



◀ Dorothy Wells of Tennessee adopted three fully vetted, healthy and well-behaved dogs from the same rescue for \$100 each.



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ing decision to euthanize for kennel capacity,” says Lisa Norwood with ACS.

ACS and other shelters host adoption events offering discounted fees or none at all. “We are huge fans of fee-free adoptions — especially with shelters so overwhelmed,” Lindsay says. “It frees up people’s finances to afford some of the medical care and the food that comes with having an animal.”

Marlisa Beatty adopted her dog, Gunner, from a shelter for free. The Pennsylvania woman had just lost three dogs to different medical conditions and spent a hefty sum on their veterinary bills. “Gunner came neutered, vaccinated and microchipped,” Marlisa says. “He is wonderful. He’s amazing. The best dog of them all.”

Some in the rescue community worry that free adoptions may attract

questionable adopters, but national animal welfare experts disagree. “There is this kind of intuitive theory that the more people pay, the more responsible they are,” Marc says. “Just because people have more expendable cash doesn’t mean they’re better pet owners. There is no statistical evidence of that.”

rescue adoptions

Dogster found that rescues’ adoption fees ranged from about \$100 to \$1,000. Many groups say the money helps them stay afloat financially but rarely covers all the costs of saving dogs; they rely on donations and grants to keep operating.

Some rescues spend thousands of dollars transporting dogs out of shelters in different parts of the country — and even from other countries — to save them from being killed.

Survivor Tails Rescue, located in Massachusetts, charges a \$500 adoption fee. Those fees helped the non-profit save dogs from high-kill shelters in the Southern United States and pay for boarding, rides to New England, training and veterinary care. “We get a lot of dogs that never had medical care,” says Megan Saucier, co-founder of the all-volunteer rescue. “We’ve had dogs cost us well over \$15,000. We’ve paid for everything from ligament repairs to orthopedic surgeries.”

Survivor Tails and most rescues fix dogs’ health ailments prior to adopting them and pay to spay, neuter, vaccinate and microchip the dogs.

At different times over the last few years, Dorothy Wells from Tennessee adopted three fully vetted dogs from the same rescue for \$100 each. “Every

dog was healthy and well-behaved,” Dorothy says. “One turned out to be a purebred Blue Heeler. The fact that you get a dog from a rescue does not speak to the loyalty, the love and the affection from that dog.”

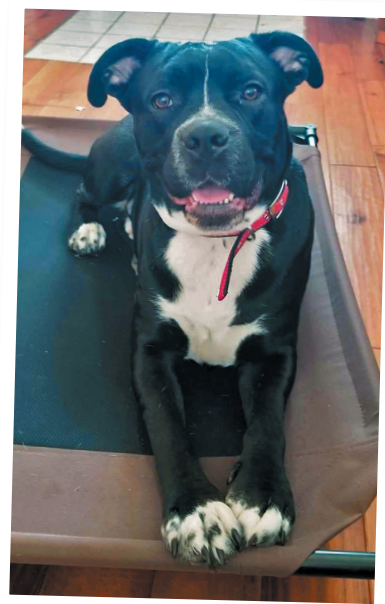
Some rescues offer low-cost or free adoptions for special-needs dogs.

Besides advocating for animals across the country with Best Friends, Marc also runs Vintage Pet Rescue, a Rhode Island group that saves senior dogs with those sweet, frosted faces and does not charge a fee. “Our adopters will need money because these are older animals with a little bit more cost attached to them,” Marc says.

HOW TO FIND A DOG TO ADOPT



- ★ Contact your community’s animal control agency
- ★ Research local shelters or rescues
- ★ Check out an online searchable database for animals who need homes, such as [petfinder.com](https://www.petfinder.com) and [adoptapet.com](https://www.adoptapet.com)
- ★ Contact large rescues like North Shore Animal League, Best Friends Animal Society, the ASPCA or the HSUS for local partner rescues
- ★ Ask friends and family for recommendations



▲ Gunner was adopted for free from a shelter that had him neutered, vaccinated and microchipped.

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