

Step 2: Reviewing Applicants and Meet-and-Greet

Once you get some interest in your pet, you will want to send the prospective adopter an application to fill out, which will provide you with all their information. (We have a **sample Re-Home Application** on this website that you may use, and many animal rescue organizations have applications on their websites which you can download for additional ideas about what to ask when interviewing the applicant.) After you receive their completed application, call them to discuss your pet.

During your conversation with the applicant, ask about their own pets (past and/or present) and also to describe a typical day in the life of their pet. Be sure to ask them for the contact information of their veterinary clinic and veterinarian. Ask them if you may call the clinic for a **veterinary reference**. If they say “yes,” ask them to call their vet’s office to let them know you’ll be calling. (Vet clinics won’t give out any information about a client unless they have their client’s approval beforehand.) When you call the vet clinic, ask things like the last time their pet was in; if the pet is up-to-date on vaccinations; their history of heartworm prevention (if applicable); and if they do other things, such as dentals, and/or treating any health conditions that may require medications. You want to know if they treated their own pet for any health issues. For instance, if their pet requires (or required) medication for diabetes, heart issues, etc., this would speak to whether or not they may treat a future pet’s medical needs. After speaking with the vet clinic, you’ll be able to tell what kind of medical care the adopter has provided for their pets.

If your pet is one who needs regular grooming, and the applicant *also* has (or had) a pet who needs grooming, ask for their groomer’s contact information and that they let them know you’ll be contacting them for a **grooming reference**. When you speak with the groomer, find out how often the applicant brings their pet in for grooming services.

If you like what you hear from the applicant, their vet, and their groomer (if applicable), then you may want to schedule a **meet-and-greet** in a safe public place. The purpose of the meet-and-greet is to get to know the applicant, to see how they react to your pet, and to see how your pet reacts to them. A pet-friendly store could be an option – preferably at a time that is not too busy so your pet will not be distracted. You could also ask your (or their) veterinarian if you could meet in a private space at their clinic. An indoor location is ideal, especially for cats and other small pets. Always take cats and other small pets in a carrier for their safety. If you feel comfortable meeting at the applicant’s home, you can see where your pet will be living, but for your safety, *always take someone with you!* That person can also interact with your pet while you get to know the prospective adopter and can act as a second pair of eyes to help you evaluate the suitability of the home for your pet. If it isn’t possible for you to do a meet-and-greet at the applicant’s home, ask them to send you photos of their house, yard, etc. You can find more information about the applicant’s home online using websites such as Zillow and Google Maps. Also, ask for photos of their current or past pets, as this will help show you if they have been well cared-for.

Don't feel pressured into making a decision during the meet-and-greet. Let the prospective adopter know ahead of time that you may not complete the adoption that day, which will take the pressure off both of you. Remember that the decision you make will impact your pet for the rest of his or her life! Ideally, you and the applicant should take some time to think it over, if possible, before proceeding with the adoption process. If that is the case, agree on speaking the next day. Think carefully about how your pet interacted with the applicant, as well as anyone else present (human or otherwise). If the applicant doesn't seem to be a good match for your pet, then let them know when you call.

However, just in case the meet-and-greet turns into adoption day, be sure you have thoroughly researched, and are comfortable with, the adopter *before you meet*, and refer to Step 3 (Adoption and Follow-up) for items you will want to take with you.

Remember that finding your pet a safe and loving home is the last responsible thing you can do for him, so please be as thorough as possible in checking out prospective adopters!

This resource is provided by ReHomeYourPets.com.