

Start small, grow, evolve, build on successes, and save more lives!



Use these checklists to help start or expand an Adoption Ambassadors program.

Checklist to Start a Program

When starting out, think small! Remember, the goal is to get your first two or three animals out the door – many shelters can do that within the first month. From there you can grow and evolve, building on your successes and making changes organically.

1. Choose Your Coordinator

Timeframe: 1 to 2 weeks

- This is a crucial step, and you want to find the perfect fit
- You can use your existing foster coordinator to simplify the process, or a qualified volunteer

2. Select Your Animals

Timeframe: 1 day to 1 week

- You may already know which types of animals you want to include in the program, so this step should be fairly simple and can be handled by your coordinator
- Pick animals who will set your Ambassadors up for success

3. Create Shelter-to-Home Placement Plan

Timeframe: 1 to 2 weeks

- Your coordinator can lead this effort
- This step involves knowing your intake-to-availability process and identifying what it'll take to get an animal ready to place in an Adoption Ambassadors home

4. Decide What to Provide and Gather Supplies

Timeframe: About a week

- Your coordinator can handle this, and along with supplies should identify a place they'll be kept for easy access

5. Recruit Ambassadors

Timeframe: About a month

- Your coordinator will handle this
- Remember, you can start with just a few – or 1 or 2! – volunteers
- Be creative and consider populations you might have previously overlooked, like college students, business owners or social/civic organizations

6. Train Ambassadors

Timeframe: Within the first month

- Remember, a small group is fine
- Your coordinator will set this up, and will need to look for enough time and space to accommodate training

For more information, visit ASPCApro.org/ambassadors

Checklist to Expand an Existing Program

If you're already doing some form of Adoption Ambassadors and want to expand or modify it, this checklist can help keep you on track and chart your progress.

1. Define Your Program

- Clearly and thoroughly write out a description of your program and all its elements

2. Examine Your Program

- Ask staff and volunteers what's working and what's not
- Compile data to determine successes and areas of improvement
- Set goals based on feedback and data

(For example, length of stay, number of animals placed, number of new volunteers in the program, number of check-ins with volunteers, etc.)

3. Embrace Change

- Release some of the restrictions that are holding the program back
(For example, consider dropping vet check, landlord check or fenced yard requirements; consider waiving fees)
- Execute your changes!
- Set a date to re-evaluate

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Checklist for Foster-Based Rescue Groups

An Adoption Ambassadors program – whether whole or in-part – can help your group place more animals. This checklist can help keep you on track and chart your progress.

1. Define Your Program

You already know how your program works, so why write it out? Clearly and thoroughly writing a description of your program and all its elements can help make sure stakeholders are on the same page and have a consistent view of your individual needs and capabilities. You probably already know that not everyone who works with your group has the same perception!

2. Examine Your Program

Ask your staff and volunteers what's working – and what's not – for the rescue as a whole, for the animals in your care, for the shelters you work with and for the public. This kind of thorough self-examination can lead to those great “aha!” moments that can move your organization onward and upward!

3. Be Open to Change

Relaxing the kind of policies that hold your program back can bring tremendous rewards. Consider lifting your rules regarding:

- Fenced yards
- Landlord checks
- Home visits

A first step could be to develop an adoption procedure that can be done by volunteers without others having to approve it.

4. Communicate & Work Your Plan

Once you've identified what elements of Adoption Ambassadors will work for your rescue, make sure all your volunteers know what's expected of them and that you'll check in on their progress regularly. Remember: Start small – baby steps will help you find your balance until you know where you're headed!

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