



Rehoming Your Cat

Making the decision to rehome an animal can be difficult. We want to ensure you have the resources you need to navigate this decision to do what is best for both you and your animal.

Alachua County Animal Resources & Care Contact Information:

(352) 264-6870

acas@alachuacounty.us

3400 NE 53rd Ave. Gainesville, FL 32609

Please be aware there are local resources available to assist pet owners.

- ❖ If you are facing financial hardships or if the need to rehome the animal is based on medical issues, there are resources in our community available to help.
 - Animal Resources and Care provides community services including Rabies Vaccinations and licensing, microchipping, and medically necessary euthanasia. Please contact our office for more information.
 - The Humane Society of North Central Florida has programs available to help, including a Community Food Bank and low-cost Spay and Neuter and Wellness and Vaccination Clinics. Grants may be available to help cover the cost of services through their clinics. If you would like more information about these programs, please contact The Humane Society of North Central Florida Customer Care Team at info@humanesocietyncfl.org or (352) 373-5855.
 - St. Francis Pet Care provides primary veterinary care for homeless, veterans, and very low-income residents of Alachua County. For more information, please call (352) 372-4959 or submit an inquiry on their website, www.stfrancispetcare.org.
 - Our office can provide you with a list of veterinary practices and organizations in our area.
- ❖ If the need to rehome is due to behavioral reasons, there are and behaviorists and veterinarians in our area that may be able to help. **Litterbox issues are one of the more common reasons we see cats needing to be rehomed, but we do have resources for this as well.** We always recommend exploring these options prior to rehoming. If you would like these resources, please contact our office.
- ❖ For more information about finding pet friendly housing, please visit www.petlisted.com/pet-friendly-housing-guide/.

If you have explored these resources but are still unable to keep your animal, the following information can assist you in placing your animal into a new home:

What are Rehoming Resources?

There are several websites, Facebook Groups, and other tools available that will allow you to place your pet directly into a new home without surrendering to a shelter or rescue. After creating a post or profile for your pet (guidance for creating the best post/profile later in this guide), interested adopters can reach out to you directly. You will select the new adopter and place the animal yourself.

Facebook Groups:

- ❖ Pet Rehoming Gainesville and Surrounding Areas (first recommendation, this group is closely monitored by rescue representatives in our area)
- ❖ Official Florida Pets! Adopt, Rehome, or Foster
- ❖ Florida Pets Free, Adopt, Rehome
- ❖ Swip Swap Gainesville, FL
- ❖ Gainesville Community Cats and Kittens (great for outdoor or community cats or kittens that have graduated from the KSD Program through Operation Catnip)
- ❖ All Animals of Florida – Rehoming

These Facebook Groups are specific to our area and the state of Florida, but if you can arrange for transportation, you can explore rehoming groups in other areas. There are many rehoming groups available, so you do not need to only use the ones listed above. If you have a purebred animal, you can also investigate breed-specific groups.

Websites:

- ❖ www.rehomeyourpets.com
- ❖ www.rehome.adoptapet.com
- ❖ www.getyourpet.com

Other Methods:

- ❖ Do not underestimate the power of **word of mouth!** Tell your friends, family members, neighbors, coworkers, or anyone you know who could be looking to add a new family member.
- ❖ Contact local animal facilities (veterinary practices, grooming salons, rescues) or other businesses around town and ask about hanging **flyers** advertising that your pet needs a new home.
 - Flyers should be large (easy to read from a distance), loud (bright/eye catching), limited (minimal details, details can be discussed later), and legible (your contact information and basics about the pet should be easy to read). There are websites available to help you generate flyers. If you need assistance, please contact our office.

Why Use Rehoming Resources?

- ❖ We have so many wonderful rescues in our community, but they are often overwhelmed. For every animal that does not enter a rescue, the rescue can focus their resources on another animal.
- ❖ A shelter environment can be extremely stressful and exacerbate existing medical and behavioral issues or create new ones. With animals constantly coming in, outbreaks of diseases are likely to occur.
- ❖ While Alachua County is considered a no-kill county, an animal being euthanized is always a possibility if shelters and rescues continue to receive animals at such high rates.

