

# Feelings Toward PET ADOPTION

Kate Coates & Erica McCoy

*Shelter from the Storm  
Animal Rescue, Inc.* is an  
all breed cat and dog  
rescue based in  
Madison, Wisconsin.





Feelings Toward  
Pet Adoption

Our Goal

## The goal for our survey is to assist *Shelter from the Storm Animal Rescue, Inc.* in:

- 1) Better preparing animals for adoption success by knowing what people are looking for when they adopt a pet (training, health, age, grooming appearances, etc)
- 2) Providing direction to the shelter staff and volunteers, giving them a better understanding of where to focus their attention when preparing animals for adoption or judging their readiness for adoption.
- 3) Providing information on areas where the staff and volunteers may need to do more research/work to promote the value of certain pet traits and characteristics (ex: an elderly pet or pet that needs more training).



Feelings Toward  
Pet Adoption

# The Survey

Have you personally adopted a shelter (rescue) pet and/or are you considering adoption in the future?

I have adopted and plan to adopt again.

I have not adopted but plan to adopt.

I have adopted but don't plan to adopt again.

I have not adopted and do not plan to adopt.

- In the past, I have adopted a [pet type].
- My most recent pet adoption took place [date range].
- I intend to adopt a [pet type].
- I plan to adopt another pet within [date range].

- I intend to adopt a [pet type].
- I plan to adopt another pet within [date range].

- In the past, I have adopted a [pet type].
- My most recent pet adoption took place [date range].
- *I do not plan to adopt again because [reason].*
- If you plan to get your next pet elsewhere...[open response].

I prefer to get my pets from somewhere other than a shelter (rescue).

Yes

Where do you prefer to get your pets from? [open response]

No

When making the choice to adopt, I really care about an animal's...

When choosing which shelter (rescue) to adopt from, I really care about...

What are your thoughts regarding the characteristics of pets found in shelters (rescues)? [open response]

