

## **ADOPTION FEES - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Every rescuer has heard it. "If you really cared about finding the dogs a good home, you would charge less or give them away." Or, "I could go to a pet store or breeder and purchase a dog for just a little more than the adoption fee."

Although we cannot speak for all rescue groups, this section is an attempt to explain more fully the adoption fees charged by A Passion for Paws which range between \$250-500 and average approximately \$300 per dog.

A Passion for Paws takes in any Akitas/Akita mixes that we have room for in our kennels or in foster homes and provide them with anything that is needed. We are an approved 501(c)(3) charity that receives no outside government funding and is supported by private donations and our own fund raising efforts. 100% of the monies received goes directly towards the care of the dogs in our rescue. The public can easily look up our IRS filings at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

We set our fees on a scale that is much like most rescues. One look at many of our dogs on our website will tell you that we could not possibly recoup all of our veterinary expenses on adoption fees alone.

Although the adoption fee is one way we use to subsidize the cost of caring for our rescued dogs, it also serves one other function. The adoption fee will put off anyone who is not willing to spend money on properly caring for his or her companion dog. If you cannot afford an adoption fee, then you are unlikely to be able to afford care for your companion throughout its lifetime when it falls ill or has an accident. Saving the money it takes to adopt a dog is a lot easier than having \$300.00 cash in hand when something goes wrong and medical attention is necessary IMMEDIATELY.

It is a harsh world out there for dogs, and making sure the dogs go to a good, responsible home that will care for them for the rest of their life is the number one concern of most rescue groups.

### **WHERE DOES MY ADOPTION FEE GO?**

Every penny of an adoption fee goes towards the dogs' expenses. In fact, in almost all cases, the adoption fee falls far short of the actual expenses spent on the dogs so we rely on public donations we receive and the many fund raising efforts of our volunteers.

The adoption fees are used to cover the cost of expenses incurred while the dog is in the possession of APFPRI prior to adoption. The dogs need to be transported from the shelters (gas is quite expensive as we are all aware), be provided with food, shelter, blankets, beds, toys, treats, collars, leashes, tags, flea treatments baths, grooming and other supplies. . Dogs may need veterinary care, surgery to be altered or to correct physical problems, prescription medications, treatment of skin conditions or injuries, etc. We may pull a dog from a shelter that is relatively healthy and we may only have to spend a small amount of money on veterinary care to have that dog ready for adoption. In this case, the minimal profit from that dog's adoption fee is applied to the vetting costs of the many others who are not so fortunate. There are times the adoption fee for a dog that is not healthy starts as low as \$250 when it could easily cost APFPRI as much as \$5,000 or more to vet this dog depending on the medical issues.

## **WHY ARE RESCUE ADOPTION FEES ARE SO HIGH?**

The assumption that rescue is a business, or that rescuer's make a profit on the dogs in their rescue could not be further from the truth.

Take the list of services above to a veterinarian, pet supply store, groomer and boarding facility and ask them what they would charge you to provide everything that rescue provides.

Some items no one can give you a price quote on is the time spent rescuing, transporting, caring for, teaching, feeding, bathing and loving these dogs while they are waiting to be adopted, sometimes co-existing with our own families and pets, just so they can finally find a family to call their own. Those of us who do rescue truly do it for our love of the animals, because there is no money to be made in rescue work. Only a pat on the back every now and then from a fellow rescuer and the joy felt when you see the strides made by a dog who is now happy and healthy and finally joining their forever family.

## **WHY NOT GO TO THE PET STORE OR A BREEDER AND GET A DOG WITH PAPERS FOR THIS PRICE?**

Yes, one could go to a pet store to purchase a puppy or adult dog with papers for a little more [more than likely, a LOT more] than the adoption fee a rescue group may request and be responsible for encouraging the puppy mill industry to flourish. Perhaps there are those who are unaware of the conditions that these animals are born to. Perhaps the thought of that sweet puppy's mother and father living out their entire lives confined to an overcrowded, feces infested cage, covered in mange, and barely able to stand does not trouble some folks.

