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INTRODUCTION

The County of Kern Department of Animal Services (KCAS) operates two open-admission animal care centers located in Bakersfield and Lake Isabella. These centers serve as safe havens for all stray domestic animals in Kern County, regardless of age, health status, or temperament.

As an open-admission agency, KCAS often faces extreme population pressures that can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals in our care. Overcrowding can lead to the spread of illness, heightened stress levels, and behavior challenges that reduce adoption potential. Many animals entering our care may be injured, un-weaned, elderly, behaviorally compromised, or carrying communicable illnesses. Others are healthy and highly adoptable with strong prospects for placement. We strive to find the best possible outcome for every animal, and we cannot do this alone.

KCAS deeply values the compassion, commitment, and tireless work of non-profit animal welfare organizations—our Rescue Partners (RP)—who help extend the reach of our lifesaving mission. We welcome partnerships with organizations that share our belief in fairness, reason, and compassion, and who are equally committed to humane, respectful treatment of both animals and people. This agreement is intended to foster a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect by clearly outlining the roles, expectations, and shared responsibilities that make our rescue program successful.

PURPOSE OF RESCUE PARTNER PROGRAM

The Rescue Partner (RP) program was created by KCAS to build collaborative efforts in placing shelter animals in permanent homes. While KCAS successfully places nearly 5,000 animals each year through adoptions and outreach, the volume of animals entering our care has consistently outpaced our capacity. Rescue Partners play a vital role in helping us create space—not only for animals with medical or behavioral needs, but also for healthy, adoptable animals who simply require a different avenue to find homes. In today's climate, every placement matters. The support of dedicated rescue organizations directly impacts our ability to care for the animals arriving tomorrow.

BECOMING A RESCUE PARTNER

KCAS welcomes applications for the RP program. To become eligible for the RP program, the organization must:

1. Be a non-profit (as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) animal rescue organization
2. Be operated for the purpose of animal adoption

3. Have no criminal or administrative violations involving crimes against animals
4. Be in compliance with all animal related laws

APPLICATION PROCESS

Organizations interested in partnering with KCAS as a Rescue Partner (RP) can submit an application online at www.kerncountyanimalservices.org. Simply click on the "How To Help" button, then select the "Rescue" link to access the application page.

Alternatively, organizations may submit a completed application package by mail to:

KCAS – Rescue Program
3951 Fruitvale Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93308

That application should include:

- 1) A completed and signed application form, provided by KCAS. For organizations based out of Kern County, a physical address is needed.
- 2) A copy of the organization's IRS determination letter
- 3) RP's statement of purpose, indicating the primary breed/species that the organization rescues
- 4) A current copy of the adoption agreement used by the RP when adopting animals into new homes
- 5) A list of all individuals authorized by RP to pull animals. The list shall include their full name, address, telephone number and email address if applicable
- 6) References from one veterinarian and one animal care/control agency with which the applying RP has done business
- 7) If RP is located within unincorporated Kern County, KCAS will conduct a property/kennel inspection prior to approval
- 8) If RP is located within unincorporated Kern County, and it is determined that a Conditional Use Permit is required through the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department, CUP permit will be required prior to approval of the Rescue Application

KCAS will review the application and supporting documents and respond to the agency as soon as possible. RP's will be notified regarding the status of their application via e-mail or telephone when the review has been completed.

RESCUE PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to maintain a productive and cohesive partnership, KCAS has established criteria for both the RP and for Animal Services to adhere to. Failure of the RP to adhere to these expectations could result in the revocation of an RP's pulling privileges. The following expectations are in place to ensure efficient and effective operation of the rescue program:

1. The RP shall maintain courteous and professional communication with KCAS staff and shall not knowingly make false or materially misleading public statements about KCAS, its staff, or its operations. Constructive feedback or concerns may be directed through official KCAS communication channels.
2. The RP shall spay/neuter any unaltered animal prior to adoption in accordance with California Food and Agriculture Code sections 30503 and 31751.3
3. If an RP utilizes a foster care system within Kern County, the RP shall provide KCAS an up-to-date list of authorized foster care providers for their organization, including names, addresses and phone numbers. KCAS may do quarterly audits of all RP's to maintain accurate records. The RP is responsible for self-certification of such foster homes to ensure that all local ordinances and state laws are being adhered to. All authorized foster care providers must be aware that such information is public information and may be released upon request under the California Public Records Act.
 - a. RP may be suspended or application revoked upon determining that any conditions described herein are not being maintained by any foster care provider, that the foster care provider is in violation of any section of title 7 of Kern County Ordinance or that the Department receives three or more validated nuisance complaints within a six month period of time
 - b. If the director intends to suspend or revoke RP application, a written notice to this effect shall be delivered in person or by certified mailing address of RP applicant, stating grounds for the proposed suspension or revocation
4. The RP shall ensure that animals released by KCAS shall be humanely and safely cared for.
5. The RP shall allow unannounced inspections of the RP or foster facilities by KCAS.
6. The RP shall keep records of subsequent rescued animals and outcomes of those animals from KCAS for at least three years and provide copies of such records to KCAS upon request.
7. The RP shall provide upon request to KCAS proof of alteration for each animal within 60 days of release, even if the animal is transferred to another party. Failure to comply could result in the revocation of the RP application.
8. Any animal residing within unincorporated Kern County for greater than four months shall be licensed under RP.
9. All animals pulled by RP are non-returnable. If it is determined that animals pulled by RP are subsequently surrendered to any Animal Shelter, or turned in as a stray, this may constitute cause for suspension or revocation on RP's pull privileges.
10. The RP shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless County and County's board members, elected and appointed officials, officers, employees, agents, volunteers and authorized representatives ("County Indemnified Parties") from any losses, liabilities, charges, damages, claims, liens, causes of action, awards, judgments and costs, including attorneys' fees of County Counsel and outside counsel retained by County, expert fees, costs of staff time, and investigation costs ("Claims") which arise out of or relate to any act or omission of RP or RP's officers, employees, agents and subcontractors of any tier hired by RP ("Consultant Representatives"). This indemnification obligation shall include bodily and personal injury or death to any person; damage to any property, regardless of where located, including the property of County; and any workers' compensation Claim arising from or relating to the

