



PetSmart Charities® Rescue Waggin'® Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the PetSmart Charities® Rescue Waggin'® program?

PetSmart Charities® Rescue Waggin'® program is a national transport program that transfers homeless dogs and puppies from communities with high pet populations and euthanasia and very few potential adopters to animal shelters elsewhere in the country where there are exceptional adoption programs in place and more adoption space for dogs and puppies in need of new homes.

What is the mission of the program?

The mission of the PetSmart Charities® Rescue Waggin'® program is to bring together animal shelters from across the nation to save more lives and find homes for more pets, wherever those homes may be.

How does a shelter become a destination shelter in the program?

Destination shelters are selected because they have achieved very high standards of animal care in their shelters as well as high sterilization rates of pets in their communities. As a result, there are fewer homeless dogs available.

Where do the dogs coming to the destination shelters originate from?

The animal shelters that are transporting animals to other communities have been identified as high euthanasia shelters (in some cases as much as 50% euthanasia rates). These shelters need programs that can help them save more lives.

Why are destination shelters able to accept dogs and puppies from other animal shelters?

These shelters often have more space for adoptions and have implemented progressive adoption programs through the years that have enabled them to find homes for pets more quickly. Also, these communities are not producing as many unwanted dogs thanks to high sterilization rates. Fewer homeless pets and higher than normal adoption rates allows them to continue saving lives by helping other shelters with their homeless dogs and puppies.

How many animal shelters are in this life-saving network?

Currently, the PetSmart Charities Rescue Waggin' program visits about 50 shelters across the nation in any given month to pick up dogs and transport them to destination shelters that have regular adoption space available.

Are pets ever displaced at the destination shelter community to make room for pets from other shelters?

No, a destination shelter's priorities are always for the pets in their community, which means no adoptable dogs in the destination shelter are ever displaced to make room for transported dogs. In fact, these destination shelters actually make the final decision as to how many dogs and puppies they can accept into their shelter at any given time from the Rescue Waggin' program. Thanks to their exceptional adoption programs and high adoption rates, these shelters are able to open their doors and save even more lives as a partner in the Rescue Waggin' program.

Aren't there pets in my community that need to be saved instead?

Destination shelters are always in contact with local animal control and rescue groups throughout their community and state to ensure that any adoptable pets in need of homes have opportunities to be saved as well.

How does the Rescue Waggin' program work?

The Rescue Waggin' program saves lives by transporting homeless dogs from shelters where there is little chance of adoption to other shelters where adoption opportunities are more available. The puppies and dogs arriving on the Rescue Waggin' vehicle receive behavior evaluations and are examined by veterinarians prior to transport to ensure they are healthy and ready for the trip. Once on-board the Rescue Waggin'® vehicle, dogs and puppies receive an air-conditioned custom-ride, complete with piped-in lullabies to help them sleep during the trip – and video monitors at the front of the vehicles enable transport coordinators to monitor them during the trip. When they arrive at their destination shelter, they receive 12-24 hours of down time before getting another medical check-up, their spay/neuter surgery, and placement on the adoption floor. According to most Rescue Waggin' destination shelters, dogs are generally adopted within a week of arriving at their new shelter.

How do you ensure the safe transport of dogs and puppies?

Drawing upon the expertise of animal welfare professionals and veterinarians who laud the program as the gold standard for pet transport, PetSmart Charities Rescue Waggin' program relies on strict standards of care for the transport of dogs and puppies, from policies and protocols on their selection to the safe and humane transport of every dog. Veterinary technicians and shelter professionals are on-board each vehicle, monitoring the entire trip to ensure the safe transport of all dogs and puppies.

How many lives have been saved so far?

Since 2004, more than 45,000 dogs have been saved through the Rescue Waggin' program – and more are riding every month!

How does this program help source shelters reach their goals of no more homeless pets?

The Rescue Waggin' program is actually a three-part program designed to help source shelters effectively manage their pet population on their own without having to transport dogs elsewhere to save lives. As a partner in the Rescue Waggin' program, they are eligible to send homeless dogs on the transport every month; receive mentoring to help improve operational standards, increase adoptions, and enhance spay/neuter services; and receive grant funding to improve their facilities or expand programs that save lives. To date, PetSmart Charities has granted more than \$1.75 million to Rescue Waggin' shelter partners to reduce disease, upgrade cat rooms, update and remodel kennels, and many other life-saving projects.

Have any shelters in the program left because they reached their goal of managing their own pet population to eliminate euthanasia?

Yes. Since the Rescue Waggin' program began in 2004, several shelters in the program have graduated from the program and are now able to manage their own populations in a more sustainable way. One shelter even went from being a source shelter to becoming a destination shelter where they can now help other shelters who are on their way to reaching this goal.

Why aren't more shelters involved in this Rescue Waggin program?

The number of dogs that can be transported is limited by the adoption space available at the destination shelters. Shelters receiving dogs work hard to maintain their standards of excellence while keeping their doors open to homeless dogs, no matter where those dogs come from. Since the Rescue Waggin' program was launched in 2004, the program has expanded to include shelters in the Midwest, East Coast, Great Plains and South Central States.

For more information on the Rescue Waggin' program, visit <http://www.petsmartcharities.org/rescue-waggin/>.

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About PetSmart Charities®

Established in 1994, PetSmart Charities, Inc. is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that creates and supports programs that save the lives of homeless pets, raise awareness of companion animal welfare issues, and promote healthy relationships between people and pets. The largest funder of animal welfare efforts in North America, PetSmart Charities® has provided more than \$134 million in grants and programs benefiting animal welfare organizations and has helped save the lives of more than 4.5 million pets through its in-store adoption program. To learn more about how PetSmart Charities is working toward its vision of a lifelong, loving home for every pet, visit petsmartcharities.org or call 1-800-423-PETS (7387).