster agreement and OKC Animal Welfare retains legal custody of the animal(s) until the hold is released. The hold will not be released until all holding requirements have been met.
* Any animal released to a Transfer Partner as a foster must be returned within 24 hours upon request of OKC Animal Welfare.
* OKC Animal Welfare will release the hold once all requirements pertaining to the hold have been satisfied, including a Transfer Agreement signed by the parties.

3. Animals that are available for public adoption through OKC Animal Welfare may be eligible for transfer placement under the following circumstances:

* There is no prior interest by public adopters.
* The animal has been on the adoption floor an appropriate amount of time as determined by OKC Animal Welfare.
* OKC Animal Welfare determines the animal would benefit from Transfer placement. Such a determination would be made based on the animal's medical and behavioral condition as well as the length of stay in the shelter.
* OKC Animal Welfare does not have other placement opportunities for the animal.

4. Animals with a bite history may be eligible for transfer placement after their quarantine period is expired and the superintendent, or designee, approves the transfer. The animal must not be deemed to pose a risk to public health and safety. OKC Animal Welfare Transfer Partners must sign a behavior/bite waiver for any animal with a history of a bite or other significant history of aggression. The Transfer Partner may also be required to sign additional waivers depending on the circumstances pertaining to a specific animal and the transfer partner must agree to advise the adopter of the previous bite and circumstances surrounding it.

All animals residing within the shelter can be requested for transfer by an approved Transfer Partner through The Transfer Coordinator, Foster Coordinator, the Transfer Program Supervisor, and/or the Shelter Unit Operations Supervisor. One or all of these employees will determine if the animal is eligible for transfer and will determine the best possible Transfer Partner for the animal. It remains at the discretion of OKC Animal Welfare if, when, and where an animal is transferred.

Oklahoma City Animal Welfare Transfer Staff will actively seek transfer for any animal that cannot remain in the shelter for adoption and that does not have a transfer commitment, as well as other animals, by posting to an OKC Animal Welfare Facebook site, sending emails, and/or making phone calls to Transfer Partners and/or potential transfer partners. Transfer Partners should also come to the shelter and visit [www.okc.gov/animalwelfare](http://www.okc.gov/animalwelfare) to see said animals.

**Policies and Procedures**

OKC Animal Welfare is determined to develop and maintain positive, productive relationships with our partnering organizations as well as with individuals and organizations in our community.

It is the responsibility of the leadership of each Transfer Partner to ensure all requirements, applicable laws, and regulations pertaining to the housing and care of animals are complied with.

OKC Animal Welfare requires that all Transfer Partners agree to follow the program policies and procedures outlined below:

1. OKC Animal Welfare reserves the right to decide which animals are candidates for Transfer placement. OKC Animal Welfare reserves the right to deny already confirmed placement to a Transfer Partner if an animal in care, custody, or control has been re-evaluated. In such instances the transfer staff will attempt to contact the partner to inform them of the status. However, if the Transfer Partner is not able to be reached and an urgent decision needs to be made, OKC Animal Welfare retains the right to make this decision and act accordingly.

2. Transfer Partners must speak with a transfer staff member regarding interest in any animal to discuss availability, medical, and behavior status. If the Transfer Partner is physically in the shelter, they should check in with the transfer staff. Transfer Partners are not permitted to pull animals on behalf of other organizations or with the intent to immediately transfer the animal(s) to another organization without first giving full veterinary attention including surgical sterilization unless otherwise discussed with the superintendent or his or her designee and approved.

3. Transfer Partners are required to pick up or locate transport for an animal in a timely manner after placement has been confirmed. If the animal is not picked up the first day it can leave, an alternate Transfer Partner may be contacted for pickup by transfer staff or an alternative placement may be arranged. Please note that OKC Animal Welfare may require immediate transport for certain animals with significant health problems and/or in the event of an emergency. All other animals need to be picked up the day after their stray time is over or in the event of owner surrenders, cats, and animals under 6 months of age, the day they are requested for transfer. If an extension is needed for emergency situations, the transfer partner should discuss it with transfer staff and transfer staff will determine if acceptable based on the animal and shelter’s needs.

4. Transfer partners are required to provide proper care, including adequate food, water, shelter, safe containment, appropriate veterinary care, and humane treatment for all animal(s) in their care at all times.