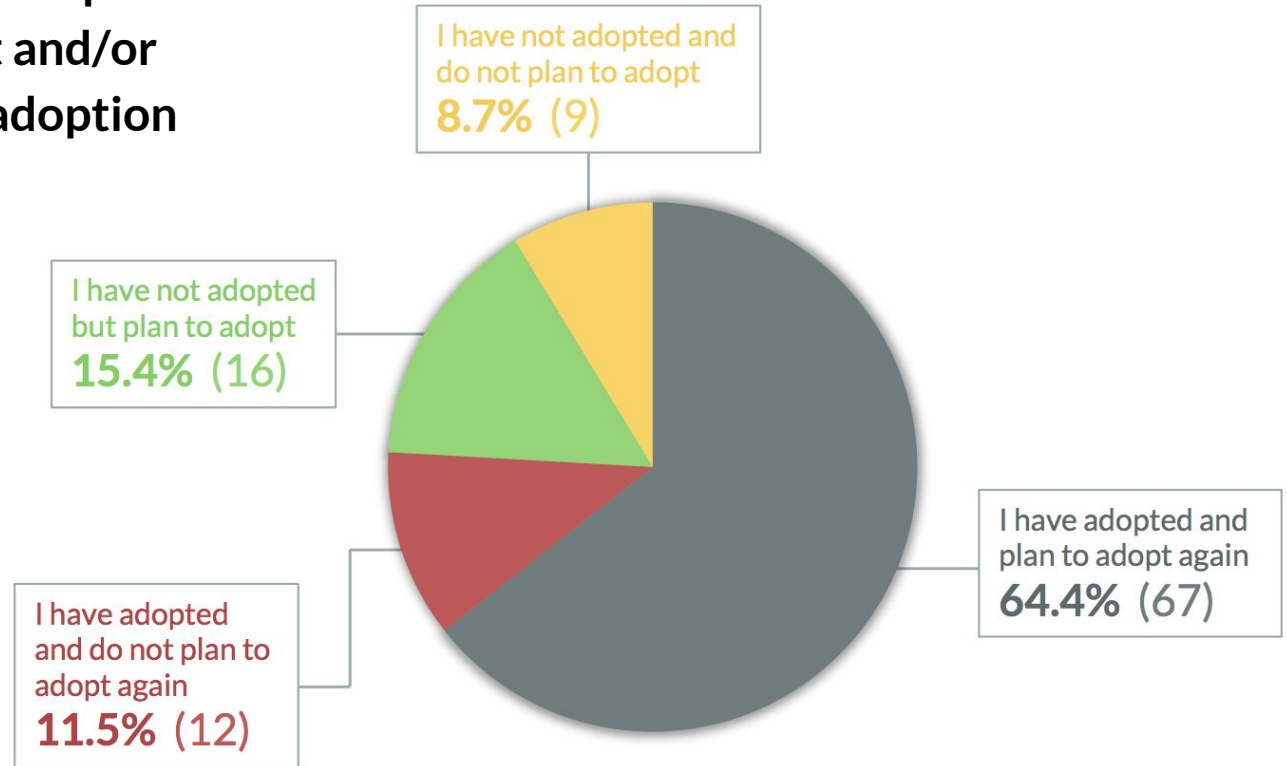
Submit



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Results & Findings

**Have you personally adopted a shelter (rescue) pet and/or are you considering adoption in the future?**



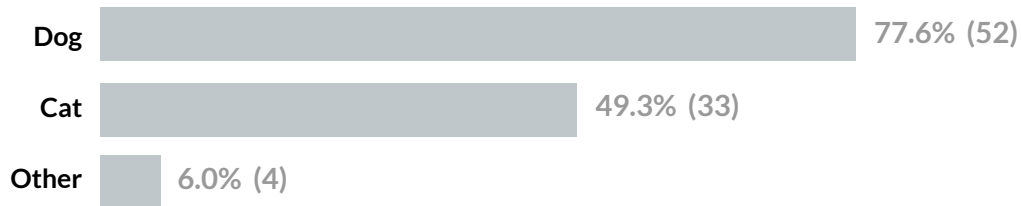
Note: 75.9% have adopted in the past



I have adopted and plan to adopt again

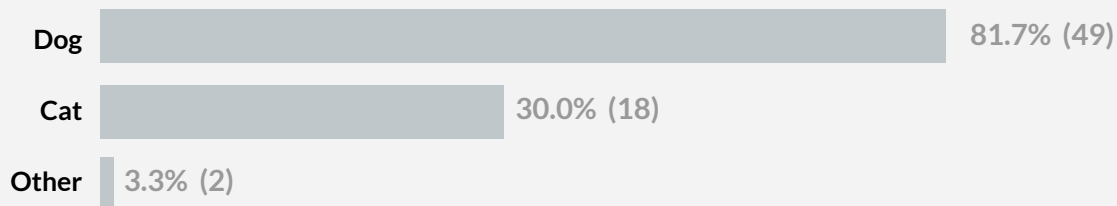
**64.4% (67)**

## In the past, I have adopted a:



0-6 months ago	11	16.4%
6-12 months ago	10	14.9%
1-3 years ago	22	32.8%
3+ years ago	24	35.8%

## I intend to adopt a:



In 0-6 months	8	12.3%
In 6-12 months	5	7.7%
In 1-3 years	16	24.6%
In 3+ years	36	55.4%



I have not adopted but plan to adopt

15.4% (16)

