CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
ANIMAL CARE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Policy Title	**Rescue Program**
Policy Number	37-04-009
Initial Effective Date	12/21/12
Revision Number(Date)	V.07 (5/6/16)
Policy Owner	Live Release Manager

Purpose
To provide general guidelines related to the ACS Rescue Program.

Primary Audience[1]

- ☐ All ACS Staff
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Clinic Operations
- ☐ Education/Outreach
- ☐ Field Division
- ☒ Live Release
- ☐ Shelter Operations
- ☒ Other: ACS Rescue Partners

I. Policy Details

1. The objective of the ACS Rescue Program is to facilitate rescue partners to provide care and shelter while seeking adopters for the animals they pull from ACS.

2. Types of Rescue Programs
    a. Traditional Rescue Program Partner
        i. Traditional rescue partners do not receive incentives for pulling animals from Animal Care Services. The dogs and cats they choose to pull do receive medical workups and sterilization surgery if they are medically fit
    b. Rescue Partner Incentive Program Partner.
        i. The Rescue Partner Incentive Program is controlled by contractual obligations and can be modified each fiscal year. Incentives are conditional upon funding availability and the meeting of contractual obligations. For each animal beyond the established baseline, the rescue will receive financial compensation as well as the traditional services provided for the animal being pulled. The baseline is established by ACS and is a reflection of the prior year's pulls and the current year's needs. Contracts remain valid for a period of one fiscal year and should be negotiated and agreed upon prior to the start of the fiscal year.
    c. High Volume Pet Partner Program Partner
        i. The High Volume Pet Partner Program is controlled by contractual obligations and may be revised each fiscal year. Incentives are based on a baseline number of animals that each participating High Volume Pet Partner must pull to receive compensation. High Volume Pet Partners will receive financial compensation or other incentives for each animal pulled beyond the baseline set the prior year.

3. Transport Policy
    a. ACS does not have a transport program and all transports are to be completed by ACS rescue partners in accordance with the current laws of any state they are transporting animals through, in addition to their final destination. All pets must be transported in a humane manner.

4. Rescue Application Approval Process
    a. Acceptance as a Rescue partner requires meeting the criteria listed below:
        i. Complete an ACS Rescue application, available for pick up at the ACS Rescue/Foster office. Or emailed to applicant. Applications will be reviewed within three (3) business days by the Rescue/Foster Supervisor.

[1] While every employee is responsible for adhering to all policies, the primary audience section of this policy simply identifies those divisions whose operations will heavily rely on the content of this policy.

ii. Agree to and sign the ACS Rescue Contract and Application.
iii. Once approved, discuss and agree to general guidelines, policies, and procedures with the Rescue/Foster staff and supervisor, which include receiving a copy of this rescue policy.
iv. Additional documentation from a rescue group may be requested at the discretion of the Rescue/Foster Supervisor or Live Release Manager.
v. Any Rescue Application can be denied at the discretion of the Rescue/Foster Supervisor. The applicant may appeal the application decision in writing first to the Live Release Manager, and secondly to the Office of the Director.
vi. ACS is free at any time, with or without notice or cause, to end the relationship with the rescue partner.

5. Policy Guidelines
   a. The following policy guidelines shall apply in all rescue situations:
      i. ACS retains all rights and ownership of the animal until transfer of ownership to a rescue partner, as well as the final say in disposition decisions (Return-to-owner, adoptions, rescue, foster and euthanasia).
      ii. Pets shall be disposition in accordance with Policy 37-04-004: Holding Period.
      iii. Any animal transferred to a rescue partner must be outcomed in Chameleon to the rescue.
      iv. Transfer of ownership to the rescue partner occurs once the animal has left the ACS staff-operated kennels and has been outcomed in Chameleon.
      v. While in rescue care, ACS is not liable for any injury or damage caused by a rescued animal (to include spread of disease to other rescue/owned animals)
      vi. Return-to-Owner and Adoption placement shall take precedence over animals pending transfer to rescue. The Live Release Manager may make an exception to this policy in certain circumstances.
      vii. Rescues requesting animal transfers must have a completed and approved application on file.
      viii. A rescue partner's primary places of business (as listed on the rescue partner's application) are subject to inspection by ACS staff. Types of inspections may include, but are not be limited to:
         1. Initial inspection upon submitting an application, generally performed by ACS shelter staff, at a mutually agreed upon time.
         2. Periodic inspection for an established rescue partner, generally performed by ACS shelter staff, at a mutually agreed upon time.
         3. Inspection due to an animal-related complaint received by the ACS Field Operations Team, performed by ACS Field Operations.
      ix. The number and frequency of animals the rescue partner may transfer can be established and restricted using, but not limited to, the following criteria: the Rescue Application, any inspection performed on the rescue partner's primary places of business, length of rescue partnership with ACS, and the discretion of the Rescue/Foster team. A rescue group that has entered into contract with ACS will be considered an approved ACS rescue group and any provisions noted in contract may supersede that of the rescue groups application and agreement.