When Should I NOT Use Rehoming Resources?

There are situations when an animal SHOULD be surrendered to a shelter or rescue. (Please be advised that Alachua County Animal Resources and Care is Alachua County's only public intake facility. More information about our local rescues will be at the end of this guide).

The situations in which you SHOULD bring a pet to ANIMAL RESOURCES AND CARE include:

- ❖ Finding a stray animal that needs to be reunited with its owner. In Alachua County, cats do not need to undergo a stray hold, but if the cat was found wearing a collar or has a microchip, you should report the cat to Animal Resources and Care. Cats are often found near their home, so we recommend utilizing the Found Animal Guide to attempt to locate an owner nearby. Our office can provide this guide if needed. If a cat is found with an ear-tip, the top corner of the ear missing or "tipped," this cat is likely a community cat living in an outdoor home. For more information on community cats, please reach out to our office or Operation Catnip at info@ocgainesville.org.
- ❖ Finding a stray animal in need of immediate medical attention you cannot pay for. If you locate a sick or injured pet outside of Animal Resources and Care hours, you can contact the University of Florida Small Animal Hospital or BluePearl Pet Hospital.
- ❖ Finding yourself unfit, unable, or unwilling to care for your personal pet and you are unfit, unable, or unwilling to rehome the animal responsibly.

The situations in which you SHOULD bring a pet to a RESCUE include:

- ❖ A legitimate rescue has offered to take in your animal and vet or rehome it because they have better resources available. This also applies to breed specific rescues.
- ❖ The legitimate rescue you adopted from has contractually obligated you to return the animal to their rescue. Many of our local rescue groups do allow adopters to rehome privately if the adoption does not work out. Please check with the rescue you adopted from before attempting rehoming resources.
- ❖ You can continue to foster your pet in the home but need the guidance of a local rescue. Ideally, you can offer your time as a foster or volunteer or money to sponsor the animal in return for their resources. If you can foster your animal until a new home is found, please consider privately rehoming first.

Our goal is to make surrendering an animal the last step after all other options have been explored to reduce the number of animals entering the shelter system and to reduce the likelihood of euthanasia.

How Do I Get Started with Rehoming Resources?

For starters, know it is **okay to use more than one rehoming resource at a time!** The more resources you utilize, the more likely you are to find an adopter. Please be aware that some rehoming resources may not be regularly monitored, so do not be discouraged if you receive judgmental or unhelpful comments. Often, these comments will come from people who have not worked in animal rescue and do not know that rehoming resources are a valuable tool. Rehoming resources can work! We strongly suggest the Facebook Group, Pet Rehoming Gainesville and Surrounding Areas, and the Rehoming Websites if you are looking for judgement-free zones.

Familiarizing yourself with local rescue groups, their adoption processes, and the way they advertise their adoptable animals can provide helpful insight for finding your own adopter. There are websites and videos that have tools for writing a successful bio for an adoptable animal, and our office can provide you with these resources if needed.

If your cat is not already spayed or neutered, **please consider getting your cat spayed or neutered prior to placing into a new home.** You can help ensure your pet will not be contributing to overpopulation by ensuring they cannot reproduce before going to a new home. If you cannot get your cat fixed, please try to arrange an agreement with the new adopter to have this done. There are rehoming resources that require posted animals to be fixed, so keep this in mind. For more resources on local options for spaying and neutering and the benefits related to fixing your pet, please contact our office.

You will want to create a bio/post/profile for your cat that **focuses on the type of home or adopter that would be best suited for him or her.**

Helpful Information to Include in a Rehoming Post

- ❖ Age of your cat
- ❖ If your cat is spayed/neutered and current on vaccinations and other medical services
- ❖ If your cat is friendly with other cats, dogs, or children
- ❖ Any behavioral or medical concerns (details can be discussed over private message, try to highlight the positives in the initial post). Most people will assume a cat is litterbox trained, but if litterbox issues exist, it should be made known to the adopter (the adopter can reach out for more resources about litterbox issues if needed)
- ❖ Personality Information – snuggly (lap kitty), independent, vocal, playful, etc.