## I intend to adopt a:



In 0-6 months	0	0%
In 6-12 months	0	0%
In 1-3 years	8	50.0%
In 3+ years	8	50.0%

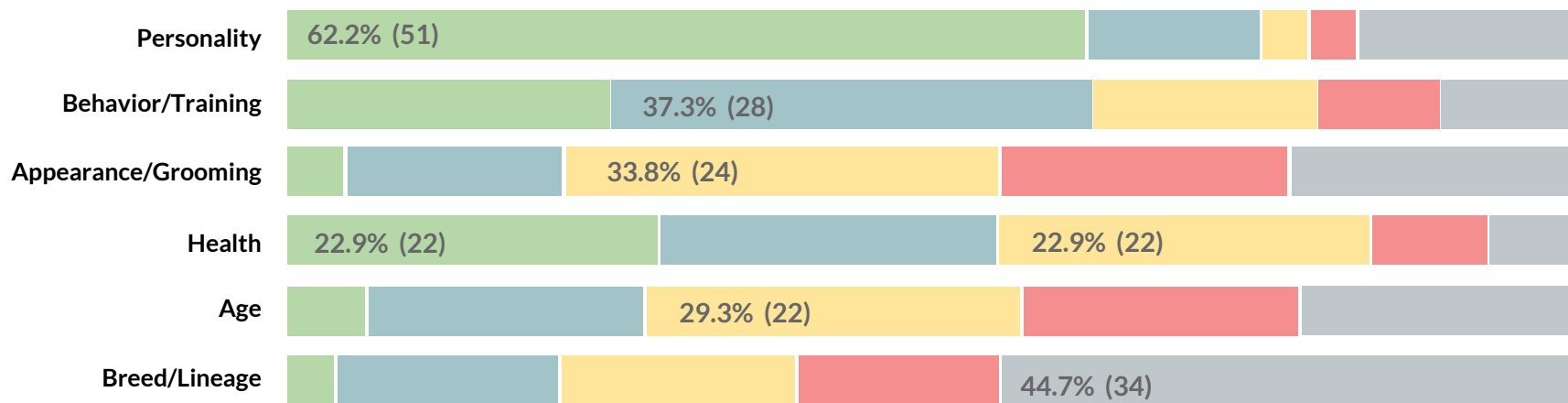


I have adopted and plan to adopt again  
**64.4% (67)**



I have not adopted but plan to adopt  
**15.4% (16)**

## When making the choice to adopt, I really care about an animal's:



Very Important

Important

Moderately Important

Minimally Important

Not Important at All

## Other traits I find important include: [open response]

### Social Skills

#### Top 4 Responses

- Compatibility with existing pets (8)
- Ability to get along with children (4)
- Reaction to and behavior toward strangers (4)
- Good fit for our family (1)

### Animal Characteristics

#### Top 4 Responses

- Size (5)
- Previous history and why pet was surrendered (2)
- Gender (1)
- Less adoptable colors, such as black (1)

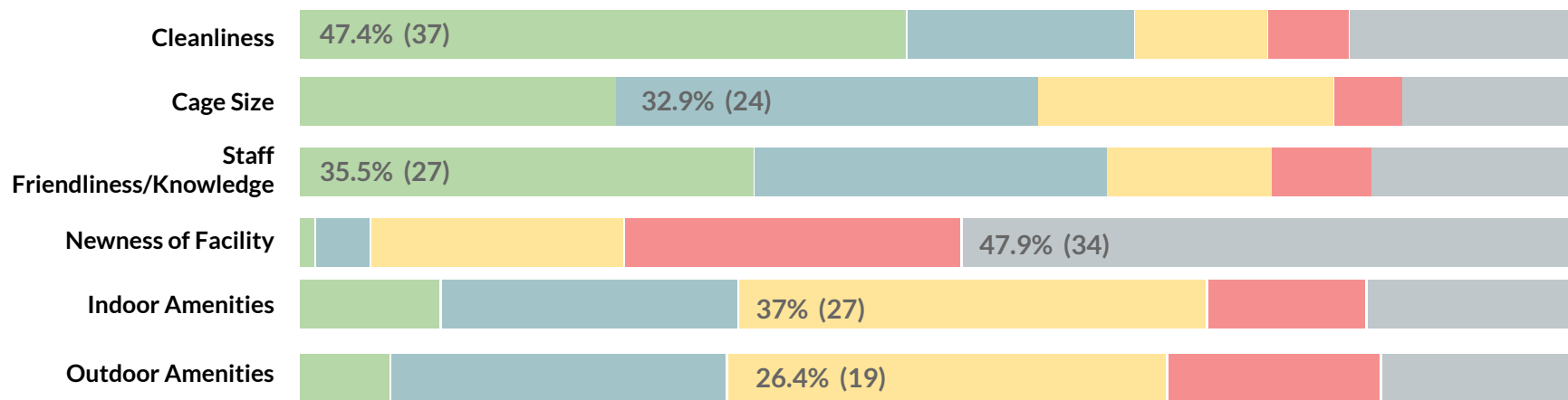


I have adopted and plan to adopt again  
**64.4% (67)**



I have not adopted but plan to adopt  
**15.4% (16)**

## When choosing which shelter to adopt from, I really care about:



Very Important

Important

Moderately Important

Minimally Important

Not Important at All

## Other things I care about when choosing a shelter include: [open response]

### Facility Characteristics

#### Top 6 Responses

- No kill policy (8)
- Overall care towards animals (4)
- Veterinary specific care (3)
- Reputation (2)
- Biosecurity and disease prevention efforts (2)
- Fundraising activities (1)

