



Working Cat Placement

The Circle of Friends Animal Shelter is pleased to announce our Working Cat Placement Program. We are looking for cat lovers who have a barn or other secure outdoor structures and are interested in adopting cats that are unhappy living inside or that are not suitable for life inside of a house. Cat temperament for our Working Cat Program ranges from friendly to feral; however, sociability cannot be guaranteed. This program is designed to find homes for cats that have traditionally been deemed unadoptable.

If you have a safe, warm barn and would like to adopt working cats, please fill out and return the Working Cat Application to the Circle of Friends animal Shelter. Once approved, you will contact and enter our waitlist. We reach out as cats who qualify become available.

Due to the nature of the program, we may not have suitable cats available immediately, but will try to fill out your request as soon as possible. We will maintain a waiting list, as the number of cats available as candidates for the Working Cat program will fluctuate. Filling out an application is the first step to adopting. A COFAS staff member will contact you and ask for photos of the shelter at location to ensure it will provide suitable housing. When we have cats working for you, you will be asked to fill out and sign an adoption contract.

Cats that are placed into our Working Cat Program fall under three main categories:

- Cats whose litter box habits are not consistent enough to be inside only cats and/or who have lived or spent time outside per their previous owner
- Cats who were found as strays and who may be too independent to appreciate living in a house
- Cats who are shy/fearful of people and prefer the company of other cats and animals

We will not place cats who are best suited to be house pets as working cats and we will not place kittens under the age of 4 months as working cats, unless they are semi-feral/feral without hope of becoming socialized (this is waived on a case-by-case basis). A minimum of two cats must be placed at the same location at the same time. We will determine if the cats can peacefully co-exist prior to placement.

What will you provide?

- A warm, secure, dry barn or building in which the cats can live out their lives
- The commitment and ability to keep the cats confined to a crate or exercise pen with a wire top for up to three weeks to acclimate them to their new environment before release
- A clean litter box that is scooped and/or cleaned at least three times a week while confined
- A constant supply of dry food and fresh water. While confined and for a short while after release, you will provide a small amount of canned food daily. What cat can resist that?
- Monitoring and providing for the safety and well-being of the cats as their caretakers
- The willingness to trap and vaccinate the cats once every three years and provide licensed veterinary care in the event of a severe injury or illness
- Spending time daily making verbal contact with the cats so that they become familiar with you

What will COFAS provide?

- All cats will appear to be in good health and have had a brief, general exam by a vet
- All cats will be spayed or neutered prior to placement
- All cats will be vaccinated against Rabies, Chlamydia Psittaci, Rhinotracheitis, Calici, and Panleukopenia
- All cats will be examined and treated for fleas and ear mites prior to placement
- COFAS will provide large crates for confinement with a box placed inside as a “hiding” place for your working cat, to be returned after confinement
- COFAS will have the cats available for pick up and will provide detailed instructions on safely confining, releasing and maintaining the working cats

What is the adoption fee?

The adoption fee for a fully vaccinated, spayed/neutered cat is \$10. This goes towards the care that we have given them. You are welcome to make a larger, tax-deductible donation if you would like.

Why in pairs?

Alley Cats Allies recommend that at least two cats always be moved together. They should be cats who have formed a bond or at least get along with each other. The move will be less traumatic and adjustment to their new home easier if they have the security of one or more trusted companions.

Why do they have to be confined for the first 2-3 weeks?

Cats need to be confined initially in their new home for at least two to three weeks in order to familiarize themselves with their new environment, so that they will remain on the premises. Even though there are instances of cats remaining when they have escaped upon arrival, this is rare and most cats will take off, never to be seen again. Other than being dangerous for the cat, this can be traumatic for the caregiver who has usually put a lot of time, energy, money, and care into the cat.

Some people see confinement as cruel, but a short confinement period is a very necessary part of the relocation project. Not confining the cats and having them run off could mean a far worse fate for the cats. You should know that during the first day or two, the cats may struggle to find a way out. Most cats settle down in the crate after a day or two when they realize that no harm will befall them.

How are the cats confined?

The adopter should be equipped with an extra-large dog crate or with a large exercise pen covered with mesh wire (COFAS may be able to provide these supplies free of charge). We will also provide a small crate where they will be placed inside and to the back of the larger enclosure. A cardboard box can also be used for the cat to hide in, in the larger crate. Items will be returned to COFAS at the end of the three-week confinement period. The cats will be provided with a: litter box, which needs to be scooped up or cleaned at least three times a week; dry food and fresh water always; and a portion of canned food every day. It is recommended that a portion of the cage/crate be covered with a sheet. This will allow the cat to feel more protected and hidden.

In the winter, the small crate should be bedded with thick towels or straw. Additionally, the caregiver may wish to place bales of straw around the enclosure to help maintain the warmth for the confined cats. During winter, the caretaker must be sure to give fresh water throughout the day as the cat's water becomes frozen. There are various devices available to keep water from freezing. We can provide sites where these can be purchased. In summer, proper ventilation is vital to prevent overheating. Cats can and do become overheated. The signs of overheating include lethargy, panting, vomiting, racing pulse, stumbling or staggering.

DO NOT RELEASE IF IT'S RAINING or the POTENTIAL FOR RAIN

Cats find their home by scent and rain will wash it away. Waiting one more day will not hurt. Leave the crates up for an additional five days, so the cats can get back in if they want. After the release, we hope they think of that barn as home and decide to stay.

What if the cats don't like their new home?

They will like the regular food and water you provide (cats cannot live on mousing alone). They may even begin to show affection. The key to success will be your patience while they adapt to the sights, sounds and smells of their new surroundings. Continue to speak softly to them.

Congratulations!

Working cats are family just like indoor cats and deserve the same love and care. We at Circle of Friends Animal Shelter congratulate you on your new family member. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that you can contact us with any questions or concerns about the adaptation process.