



City of Aztec Animal Shelter Adoption Process

1. Ask yourself if you are ready to adopt.

You should first determine if you are really ready for a pet. Think about your current living conditions and ask yourself few questions: Is your living situation stable? And, are you ready to commit to a pet for the next 10-12 years? Do you have the time and energy for the daily needs of a dog or cat?

Tip: Try to plan your adoption for when you have free time to get your pet settled in. Avoid adopting a dog right before leaving on vacation.

2. Check your finances.

Give some thought to the extra pet expenses and make sure they will not bust your budget. This includes dog food, treats, toys, bedding, training class, grooming, boarding and/or pet sitting, as well as unforeseen expenses like an occasional vet visit. Many people return pets to the shelter because they cannot afford the added expenses. Make sure you know the financial responsibilities ahead of time.

Tip: On average, a new pet could cost you at least \$1,000 in the first year and \$500 each subsequent year you own it.

3. Run it by the people in your household.

Make sure that others in your home are on board, before you actually adopt. You may want to bring roommates, parents, children, spouses or partners with you to the shelter, so that they can be a part of this fun process. If you rent, be sure to contact your landlord about their policies. Also, if you already have a dog, bring them along to make sure that they are friendly with the new dog.

Tip: Consider if anyone living with you is allergic.

4. Research what kind of dog you want.

Once you have evaluated your resources and checked with the people in your life, you will want to think about what kind of animal you are looking for. Various breeds of dogs need different levels of care. For example, some dogs need more exercise and outdoor time than other breeds. A Basset Hound might be a bad choice if you intend for it to be your running partner. Research the specifications of different breeds and determine a dog type that will work for you.

5. Visit the shelter in person.

Once you have had a chance to think about the type of pet that would work best for you, you should visit your local shelter to see the animals in person. TIP: Although all of our adoptable animals are posted through petharbor.com, it is always best to visit the animals in person to see if you connect with them before getting your heart set on one.

6. Ask questions about the animal's medical history.

Talk to the shelter staff about the medical history of any prospective dogs. Determine if there are any medical issues you need to be aware of. It is important that you ask in order to make sure you know your responsibilities after adoption.

7. Talk with the staff about the dogs.

Once you get an idea of the dog's medical history, be sure to ask about other things like temperament and any previous owners. Although the staff may not have a lot of specific information about the dog before they received it, they may have an idea of what its situation was like before coming to the shelter. Because they work with the animals daily, they will also be able to fill you in on the temperaments of each dog. This will be valuable information to help you find the perfect dog.

8. Play with the dog.

Many shelters will allow you to walk the dogs and play with them a little to get a feel for their personalities. Depending on what you are looking for, this is a good opportunity to check out the dog's energy levels and temperament. This should give you a better idea if the dog is "the one."

Tip: If you want an athletic dog that will go for runs and hikes with you, look for one that runs around a lot and seems eager to play.

9. Complete forms and pay fees.

Once you have picked your perfect pet, you will need to pay a fee and fill out some paperwork. All animals adopted from the AAS are required to be sterilized prior to going home so not all pets will be ready to go home the same day.