



Four Paws Rescue

A NON-PROFIT ANIMAL SHELTER

P.O. Box 422 • Millville, Utah 84326 • (435) 752-3534 • www.4paws.petfinder.org

LAYTON ADOPTION ASSISTING OVERVIEW

WHAT: PetsMart adoption Saturdays are our most successful way of adopting pets. Since our facility is not equipped to welcome the public, we rely heavily on PetsMart adoption events, the internet and word of mouth to get our pets out there. Far more dogs are placed at these adoption events than through any other method. Therefore, nearly every Saturday, Four Paws volunteers head down to Layton. We feature anywhere from 6-12+ dogs depending on the space in the vehicles heading to Layton.

Your role as an adoption assistant is to talk to potential adopters during an in-formal prescreening process and to help out during the adoption event. There is no application at the PetsMart event, so it is a conversational process. This document provides the various questions we ask to get a feel for the potential adopter, and then relay your information to the adoption leader who will finalize any approved adopters. **All adoptions must be approved by an adoption leader.**

WHO: This is for anyone who has a vehicle (SUV, Jeep, truck with shell, van, etc.) that could transport dogs, dogs in crates, or dogs and collapsed crates. You should be able to lift 30-40 pound crates and stand on your feet most of the time. You may be walking dogs who aren't very good on leash and can be strong. (If you are not transporting, don't worry about the vehicle part. The rest is applicable.)

WHERE: PetsMart off of I-15 at exit 331 (heading south) in Layton. Turn right off of exit ramp, go through two stop lights and PetsMart is on the left near Wal-Mart. Address is 859 W Hill Field Rd, Layton, UT 84041.

WHAT YOU SHOULD WEAR:

- Shoes: closed toe, good traction, comfortable
- Pants: pants or jeans that can (and will) get dirty
- A Four Paws t-shirt (email scfourpaws@hotmail.com to check if we have some for purchase)

WHAT YOU MAY WANT TO BRING:

- Leather work gloves are handy when carrying crates
- A lunch or snack (not always time to go to lunch)
- A drink for yourself
- A camp chair if you'd like

HOW: Here is an ESTIMATED schedule for a Saturday adoption day in Layton if you start in Logan. For volunteers starting in Layton (non-transporters), the event runs typically from 11:00am to 5:00pm.

9:00-9:30am	Pick dogs up in your vehicle (site various from shelter, to director's home, to local pound) – to be determined Friday evening
10:00am	Head to Layton, 50-60 min drive
11:00am-11:30am	Arrive at Layton, walk dogs, set up crates in store, adoption table. This is when the event starts, so any local volunteers may show up.
4:00-5:00pm	Begin walking dogs for last potty, break down crates, load up vehicles, head for Logan.
6:00pm	Arrive in Logan

I. QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL ADOPTERS

We feel that Four Paws dogs are exceptional. They have been through adversity which led them to us. Therefore, we look for the best possible homes for our dogs. Below are questions you should be asking the minute someone shows an interest in the dog, not after they have bonded and tell you they are ready to adopt. It's easier to interrupt a possible bad adoption than turn someone down after they have their hopes up!

- **Are you looking for a dog today?** If they reply they are just "looking" that's fine. Lots of people come to adoptions to see the dogs. Don't spend lots of time and energy (pulling dogs in and out of cages) for someone that is just browsing. It takes up your valuable time and takes the dog away from people that are really looking to adopt. Be cordial and tell them about us, and give them a business card if you think they may be looking for a dog in the future.
- **How long have you been thinking about getting a dog?** If they say, "A while..." Then you can carry the informal interview to the next step. This is an easy open-ended way to engage in conversation. They will probably start to talk about other dogs they have met, any current pets they have, or tell you about their previous dog.
- **Are you looking for an indoor dog or outdoor dog?** We want ALL of our dogs to be indoor dogs. If you phrase the question "indoor or outdoor," it makes potential adopters more apt to tell the truth. If you simply tell them that we only adopt dogs that will be allowed indoors, people will lie through their teeth and tell you the dog will be indoors! If the response is an "outdoor dog," refer that person to Ogden City Animal Shelter, Davis County Animal Shelter, Salt Lake County Animal Services or Cache Meadows Vet Clinic which is Logan's City Pound. Their facilities don't have as much preference to indoor homes as rescues do. If their dogs don't get adopted, they run the risk of being euthanized. Sometimes they reply "both" or "indoor and outdoor" and that is unclear and means many different things to many people. If they say this you can further ask, "Where will the dog be kept during the day while at you're at work? How about when your family is home? Where will the dog sleep at night?" Then you can get an idea of how much time the dog will get with family. In a securely fenced yard during work/school hours is acceptable for some dogs.
- **Have you ever had a dog before?** Hopefully they have owned a dog before and it lived to the ripe old age of 15! What we are really trying to see is if they have been a responsible pet owner in the past. No experience is probably better than a bad experience. Red flags are that they've had a dog run away, been hit by a car, or that they've had many dogs and have given them away for various reasons.
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- **Do you have a fenced yard? If their answer is "yes," then find out what kind of fence and how much of their yard is fenced.** Almost all of our dogs require a fenced in yard. There are a few exceptions to the rule (darn fence climbers!). If they don't have a fence, but have an intelligent way to keep a dog on their property and safe from streets (and answer all the other questions adequately), then we need to refer that person to Lisa or the adoption leader. Lisa gets the final word! Make sure the fence is secure, not with gaping holes. Two foot flower bed fencing is not adequate! Make sure their "fence" isn't just one side of the property that their neighbor fenced. We want a fully enclosed area.
- **If they don't have a fenced yard...** Refer the person to an adoption leader. There are a few dogs that don't need fences either because this dog can climb any fence no matter what!
- **If they rent...** With apartments there is rarely a fenced yard, so we don't adopt too many apartment renters. If they rent a house or condo that has a fenced yard, they will have to provide their landlord's name and number. Too often people don't check their contract regarding pets and the dog is returned.