However, even if the plight of the pup's mother and father didn't concern them, and their motivation was to save a few dollars, not go through the hassle of being screened by rescue to help match them with the pup that best fits their family, or, to show those rescue groups that they could go somewhere else, they would be woefully misinformed. Pet store pups are notorious for costing their owners, not just in the funds to cope with the many health problems, but emotionally, as many owners fight a losing battle with bad genetics, compromised immune systems, and unstable temperaments.

Prospective pet owners could also seek a breeder, pay \$500-\$1,000 or more for a puppy and, IF they are responsible pet owners, they would still need to spend the funds to properly vet their new pet (See pricing for basic vetting above). There are breeders who do breed for the betterment of the breed and they make sure that the pup's family history is known and all health concerns addressed, but you can expect to pay far more for a puppy from this type breeder for the piece of mind of getting a "quality" pup. These reputable breeders also carefully screen prospective families just like rescues do. If a breeder does not screen you, then he/she is not in breeding for the betterment of the breed!

## **IF YOU REALLY CARE SO MUCH ABOUT FINDING THE DOGS A GOOD HOME, WHY DON'T YOU CHARGE LESS OR GIVE THEM AWAY?**

Rescuers care enough to provide for these dogs when their original owners did not, to screen homes, to invest their hearts, time, and personal funds. Rescuers care enough to know that if someone cannot afford an adoption fee, it is likely that person would also be unable to provide proper veterinary care for the animal. Rescuers care enough to have researched and know what happens to those "free to good home" pets - the neglect, abuse and abandonment that these

animals, deemed of no value, will suffer. We care enough that we cannot be governed by expenses.

Rescuers will take in these animals and sometimes foster these animals in their homes, making them part of their family while providing care and training. The animals will be screened for behavioral and health problems and have those issues addressed. Every attempt is made to make the best possible match with prospective adopting families. Rescuers spend hours on the phone and computer each day seeking the perfect home, help for a dog, or transport for a dog needing to be saved. Setting up transports for these animals may take weeks to arrange, and require hundreds of e-mails. Additional time is spent photographing, promoting and otherwise presenting the adoptable dogs to potential adopters. Phone bills are frequently outrageous, as rescuers still find it necessary to call shelters and vets, to interview prospective adopters and check their references.

Rescuers devote a lot of energy trying to make people aware of the pet overpopulation problem and what becomes of dogs from puppy mills and back yard breeders. Unscrupulous breeding victimizes the animals and the poor unsuspecting families that love, and sometimes lose, their beloved pets because of greed.

### **WHY DO RESCUE GROUPS CHARGE MORE THAN ANIMAL SHELTERS?**

Animal Shelters receive city, county, state or federal funding, or any combination of these government entities. Rescue groups do not.

Animal Shelters are temporary safe houses for dogs in immediate need. Most public shelter dogs in Southern California are only held for about 3 days if the shelter is overcrowded. Public shelters do not provide long term housing, extended vet care, or training. Rescue groups do this, and it is pricey. Most of the time rescue groups get their dogs from shelters, as shelters often have relationships with the rescue groups and will call upon them when needed to take in a pup that they cannot afford to pay for the vetting cost and know that it will get adopted to the home that best fits its personality and needs.

The sad truth is since we are living in a material world, pets without value are considered disposable.

This is in no way intended to convince someone to adopt a dog from a rescue rather than a shelter. It is to simply let you know the difference in cost between the two. In our eyes, an adopted dog, from any organization, is a rescued dog.

APFPRI volunteers and foster homes are not paid a salary and usually have full-time jobs, family, commitments and dogs of their own to care for. This kind of sacrifice takes away a substantial amount of time and energy from their personal lives and is the hugest donation on their part.

We at A Passion for Paws hope this helps you understand "why" there are adoption fees and "why" they are what they are; but if you are still upset or confused, then adopting a rescue dog is clearly not for you.