



WETZEL COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

RESCUE PARTNERSHIP POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, consistent, and legally compliant guidelines for the evaluation, approval, and management of rescue partnerships with the Wetzel County Animal Shelter (WCAS).

This policy ensures that all animal transfers are conducted in a manner that prioritizes:

- Animal welfare
 - Public safety
 - Legal compliance
 - Responsible placement outcomes
-

AUTHORITY

All decisions regarding rescue partnerships, including approval, denial, limitation, suspension, or termination, are made **at the sole discretion of the Wetzel County Animal Shelter Director**.

Such decisions are made:

- With the **full support of the Wetzel County Commission**, and
- In accordance with **applicable laws, active legal proceedings, and guidance from the Humane Officer and/or County Attorney, when applicable**

This authority is final and not subject to appeal.

GENERAL PARTNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for partnership, an organization must:

- Be a recognized rescue organization in good standing
- Demonstrate **operational longevity, stability, and a positive reputation within the animal welfare community**
- Provide proof of 501(c)(3) status or equivalent nonprofit designation
- Demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate animal care, housing, and veterinary support
- Maintain appropriate biosecurity and disease prevention practices
- Provide documentation as required by WCAS, including but not limited to adoption and foster protocols

Submission of an application does not guarantee approval.

Approval is contingent upon WCAS review and remains at the discretion of the Director.

APPLICATION REVIEW & APPROVAL PROCESS

Rescue partnership applications are reviewed based on **organizational need, operational fit, and the best interest of the animals.**

WCAS may utilize an internal evaluation process, which may include consideration of factors such as:

- Organizational capacity and resources
- Experience and operational history
- Veterinary and biosecurity practices
- Ability to manage medical or behavioral needs
- Alignment with WCAS mission and placement priorities

This evaluation process may include the use of internal scoring or review tools to ensure consistency.

Final approval decisions remain at the sole discretion of the WCAS Director, with support from the Wetzel County Commission and in accordance with applicable legal considerations.

EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

Rescue organizations with an established history of partnership and demonstrated compliance with WCAS standards may continue to be recognized as approved partners.

However, WCAS reserves the right to **re-evaluate, suspend, or terminate any existing partnership at any time** in accordance with this policy.

TRANSFER ELIGIBILITY & LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Not all animals are eligible for transfer.

Animals may be restricted from transfer due to, but not limited to:

- Active legal cases or pending court proceedings
- Seizure, cruelty, or neglect investigations
- Required hold periods under West Virginia law
- Behavioral or medical evaluations still in progress

Animals involved in active legal proceedings shall not be discussed, disclosed, or considered for transfer with any rescue organization until appropriate legal clearance has been obtained.

WCAS reserves the right to withhold, delay, or deny transfer of any animal at any time based on legal, safety, or welfare considerations.

PLACEMENT PRIORITIZATION

WCAS prioritizes placement decisions based on:

- The individual needs of the animal
- The capacity and demonstrated capabilities of the rescue partner
- The ability to support medical, behavioral, or specialized needs
- The overall best interest of the animal

Preference may be given to organizations that demonstrate flexibility in accepting animals with varying needs, including those that may be harder to place.

PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Approved rescue partners are expected to:

- Maintain humane standards of care at all times
- Utilize appropriate screening and placement procedures
- Provide accurate and timely updates upon request
- Ensure animals are not used for breeding, research, or unlawful purposes
- Comply with all applicable laws and regulations

Failure to meet these expectations may result in immediate termination of the partnership.

INSPECTION & OVERSIGHT

WCAS reserves the right to:

- Request additional documentation at any time
 - Conduct inspections of facilities or foster environments, with or without notice
 - Evaluate ongoing compliance with this policy and partnership standards
-

DENIAL, SUSPENSION, OR TERMINATION

WCAS reserves the right to deny, suspend, limit, or terminate any rescue partnership **at any time and for any reason deemed appropriate**, including but not limited to:

- Concerns related to animal welfare
- Misrepresentation or incomplete information
- Failure to comply with policy or agreement terms
- Legal concerns or risk exposure
- Capacity or operational concerns

All such decisions are made at the discretion of the Director, with Commission support as outlined above.

WCAS is not obligated to provide detailed justification for partnership or placement decisions.

NO GUARANTEE OF TRANSFER

Approval as a rescue partner does not guarantee:

- Availability of animals
- Selection for transfer

- Priority placement

All transfer decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By applying for and/or participating in a rescue partnership with WCAS, the organization acknowledges that it has received, reviewed, and agrees to comply with this policy in full.

FINAL STATEMENT

The Wetzel County Animal Shelter is committed to responsible, ethical, and legally sound placement practices. All decisions are made in good faith, with the primary goal of ensuring the safety, welfare, and best possible outcomes for the animals in our care.