

## Adoption Fees

We sometimes get questions about why we charge the fees that we do to adopt an animal. We hope this helps explain...

- 1. Adoption fees help cover at least some of our costs of caring for the animal.** These costs include spay/neuter surgery which costs an average of \$50 per animal (which is greatly discounted for us), vaccinations & deworming medication which cost about \$20 – more if an animal stays with us long enough to need additional vaccinations, a microchip which costs about \$12, and tests for diseases like Heartworm, Lyme's, and Feline Leukemia which cost approximately \$10 per animal. In addition, many animals require additional tests, antibiotics, and sometimes other surgeries or treatments. (Fortunately, we have almost all of our food donated so that's one expense we haven't included here.) We also have the costs of keeping the lights and the heat on, keeping the shelter clean, and paying a qualified staff to care for the animals.
- 2. People tend to value what they pay for.** We believe that animals have inherent value but research shows that the more a person pays for an animal the more likely they are to reinvest in that animal through training, veterinary care, and quality food and the more likely they are to keep that animal for the duration of its life. Of course there are exceptions, but it's a general principle that has been proven to be accurate most of the time. We have people come in that don't want to pay for what they consider a "used dog" (sadly, that is a term we've actually heard) or "just some stray." Charging a fee helps weed out people who don't think our animals are worthy. (We do frequently lower the adoption fees on animals who have been in our shelter for an extended period of time however we don't always advertise this since we want people to choose the animal that is best for them not just the bargain-priced ones.)
- 3. Animals are expensive to care for and an adoption fee is only the start.** We know MANY people with low-incomes place their animals' care above their own and that the amount of money people have in the bank has nothing to do with the amount of love in their hearts. However, the reality is that providing for an animal is expensive just for quality food and regular veterinary care without taking into account unexpected veterinary costs for illness or injury, grooming for certain breeds, kennels/fences, and training. While we appreciate the love people of all incomes have for their animals it would be irresponsible for us to place an animal into a home where it's care would over-burden the family. If paying an adoption fee poses a hardship, where will the money come from to pay for all of the other things for the rest of the animal's life?
- 4. The fortunate animals help provide for the less fortunate.** It shouldn't come as a surprise that puppies and kittens are adopted much quicker than adult dogs and cats. Likewise, certain breeds are more popular and easily find homes while others remain in the shelter for many months. For this reason, our adoption fees vary a bit depending on the animal and they are usually higher for the more "desirable" ones. The increased income from those animals helps pay for the others who require costly treatments or who will simply be at the shelter longer requiring continual care.

What about “free kittens”? Here’s a cost comparison...

## A Tale of Two Kitties

	“Free” Kitten	Shelter Kitten or Cat
Initial Cost	\$0	\$100 average
Feline Leukemia Test	\$33	Included
Distemper Combo Vaccine	\$22.50	Included
Distemper Combo Vaccine Booster	\$22.50	Included
Rabies Vaccine	\$21.50	Included (if old enough)
1 <sup>st</sup> Deworming Treatment	\$5 - \$10	Included
2 <sup>nd</sup> Deworming Treatment	\$5 - \$10	Included
Flea/Tick Preventative	\$15	Included
Spay/Neuter Surgery	\$150-\$250	Included
Microchip Implantation & Registration	\$58	Included
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$332.50 – \$442.50</b>	<b>\$100 average</b>

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