- **Other things to ask:** How do they feel about crate training? (Crating is not cruel, but used as a beneficial training tool!) How do they plan to exercise their pet? How do they plan to obedience- and house-train their pet? Do they see this pet with them through all of life's changes (marriage, moving, and babies)?

2. RED FLAGS TO LOOK FOR DURING ADOPTION PRE-SCREENING:

- **We will not adopt dogs as a gift for someone else.** Pets should never be given as gifts. Getting a pet is a 10-15 year commitment and should only be made by the person who wants the pet. If the recipient is fully participating while the other person is paying the fee that is OK, but it is good to know if they understand the costs of having an animal too.
- **We will not adopt to anyone who where the child is to be the main care taker.** A child cannot be responsible for caring for a pet. The entire family must want a pet, and the parents must realize they ultimately will be the caretakers. I ask the parent(s) if they indeed want a new pet too.
- **We will not adopt dogs who will have to live outdoors 24/7.** Dogs are social pack creatures. They are not meant to be alone for long periods of time out in the elements. It's not about how great their dog house will be, it's about becoming an indoor member of the family.
- **We will not adopt to anyone who can't pay the adoption fee in full.** If they cannot afford the \$125+ fee, then how can they afford any future medical costs? Pets can cost thousands of dollars a year.
- **We will not adopt to anyone who intends to breed the dog.** First of all, the adult dogs are already fixed so they cannot be bred. Sometimes we adopt puppies that are too young to be spayed/neutered (though the adoption fee covers this and is arranged for later), but no one will get a puppy from us if then intend to use it for breeding. At that point you educate the person about the millions of dogs that are killed every year simply because there are too many pets and not enough homes.
- **Not all family members are present.** This mainly is for the adults of the household since they will be the main caretakers of the pet. At times, one spouse has come home with their newly adopted pet only to call us the next day to say the other spouse doesn't like or want a dog to begin with! To avoid these instances, we want all family members present.

3. ADOPTION OVERVIEW

Adoption Fee: Our adoption fees range from \$125-\$200. Most adult dogs are \$125; all puppies and most purebreds are \$150; and a small dog is \$200.

Our adoption fee includes:

- Spay or neuter surgery
- Rabies vaccination and rabies certificate (to register the dog with the city)
- Parvo/distemper vaccinations (and boosters for any puppies – we'll do the boosters)
- Four Paws ID tag
- Dog training DVD (if needed)
- Dog food samples (if available)
- Collar (unless they want to purchase a new collar)

At the time of the adoption, the adopter will sign a PetsMart contract and a Four Paws contract. They will also pay the adoption fee at this time (cash). (Lots of people have bounced checks.) Our most important point is that they must return the dog to us if they can no longer keep the dog at any point. Too often people just take them to the pound. Four Paws is committed to the dog for the rest of its life.

Many vets will not spay/neuter a puppy less than 20 weeks. If the puppy is adopted at an age too young to fix, surgery arrangements will be made. We use Salt Lake Spay/Neuter Clinic in Murray for any Wasatch Front adoptions; and various vets in Cache Valley for Cache Valley adoptions. Rabies shots are given at the time of the spay/neuter.

Things we do not include in our adoption fee:

- microchipping (refer them to the BIG FIX - a mobile clinic which travels throughout Utah - www.utahpets.org/bixfix.html).
- heartworm testing or heartworm preventatives
- regular vet checkups

Because these dogs are of unknown histories we cannot guarantee their future health. However they are treated if sick or injured while in our care. We lack the funds/donations to provide extra benefits like the ones mentioned above.

Sometimes we get a pair of dogs, or a cat/dog duo, who would be best if kept together. There is a discount in the adoption fee since there are two of them.

Adoption Fee Refund: The adopter has 2 weeks from the date of adoption to return the dog and get their adoption fee refunded. This is handy for people who have another pet in the home or aren't sure if the dog is a perfect match for them but want to try it out. Remember to explain that after 2 weeks they cannot get a refund. Often people return a dog 6+ months later and still want a refund!

Remember: Each approved potential adopter will have to be run by an adoption leader before the adoption is finalized.

These questions are vital to find out if a person is qualified to adopt a Four Paws dog. As an adoption assistant you will not be required to make any final decisions; your role is to assist the adoption leader by doing an informal pre-screening. Sometimes people give a different story to another volunteer, and then you have a hunch that they are not telling the truth. It may sound strict, but most rescues have the same requirements all over the country. Again, and I can't say this enough, it's much easier to interrupt a possible bad adoption than to get this person's hopes up if they aren't qualified. Remember, you'll probably never see this person again. Just think how bad you would feel if this dog went home and was locked up in a dog kennel 24/7-- or worse. We've been doing this a long time and know who will have the most success in adopting dogs. After all, the person doesn't want just any dog – they want the right dog! Their success is our success!