



## Alternatives to Surrendering Your Cat

Surrendering your cat to the Dane County Humane Society is a serious decision and should only be made after exploring other alternatives and with a complete understanding of the process and potential outcomes.

### Solutions to Common Problems that Often Prompt a Decision to Surrender Your Cat

Most responsible pet owners find surrendering their cat to be difficult and emotional, typically a step they would prefer to avoid. There are often simple solutions to problems that lead someone to assume that they must get rid of their cat.

If your cat has **behavioral problems**...

- Have your cat examined by a veterinarian. Behavioral problems are sometimes linked to a treatable medical condition. For example, a cat that has begun urinating outside the litter box may have a urinary tract infection that can be treated.
- Contact a feline behavior specialist to discuss your cat's behavior problems and solutions to the situation. For example, many cats reported to have litter box problems are actually reacting to a box that is simply too dirty or is not set up to their liking. Providing an appropriate, clean litter box situation has solved many such problems.
- Discuss how to solve your cat's behavior issues with the DCHS' feline behavior specialist by calling (608)838-0413 ext. 148, or via e-mail ([felinebehavior@giveshelter.org](mailto:felinebehavior@giveshelter.org)).
- Review our helpful feline behavior articles available on our website at [www.giveshelter.org](http://www.giveshelter.org).
- Contact Cats International, a Wisconsin-based non-profit organization, for behavioral advice at (262)375-8852, or visit their website at [www.catsinternational.org](http://www.catsinternational.org) for articles on how to solve feline behavior issues.

If you or someone in your family has **allergies**...

- Create an "allergy-free" zone in the home, like the bedroom, where the cat is not allowed.
- Use high-efficiency HEPA air cleaners throughout your home to clean the air of allergen particles.
- Try to remove or reduce the number of dust and allergen-catching items in your home, such as carpeting, rugs, cloth curtains and blinds, etc.
- Clean your home frequently and thoroughly to remove dust and dander. Wash cloth items that collect dander.
- Bathe your cat on a weekly basis. (Yes, with patience and positive reinforcement they can get accustomed to this!) Discuss bathing with your veterinarian to best determine which shampoos, if any, to use.
- Ask your doctor to test you for allergies to determine exactly what you are allergic to, because many people are allergic to more than just cats. Reducing the amount of the other allergens in your home will help to reduce your overall allergic reaction.
- Speak with your doctor about which one of many "anti-allergy" drugs might be right for you. Often, it only takes one pill a day to significantly reduce your allergic reaction, making it possible for you to keep your cat.

If you are **moving and/or landlord policy does not allow pets**...

- It is possible, with planning and perhaps a few compromises, to find pet-friendly housing almost anywhere.
- Get a copy of the Humane Society's guide to pet-friendly housing in the Dane County area.
- Visit [www.RentWithPets.org](http://www.RentWithPets.org), which is a great resource that thoroughly outlines how to find a pet-friendly home.

## Steps to Take if You Must Surrender Your Cat

There are a number of steps that you should actively explore before contacting the Dane County Humane Society to surrender your cat.

The first step is to ***find a new home for the cat yourself***:

- Talk to friends, family members, neighbors, local veterinarians, and others you trust to try and find someone willing to adopt your cat. As a last resort, advertise in the newspaper.
- Utilize the Dane County Humane Society's Rehoming website, which allows you to post a picture and information about your cat for potential adopters to view. You can find a link to the Rehoming website from our website at [www.giveshelter.org](http://www.giveshelter.org).
- Never abandon your cat in a rural area or on a farm. Just because some cats live as farm pets does not mean that your cat will be able to survive. Your cat is not able to care for itself on its own; it is your responsibility to provide for the cat.
- Screen potential adopters carefully. Do not be afraid to deny a potential adopter if you just do not "feel right" about them. Trust your instincts. Your cat's future happiness depends on it.
- Always ask for an adoption fee from the adopter. Never give your cat away as "free to a good home" because this can attract the wrong kind of adopter.

When you've found a new home for your cat...

- Personally visit the prospective new home yourself to ensure that it is a safe and healthy environment suitable for your cat.
- Have your cat spayed/neutered before placing them with their new family to help reduce pet overpopulation.
- Require adopters to provide a valid form of ID, like a driver's license, and make a written record of their license number. Also require them to sign an adoption contract that requires them to contact you to return your cat if for some reason they can no longer keep it.

After trying to rehome your cat yourself, the next step is to ***contact other cat adoption or rescue organizations***...

- Contact the following rescues in the area to see if they will accept your cat:
  - \* Angel's Wish (608-848-4174)
  - \* Shelter From the Storm (608-213-8864)
  - \* Specialty Purebred Cat Rescue (262-654-0764)
  - \* Touched by a Paw, Inc. (262-473-4769)
- You also can search the phone book or Internet for cat rescue homes and organizations, but screen every organization carefully to ensure that it is a legitimate rescue with sincere intentions.

As a final step, ***contact the Dane County Humane Society***...

- After you have gone through all of the above steps and have not been able to find a solution, contact the Dane County Humane Society to discuss surrendering your cat. Remember to plan ahead. The next available surrender appointment is typically 2 to 4 weeks away.
- It is important that you understand the implications of surrendering your cat to the DCHS. The shelter exists as a resource to people who have explored *all* other alternatives. However, we take in between 20 and 30 cats each day, oftentimes more. Our space and resources are limited. As a result, we can not guarantee that we will be able to place your cat up for adoption. There is a possibility that your cat may have to be euthanized due to problems that make it unadoptable. These can include, but are not limited to, medical problems (such as FIV or FELV positive) or behavioral issues (for example, litter box problems or aggression). This is why we encourage you to sincerely and thoroughly try to find an alternative to surrendering your cat.

**Dane County Humane Society, 5132 Voges Road, Madison, WI, 53718**  
**(608)838-0413**                      **[www.giveshelter.org](http://www.giveshelter.org)**