6. Selection and Transfer Criteria
   a. Criteria for selection of rescue animals shall include but are not limited to the following:
      i. Any animal that does not have an active adoption hold or has not yet been returned to the owner. Rescue partners must understand that return to owner and adoption may take precedence over a rescue pulling a pet as outlined in 37-04-007 Hierarchy of Disposition.
      ii. Temperament and overall disposition of the animal will be considered. Any animals associated with a bite/investigation must follow the procedures outlined

for rescue partners requesting the release of a bite animal, as stated in ACS policy 37-04-007: Hierarchy of Animal Disposition.

iii. The age of an animal shall not exclude it from being rescued, provided it meets one or more of the other criteria for selection. Puppies and kittens under the age of 8 weeks may be transferred without prior sterilization to a rescue partner as they are too young for adoption.

b. Transfer of an animal into rescue care shall occur in the following manner:
   i. The rescue partner must contact the Rescue/Foster team (via phone, email, or in-person) and request a rescue hold be placed on the animal.
   ii. Requests for rescue holds are honored in the order received, and at the discretion of Rescue/Foster staff. If a rescue group is interested in pulling a pet that already has another group's rescue hold, the Rescue/Foster staff may contact the group with the hold to see if they are interested in removing their hold to allow another group to pull. The original group's hold cannot be removed and a new rescue hold placed until the original group gives permissions to ACS to remove the hold, or the pet has not been picked up by the original group within the allocated time frame found below.
   iii. ACS encourages all rescue groups to place holds as early in the stray holding period as possible. Once the pet becomes eligible for surgery the rescue will have 24 hours from the time of contact by Rescue/Staff to pick up their pet. If the rescue group fails to pick up their pet in the allocated time frame the rescue hold will be removed and the pet will become eligible for other disposition.
   iv. With the exception of certain permitted rescue partners, all animals must remain in ACS possession throughout the duration of any stray holding period.
   v. Certain rescue partners may pull a dog or cat that has not completed its stray hold period. It's the responsibility of the those rescue partners to hold the animal for the duration of their stray hold period in the event an owner is looking to reclaim their pet. These pets must be held in a publicly accessible building and viewable on a public website.
   vi. The rescue partner shall be advised by the Rescue/Foster or Clinic teams on any specific medical needs of the animal.
   vii. A rescue partner may enter and walk through the publicly-accessible areas of ACS facilities at any time the facility is open to the public but this may be limited if need arises and with the approval of the Live Release Manager.
   viii. A rescue partner must obtain permission from the Live Release Manager or Rescue/Foster Supervisor and the Shelter Operations Manager or Kennel Supervisor prior to entering the euthanasia building or any observation kennel. The rescue partner will be escorted by ACS staff at all time while in the euthanasia ward or any observation kennel.

c. Should a pet impounded at ACS be found to have a microchip registered to a currently approved rescue partner, ACS will contact the rescue. The rescue will have first right of reclaim as the owner, without fees, provided the pet is reclaimed within the stray holding period.
   i. Should the animal be adopted during this time and the rescue requests the animal be returned to them, the reclaim must be processed as a Return to owner, and will not count towards a rescue groups RPIP or HVPP contract.
   ii. Should the rescue not request that the animal be returned to them, they may place a rescue hold for pickup at the end of the stray holding period. An ACS adoption will take precedence over this hold, in accordance with policy 37-04-007: Hierarchy of Animal Disposition. This animal will count towards a rescues RPIP or HVPP contract

d. Should a pet impounded at ACS be found to have a microchip implanted by, but not registered to a currently approved rescue partner, ACS will contact the rescue and they will have the right to place the first rescue hold.