### Rehabilitation & Adoption Processes

#### Top 6 Responses

- Adoption process (2)
- Website presence regarding available pets (2)
- Adoption rates and successes (2)
- Behavior modification and training efforts (2)
- Quality of environmental enrichment (1)
- Surrender circumstances / previous records (1)



I have adopted and do not plan to adopt again

**11.5% (12)**

## In the past, I have adopted a:



0-6 months ago	3	25%
6-12 months ago	1	8.3%
1-3 years ago	2	16.7%
3+ years ago	6	50.0%

## I do not plan to adopt again because:



**“Planning to find a breeder of the particular breed I’m interested in and get that breed by 10-12 weeks old so I can train it the way I want it to be trained.”**

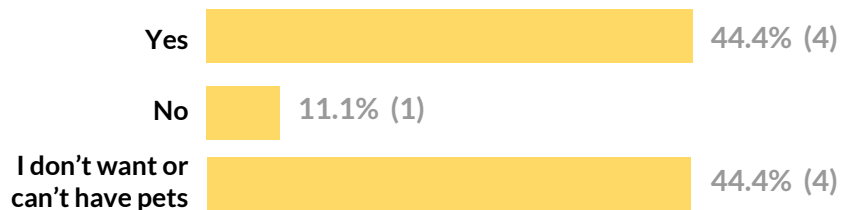
*- Anonymous Survey Participant*



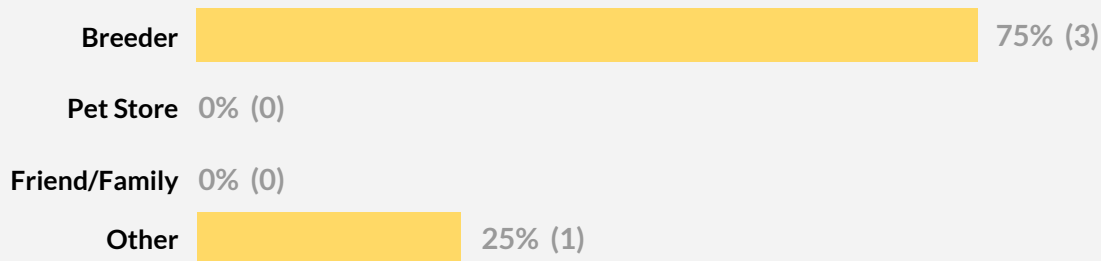
I have not adopted and do not plan to adopt again

8.7% (9)

## I prefer to get my pets from somewhere other than a shelter (rescue).



## If yes, where do you prefer to get your pets from?



"Private breeders of course. It's important to me that **they care about what they're doing** as a breeder and that placing/finding these pets homes is very important to them."

- Anonymous Survey Participant

# What are your thoughts regarding the characteristics of pets found in shelters (rescues)? [open response]

## Animal Characteristics

### Top 10 Responses

- Friendly (12)
- Loving (12)
- Varying Qualities (12)
- Badly Behaved (10)
- Require learning curve (7)
- Healthy (6)
- Unhealthy (6)
- Sweet (6)
- Abused (5)
- Old (4)

## Facility Characteristics


### Top 8 Responses

- Sad (5)
- Mostly Older Dogs (4)
- Loud (2)
- Youngest adopted 1st (2)
- Unhelpful Staff (2)
- Don't effectively weed out unsuitable animals (2)
- Don't know their animals well-enough (2)
- Deception on health/behavior issues (2)

## Areas of Improvement


### Top 4 Responses

- Need availability of staff with animal knowledge (6)
- Need to provide animal's backstory (5)
- Need to provide better personality evaluations (4)
- Need to change perception that something is wrong with the animals (3)




**“It is important to evaluate the new pet's  
characteristics in a controlled  
slow-introduction environment. Too many  
people just open the door & hope for the best.”**