- ❖ What your cat will come with
- ❖ The best way for potential adopters to contact you

Tips for a Successful Rehoming Post

- ❖ Writing in first person can help adopters feel a personal connection to your cat.
- ❖ You SHOULD be honest with potential adopters about behavioral or medical issues to ensure they are equipped to handle these issues, so it is okay to be up front about these issues in the initial post, but you should focus on the positives. Remember, details can always be discussed over private message. Often, rehoming posts will focus too heavily on the need to rehome, and this can be off-putting to potential adopters and prevent them from getting to really know your cat.
- ❖ Include visual aids. This can quickly capture an adopter's attention while they are scrolling. Adopters are more likely to view a post if there are pictures attached.
- ❖ While you want to answer questions adopters may have in your post, you also do not want the post to be too long, or an adopter may decide not to read all the way through. Start with the positives about your dog, hit the key information, and be prepared to discuss more details over private message.
- ❖ Bios can be fun, quirky, or different. Be creative! You can view bios from rescues or Google templates for more ideas. If you need assistance writing a bio, please contact our office.

Helpful Visual Aids

- ❖ It is always helpful to include pictures of your cat! You do not need to post every picture you have; you can send the potential adopter more pictures over private message, but you should select at least 3 pictures.
- ❖ Personality pictures are always important! If your cat loves climbing the cat tree, playing with mousey toys, sleeping with other animals, or rolling around in catnip, show this! If you share pictures that feature other animals, you may want to make it known that the other animals are not available for adoption.
- ❖ If you've owned your cat since he or she was a kitten, it is okay to share kitten pictures with potential adopters, but this is normally best done over private messages, so potential adopters do not get confused about the age of your cat.
- ❖ Videos that highlight your cat's personality can also be helpful, especially over private messages. Videos can allow the adopter to get to know your dog virtually, and you can also offer to video chat.

GOOD Example:

Hi, I'm Barry. I'm a male, 2-year-old kitty looking for a new home. My owner must move, and sadly, cannot take me along, so I'm hoping someone else will be able to take me in. I'm neutered, microchipped, and current on vaccinations and parasite prevention. I am allergic to some medications, but my owner can discuss that more with you over private message.

I was found when I was just a few days old and had to be bottle-fed along with my littermates. My owner took care of my litter, so she has lots of cute kitten pictures of me if you'd like them. I do well with other cats, dogs, and children. Sometimes I like to play rough with other kitties, so if you have another young cat in your home, I'd be very happy. I might annoy an older cat with my antics, though. I love to be in the middle of the action, and I will follow you around the house and stare at you. Staring is

kind of my thing. If you like taking pictures of cats, I'm a very photogenic guy. I don't like to be held, but I will find you when I'm ready to be scratched. I love climbing cat trees and watching lizards run around outside of the window. I will sit in the window for hours!

If you are interested in adopting me, please message my owner on Facebook or text her at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.



What if I Need to Rehome Multiple Animals?

Of course, it is wonderful if animals can be adopted into the same home but placing multiple animals at a single time can be difficult and time consuming. It's important to consider if your animals are bonded. How would they do apart from each other? Animals that have been together their entire lives, especially senior animals, may not do well being separated. If you are unsure if your animals are bonded and should be placed together, please contact our office for helpful resources.

If you determine your animals are bonded, you should make a post that includes the animals that need to be placed together. You want to give each animal a spotlight within the post while sharing why they need to be adopted together. You can include pictures of the animals apart and together.

If you believe your animals can go to different homes, we recommend creating separate posts for them. This can cut back on confusion for adopters and ensures your animals will get their own spotlight. Your animals will not be assumed to be a "package deal," you can keep the post shorter and more concise and sharing updates will be easier if the post only features one animal. If you decide to make a post featuring all the animals, make it clear that they can be adopted apart and give them their own features. If you have a litter of kittens to rehome, for example, you could mention in your post to click on their picture for more information about them.