i. Should a pet receive a rescue hold prior to ACS establishing another rescue groups previous ownership of the animal, the implanting facilities hold will take precedence.
ii. This animal may be returned to owner or adopted in accordance with policy 37-04-007 Hierarchy of Animal Disposition.

e. Should an animal impounded at ACS be found to have a microchip associated with a rescue group that is not currently an approved partner, ACS will attempt to notify the rescue of the animal's impoundment at ACS.
   i. At the discretion of ACS Management, the rescue may reclaim this pet within 24 hours as the owner, at the end of the stray holding period. Immediate reclaim is required if the pet was owner surrendered to ACS. ACS will not hold the pet longer than 24 hrs past the stray holding period for the rescue should another live release option be confirmed.
   ii. It will be the rescue group's responsibility to let ACS know if and when they will be reclaiming the pet within the 24 hr window after the release date.
   iii. Reclaim fees must be paid by the rescue group in accordance with the current ACS Fee Schedule located on the ACS website at www.saacs.net.

7. Responsibility of the Rescue Partner
   a. To provide a safe and secure environment.
      i. Ensure humane living environment for the animal.
      ii. At the rescue partner's expense, provide any required medical treatment for the animal while in the rescue partner's care. ACS may require proof of medical treatment of animals while in the rescue partner's care.
      iii. Ensure transporters have the needed pet identification to accurately and safely facilitate the transfer.
      iv. Provide reliable and humane transportation for the animal from the ACS facility. Pets must be transported in a properly sized kennel, separated from other pets and protected from the elements if in an open air vehicle.
         1. ACS has the right to refuse releasing the pet should the transporters not have the appropriate accommodations as detailed above.
      v. Report any communicable disease the pulled animal broke with within 72 of being pulled from ACS.
   b. Unless authorized by ACS Veterinary staff or contractual agreement, all animals will be sterilized and vaccinated prior to transfer to the rescue partner. The rescue partner agrees to sterilize any unsterilized animals transferred into their care, within 90 days unless otherwise agreed upon.
   c. Maintain an adoption program that includes marketing the animal with the intent of finding permanent placement, an adoption application, and adoption applicant screening.
   d. Compliance with the Excess Animal ordinances in the City Code. ACS will waive the Excess Animal permit fees for any approved rescue partner. Rescuers must maintain a current Excess Animal permit when they have an excess number of animals on the primary place of business or in any foster home within city limits. Any ACS staff performing a site inspection may issue/make current an Excess Animal permit for the rescue partner. Each primary place of business or foster home must maintain its own Excess Animal Permit.
   e. Any transferred animal returned to ACS must first be approved by the Live Release Manager or Rescue/Foster Supervisor.
   f. Rescues interested in adopting animals are subject to the all applicable ACS Adoption policies and procedures.
   g. If a rescue partner has concerns about a policy or specific situation, they should be first brought to the attention the ACS team in this order; Rescue/Foster Coordinators, Rescue/Foster Supervisor, Live Release Manager and the Director.

h. Adherence to the department's patron code of conduct policy entitled, 37-15-006 Patron Conduct Policy.
i. The above items in this section, "Responsibility of Rescue," also apply to any members of the rescue partner's Foster network.
j. Transfer a minimum of four (4) ACS animals per year in order to maintain rescue partner status.
k. Maintain a valid 501(c)3 status. Rescues will not be approved to pull or allowed to continue to pull should their status be pending, revoked or under review.
l. Have a completed and signed rescue application and contract on file to be updated with any new status changes as detailed in the contract.

Policy Authorization

Signature: _____ Date: 05/28/16
Name (Title): XAVIER URRUTIA (ACS INTERIM DIRECTOR)