*Anonymous Survey Participant*



**“A potential adopter needs to ask questions  
and meet the animal(s) but will likely be able to  
find a great pet!”**

*Anonymous Survey Participant*



**“Sometimes it's hard to understand a pet's personality at a shelter, so having good information from fosters and employees is really helpful to make sure the pet will fit with the owners.”**

*Anonymous Survey Participant*



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Recommendations

## Based on survey feedback, our recommendations to *Shelter from the Storm Animal Rescue, Inc.* include:

- 1) Develop a better system for properly showcasing the personalities of the animals within the confines of SFTS. Being able to temporarily separate the animal from the others in a less distracting environment could better indicate the true personality of the potential adoption candidate.
- 2) Keep employees knowledgeable of the personalities of the animals they support and have them available to answer questions of prospective adopters. Accuracy specific knowledge leads to long-term trust in the institution and increased chance of multiple adoptions by the same adopter.
- 3) Encourage volunteers to log their interactions with the animals they spend time with. The length of time spent with the animal is not necessarily as important as the quality of time spent. Have volunteers track progress and details regarding the animal's behavior and personality. These are key factors that provide potential adopters with the information they most want to know.

## Our recommendations, continued:

- 4) Strive to make the adoption process easy. While it is always important that shelter animals end up in homes ready to take on the responsibility of pet ownership, potential adopters should not be turned off by lengthy processes and high costs. It is also important to be transparent about animals that already have multiple applications or pending adoptions.
- 5) Increase awareness that puts focus on SFTS' increased involvement and investment in the animals under its care. Potential adopters tend to be genuinely concerned with the interaction and enrichment opportunities provided to shelter animals and are more likely to adopt from places with higher staff to animal engagement.
- 6) Hold fundraising opportunities that engage the community. This is another area that potential adopters find favorable. Not only does this open doors to further adoptions, donations, and potential volunteers, but it allows SFTS to work on breaking common misconceptions about shelters and shelter animals while showcasing the positive work they do with the animals under their care.

Questions?

# Appendix

## Tallied responses from open response question on slide 14

Animal Characteristics		Facility Characteristics		Improvements:	
Friendly	IIIIIIIIII (12)	Sad	IIII (5)	Need availability of staff with animal knowledge	IIIIII (6)
Loving	IIIIIIIIII (12)	Mostly older dogs	IIII (4)	Need to provide animal's backstory	IIIIII (5)
Varying Qualities	IIIIIIIIII (12)	Youngest adopted first	II (2)	Need to provide better personality evaluations	IIII (4)
Badly Behaved	IIIIIIII (10)	Don't weed out unsuitable animals	II (2)	Need to change perception that something is wrong with the animals	IIII (3)
Require learning curve	IIIIII (7)	Loud	II (2)	Need better temperament testing	I (1)
Sweet	IIIIII (6)	Don't know their animals well enough	II (2)	Need staff screenings	I (1)
Healthy	IIIIII (6)	Deception on health/behavior issues	II (2)		
Unhealthy	IIIIII (6)	They weed out aggressive/sick animals	I (1)		
Abused	IIIII (5)	Same quality as rescue	I (1)		
Old	IIII (4)	Smelly	I (1)		
Loyal	IIII (3)	Required age limit for animal adoptees	I (1)		
Aggressive	IIII (3)	Centers of rehabilitation	I (1)		
Appreciative	IIII (3)	Limitless animal options	I (1)		
Well Behaved	IIII (3)	Understaffed	I (1)		
Depressed	IIII (3)	Overcrowded	I (1)		
Unpredictable	IIII (3)	Foster care more reliably good	I (1)		
Untrusting	II (2)				
Skittish	II (2)				
Frightened	II (2)				
Timid	II (2)				
Lonely	II (2)				
Confused	II (2)				
Anxious	II (2)				
Sad	II (2)				
Quiet	I (1)				
Shy	I (1)				
Smart	I (1)				
Desperate	I (1)				
Hopeful	I (1)				
Hopeless	I (1)				
Unconditional	I (1)				
Grateful	I (1)				
Mutts	I (1)				
Unfriendly	I (1)				
Majority Older	I (1)				
Playful	I (1)				
Trusting	I (1)				