How Do I Find Good Adopters?

One of the most common reasons we hear why someone does not want to attempt rehoming resources is because they are worried about finding the right adopter. Did you know the adoption process many

rescues and shelters use can be replicated from anywhere? You can vet adopters the same way a rescue would!

Important Topics/Items to Discuss with Potential Adopters

- ❖ **Communication:** Vetting adopters tends to be easier to do over the phone. If an adopter is willing to talk over the phone, we recommend talking instead of messaging. Not everyone prefers talking on the phone, but you can get immediate answers to the questions below. Ask the adopter if they are willing to have a conversation over the phone or establish their preferred communication method early on.
- ❖ **Rehoming Fees:** Rehoming fees are optional, but please keep in mind that studies have been completed that show that higher adoption fees do not correlate to a better-quality home. The goal of a fee should NOT be to recuperate lost costs or make a profit. Familiarizing yourself with local adoption fees can give you an idea of what a reasonable fee for a cat would be if you would like to ask for a rehoming fee. You can always reduce or remove a rehoming fee before placing the animal, or you can ask the adopter to donate to a local rescue instead.
- ❖ **Veterinary Care:** Preferably, your cat will be spayed or neutered and fully vetted prior to rehoming, but it is always important to discuss medical care with potential adopters. Does this adopter have a veterinarian they already use? Are their current animals current on services and fixed? If not, is the adopter open to resources about local veterinary options?
- ❖ **Other Animals and Children:** Always discuss other animals in the home as well as animals they have previously owned. Have they rehomed or surrendered animals in the past? Are their current animals indoors or outdoors? Are there children in the home? Is the adopter prepared to allow for a SLOW introduction between your cat and the other pets and children in the home?
- ❖ **Indoor/Outdoors:** We do recommend cats go to indoor-only homes when possible to ensure their safety and the safety of our native wildlife. If the adopter needs more information on how to enrich an indoor kitty's life or the dangers of kitties living outside, we are happy to provide this information. If your cat is an outdoor cat, Operation Catnip has resources for acclimating to an outdoor home if needed, though we recommend exploring the possibility of an indoor home first.
- ❖ **Declawing:** We do not ever recommend declawing. It is a painful procedure where part of the cat's toe is amputated and can result in long-term medical and behavioral issues. If your cat is already declawed, you should ask an adopter if they are prepared to navigate those issues if they arise. If your cat is not declawed, ask the adopter if they plan on declawing. Most adopters do not understand what declawing entails, so if someone says yes, they may just need to be educated on the topic. If you would like more information on declawing, we do have resources available.
- ❖ **Financial Stability and Resources:** Is the adopter familiar with local resources if medical or behavioral issues arise? Are they familiar with any issues your cat has/had, and are they comfortable and prepared to work with them? Do they feel financially stable enough to seek out these resources and provide adequate care for your cat?
- ❖ **Contract/Agreement:** Do you want to be contacted if the adoption does not work out? Do you want the cat to be returned to you? How do you feel about the adopter selling or rehoming the

cat? Are you planning for the adopter to have the cat fixed later? You do NOT have to have a contract or put answers to questions like these in writing, but it is an option if you want the potential adopter to know you are serious about the placement.

- ❖ **References/Home Visits:** When you privately rehome, you may have more time to investigate adopters than a rescue or shelter would. In fact, many rescues do not do home visits and may not do extensive reference checks. If you would like references, you can ask for veterinary or personal references. You can ask the adopter to send pictures or videos of their home or video chat with the adopter.
- ❖ **Meet-and-Greets:** Cats can often take longer to warm up to new situations and people, so arranging for meet-and-greets can be tricky because the adopter may not get the most accurate representation of your cat. We recommend sending videos or video chatting with the adopter, so they can see how your cat is when he or she is most comfortable.

If you have been speaking with a potential adopter but do not believe this person would be a good fit for your cat, it's okay to explain that. If an adopter ever makes you feel uncomfortable or if you have serious concerns, you should report that person to an administrator in the group or contact the rehoming website, or you can contact our office for further guidance. We believe in reducing barriers to adoption, but you should feel comfortable with the adoption.