5. Ownership of and full legal responsibility for the animal will transfer to the Transfer Partner at the time of physical transfer, including full liability for any further/future costs associated with the care, health and behavior, and/or recuperation from damage or injury associated with the animal(s). OKC Animal Welfare provides records containing a preliminary assessment of the animal's health and behavior. Neither these records nor any written or verbal communications from OKC Animal Welfare shall be considered to be a guarantee or warranty of the condition of the animal, its exact age, health, or temperament and behavior. OKC Animal Welfare does not warrant any medical or behavior problems, complications, and/or illnesses that were not detected or that may arise with a particular animal. Animals placed with Transfer Partners cannot be returned to the shelter for medical treatment, including booster vaccinations and diagnostic testing.

 6. OKC Animal Welfare recommends that any sick animal as well as any apparently healthy animal be kept separate from other animals at the receiving home or facility for a minimum of 14 days to reduce the risk of introducing several highly infectious, often fatal illnesses such as panleukopenia or parvovirus, to an existing population. OKC Animal Welfare does not take any responsibility for other animals becoming ill.

7. Transfer Partners may be contacted whenever an animal arrives at OKC Animal Welfare with identification that traces back to that partner. It remains at the discretion of OKC Animal Welfare to transfer the animal to the Transfer Partner.

8. Transfer Partners are not allowed to transfer an animal back to the care of OKC Animal Welfare unless agreed upon by the Superintendent or designee.

9. Transfer Partners are required to maintain their own medical records, including vaccination certificates initially provided by OKC Animal Welfare. Copies should be retained and these materials provided to adopters or fosters as needed. All medical information should be kept for a minimum of three (3) years in the event it is requested for review by OKC Animal Welfare.

10. Transfer Partners must agree to allow their public contact information, including email and website, be given to potential adopters for animals they are transferring. It must be agreed that all potential adopter’s be given information from the transfer partner on how they can adopt an animal through the transfer group and be considered for placement of the animal. All current Transfer Partners’ adoption policies can be followed.

11. Communication between Transfer Partners and OKC Animal Welfare staff and volunteers must at all times be respectful and polite, whether expressing requests, concerns, or comments. Rude, demanding, or abusive behavior by either party will not be tolerated. Interference between an employee and guest to the shelter by transfer partner member is prohibited, including board members, fosters, transporters, etc.

12. Derogatory criticism or harassment in public, in person, in print, or online with harsh or inappropriate language directed at or about any OKC Animal Welfare employees, volunteers, foster homes or other transfer partners will not be tolerated.

13. Transfer Partners shall agree that during and after their status as a partner, they (individually or as a group) shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information that they learn about OKC Animal Welfare including: information about specific animals' medical, behavioral, or other records, including information about euthanasia decisions; information about the compensation, qualifications, abilities, or personal information of any OKC Animal Welfare employee; the identity or personal information of a foster, adopter, potential adopter, or person whose record is otherwise accessible, or individually identifiable financial information, including credit card information.

14. OKC Animal Welfare requires that Transfer Partners refrain from posting or forwarding transfer email alerts and communications on animals to any other parties outside of their organization including social media content. The photos and information are the property of OKC Animal Welfare and cannot be used without express written permission from a transfer employee. Partners may not forward or share social media posts, pleas, or emails to any other parties or post any portions thereof on any external website. Only approved Transfer Partners are authorized to receive transfer alerts and to communicate with Transfer Staff regarding animal placements.

15. Transfer Partners should communicate directly with their foster volunteers and adopters. OKC Animal Welfare will not respond to any inquiries from Transfer Partners' fosters or adopters regarding animals placed with the partner and will communicate directly with the Transfer Partner only. Transfer Partners are not allowed to send their fosters to the shelter to pick out animals.

16. If a Transfer Partner encounters a problem with or has a question about any OKC Animal Welfare process, policy or procedure, the Transfer Partner should email the program at awtransfers@okc.gov.

**Facebook Page Criteria**

Oklahoma City Animal Welfare will maintain a secret Facebook page to post animals needing transfer. Members of the page must be members of an approved Transfer Partner and able to choose animals for this partner. No content (including pictures) may be shared outside of this group without prior written authorization from an OKC Animal Welfare transfer staff member.