What Should I Send with the Adopter?

What you send home with the adopter is entirely up to you, though we do recommend a few things if you are able:

- ❖ **Medication:** Of course, if your cat is on any medication currently, it is important to send that medication with the new adopter. Many owners will also send along any parasite prevention they have.
- ❖ **Medical records:** This will make it easier on your cat's new owner and veterinarian.
- ❖ **Microchip Information:** If your cat is microchipped, it is VERY important that the microchip information is updated with the microchip company. Your cat's microchip number should be on the medical records, but if not, you can contact the facility that administered the microchip or you can bring your cat to a veterinarian or shelter/rescue to be scanned to get the number. If you do not know which company the microchip was through, you can run the microchip number through a universal microchip lookup to get the name of the company. You should contact the microchip company directly to update the contact information on the microchip. The new owner can also do this.
- ❖ **Food:** You should send your cat with some of the food he or she is familiar with to help prevent tummy trouble if the owner decides to transition to a new food.
- ❖ **Bedding:** Sending cats with blankets or beds that smell familiar can help them adjust to a new home.
- ❖ **Toys:** Like bedding, toys that are familiar can also be helpful during the adjustment period.

- ❖ **Resources:** If the adopter is new to the area, new to owning a cat, or just needs more information, we are happy to provide you or the adopter with information about welcoming a new cat to the home as well as local pet resources.

You can send other items like carriers, bowls, or anything else you believe would help the new adopter, but it's also okay if they decline items. They might have their own supplies.

If you do not have other animals and are no longer in need of supplies, you can also donate those supplies to Animal Resources and Care or a local rescue group.

Should I Stay in Touch?

The decision to rehome an animal can be a difficult one to make, some owners want to know how their animal is doing in the new home while others may think updates are too painful. It is okay either way! It's also important to know the new adopter may or may not want to send updates, and if they do not want to, it does not mean your animal is not being cared for. Welcoming a new animal home is a big decision, and the adjustment period will vary for every owner and animal. If you would like updates, you should discuss that with the potential adopter beforehand.

Rehoming Resources Aren't Working. Now What?

- ❖ If you haven't explored every rehoming resource, you can post in multiple groups or on multiple websites.
- ❖ If you have not been receiving as much interest as you would like, try updating your pet's bio or swapping out the pictures or adding new ones. A new picture may catch a different person's eye.
- ❖ If you are rehoming multiple animals and have not created individual posts for them, try creating separate posts.

Finding the perfect home for your animal can take time. If time is not a luxury you have with your situation, it is important to plan in the event you cannot find a suitable adopter.

In Alachua County, the only public intake facility is Alachua County Animal Resources and Care. Due to the overwhelming number of animals surrendered daily, **appointments for owner surrenders are often required and may need to be scheduled in advance**. Therefore, it is important to give their staff as much notice as possible. **To inquire about scheduling an appointment for surrendering an animal, please reach out to the Shelter at acas@alachuacounty.us.**

The majority of our local rescue groups pull animals from other shelters to reduce euthanasia rates, so their ability to take an animal directly from the public is often limited. You are welcome to reach out to local rescues, but please be aware they may not be able to take your animal. If you do reach out, we recommend including medical records, pictures of your animal, the reason you need to surrender, how soon you need to surrender and if you are open to fostering, and what resources you have already attempted.

Local Rescue Groups:

- ❖ **The Humane Society of North Central Florida**
www.humanesocietyncfl.org
info@humanesocietyncfl.org
- ❖ **Puppy Hill Farm**
www.puppyhillfarm.com
puppyhill@hotmail.com
- ❖ **Faithful Friends Pet Rescue and Rehoming**
www.faithfulfriendsrescue.org
FaithfulFriendsPRR@gmail.com
- ❖ **Second Chance Rescue and Rehoming**
www.secondchancerescueandrehoming.org
s.chancerescue@gmail.com