**Returning Proof of Surgical Sterilization**

All dogs, cats, and rabbits must be surgically sterilized within thirty (30) days of transfer of the animal by a licensed veterinarian and written proof turned in to the shelter immediately. If a veterinarian determines that it would be injurious to the animal’s health to be sterilized, the animal(s) can be placed on a “health hold.” In this event, a veterinarian’s statement can be turned in but it must contain a date by which the animal can be safely sterilized, or must contain a statement that the animal, due to advanced age or chronic health problem(s), cannot be safely sterilized. In such case(s), the animal will not be sterilized but shall be prevented from breeding. The shelter’s Follow Up Form can be used for the veterinarian to complete for these purposes or animals records from a veterinarian clinic can be used. Forms can be mailed to Oklahoma City Animal Welfare, 2811 SE 29th St, OKC, Ok 73129, emailed to awtransfers@okc.gov or personally handed to Transfer Staff at the shelter. Failure to return these forms in a timely manner will result in transfer privileges being revoked. Transfer Partners may be excluded from returning proof on every animal if they have provided proof of alter on at least fifty (50) animals consecutively transferred or they have provided proof of alter on all animals transferred within a two (2) year time frame. However, Transfer Staff can request veterinarian records at any time for partners that meet the excluded expectations.

**Transfer Partnership Status Review**

Should OKC Animal Welfare discover evidence or allegations of inappropriate or insufficient care or shelter of an animal placed with a Transfer Partner foster home, boarding, or private facility, OKC Animal Welfare reserves the right to investigate the situation and revoke all transfer privileges at its sole discretion. OKC Animal Welfare further reserves the right to review and reevaluate a Transfer Partner's status and placement privileges at any time if OKC Animal Welfare feels that any policies have been put in question or violated.

A Transfer Partner, in turn, may make inquiries to OKC Animal Welfare regarding their status and may opt to withdraw from the Transfer Program at any time.

Circumstances including but not limited to the following may result in a Transfer Partner being re-evaluated by OKC Animal Welfare and suspended or removed from the program:

* Suspicion or evidence of involvement by a partner and/or their respective foster homes or affiliates in animal hoarding or cruelty.
* Evidence that the care of animals placed with the Transfer Partner has been substantially compromised.
* Failure to provide information requested for animal(s) placed with the transfer group.
* Repeated failure to complete the transfer of animals in a timely manner.
* Interference or disruption of the functions or protocols established within the OKC Animal Welfare shelter or operations.
* Ignoring or circumventing Transfer and OKC Animal Welfare policies, procedures, eligibility requirements, and practices.
* Disclosing confidential information as set forth in greater detail in paragraph 12 above.
* Failure to communicate in a polite and respectful manner with staff and employees at all times and on social media.
* 501(c)3 being revoked by the United States Federal Government.

**Reinstatement of Transfer Partner Status**

If a Transfer Partner is suspended from the Transfer Program and would like to be reinstated, the partner must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Submit a new Transfer Application.

2. Submit a written statement explaining the reason for requesting reinstatement.

3. If you feel that your original suspension or termination was not warranted, provide documentation and clarification in support of your reinstatement.

4. Provide proof of action steps taken to remedy the issues or circumstances that initially caused the suspension or termination to be enforced.

OKC Animal Welfare Superintendent or designee will carefully review all materials and will provide a written response with the decision regarding reinstatement. In addition to the information provided by the partner organization, other factors including, but not limited to, the following, will be considered:

* Any neglect or cruelty complaints or convictions within the last ten years.
* Complaints received from fosters, adopters, or partners of the organization.
* Interactions with OKC Animal Welfare staff, volunteers, and partners.
* General adherence to OKC Animal Welfare and transfer policies and the spirit of partnership as outlined in this document.

**Thank You!**

**Thank you for your interest in transferring animals from the shelter.**

**Important Information**

**Animal Shelter Hours**

Open seven days a week (except major holidays)

9am-5:30pm to drop off animals and pickup transfers

12pm-5:30pm for adoptions or reclaims

**Websites with Shelter Animals Listed**

[www.okc.gov](http://www.okc.gov)/animalwelfare

[www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)

**Contacts**

Shelter Main Number (405) 297-3100

Transfer Coordinator (405) 297-3082 awtransfers@okc.gov

Foster Coordinator (405) 297-3082

 awfosters@okc.gov

Transfer Supervisor (405) 297-2098

Shelter Unit Operations Supervisor (405) 297-3088

To report emergencies, strays, cruelty, etc (405) 297-2255

Staff email addresses are standard format: firstname.lastname@okc.gov