Services. RP shall defend any Claim with counsel of RP's choice, subject to County's written approval, and at RP's sole cost.

11. The RP acknowledges that a failure to submit an updated agreement and/or application within 60 days of receipt may result in a revocation of pull rights with KCAS.

Code Of Conduct

All RP's and their representatives are expected to:

- Conduct themselves with integrity and professionalism when interacting with KCAS staff, the public, or other organizations.
- Represent their rescue organization truthfully and in good faith.
- Report suspected violations of animal welfare laws or public safety concerns to the appropriate authority.
- Avoid conflicts of interest that could compromise the integrity of the program.

Data Sharing & Outcome Reporting

KCAS values transparency and continuous improvement. RP's are encouraged to share outcome data (adoptions, transfers, etc) with KCAS on a quarterly basis to support grant reporting, planning, and public accountability. Sharing this data also helps us collectively demonstrate our community impact.

KCAS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. KCAS will allow for a 72-hour hold when a RP requests this as part of a transport of at least 12 dogs where a minimum of 2 of those dogs, or 15% of the transport, are over 40lbs.
2. KCAS may offer transportation of animals to RP's facility when resources and conditions allow. Transportation will be a consideration when endpoint is within 250 miles of KCAS, and at least 12 dogs, where a minimum of 2 of those dogs, or 15% of the transport, are over 40lbs.
3. KCAS may offer spay or neuter to RP's when resources exist to do so. Animals cannot be left in the shelter to wait for alteration. An appointment must be made to return the animal for surgery at a later date.
4. KCAS may offer production of a health certificate when availability exists to do so.

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

KCAS has implemented the following Policies and Procedures to provide clear communications and a standardized rescue program while maximizing the efficient use of limited KCAS resources:

Availability of Animals

In most cases, stray animals that have been received with no indication of ownership are available for Rescue 72 hours after intake. This means that in most cases, an animal received on a Monday will be available for Rescue that Thursday. An animal received on a Tuesday can be released to a Rescue that Friday, so on and so forth. This includes weekends and holidays.

All animals are subject to be returned to an owner if the animal is still in KCAS' care, and an owner comes forward with proof of ownership.

Animals that have been received with an indication ownership must be held 5 calendar days, which does include weekends and holidays. After 5 calendar days, animals received with an indication of ownership are available for release to Rescue.

Animals that have been surrendered by their owners are available for Rescue immediately, with no holding period necessarily observed.

Adoptions and rescues of animals are on a first come, first serve basis, and animals generally become available for both outcomes concurrently. Exceptions may apply when KCAS prepares a large-scale rescue transport. Additional exceptions may be made, at the sole discretion of the Director, when it is evident that extenuating circumstances warrant additional hold time.

Rescue Fees

No "pull fee" will be charged for a partnered RP to pull an animal from KCAS.

Spay and Neuter

A partnered RP may request spay and neuter of an animal at no cost to the RP.

Microchipping

A partnered RP may request a microchip be implanted at no cost to the RP.

Rabies Vaccinations

Rabies vaccines may be purchased at a cost of \$10 per vaccination.

Core Vaccinations

A partnered RP may request a core vaccination (Bordetella/DHPP/FVRCP) at no cost to the RP.

Authorized Representatives

KCAS only allows registered RP's to rescue under the program. RP's may not extend their rescue privileges to third parties, who may be adopting for private purposes, or for another rescue organization that is not registered with KCAS as an RP. Animals may be rescued only by those persons authorized and listed in the RP application by the primary contact person for the RP. The RP is responsible for self-certification of their representatives. Representatives that fail to follow the rescue program protocols and policies may cause the RP's rescue privileges to be suspended or revoked. When an RP rescues an animal from KCAS, they are responsible for adhering to all program protocols and policies as well as laws regarding animal care and providing follow up information to KCAS on each animal.

COMMUNICATION

Maintaining courteous and professional communication between all KCAS staff, volunteers, and contractors will ensure that we maintain a streamlined, effective rescue program. In the event of disagreements or concerns, both parties are encouraged to engage in respectful dialogue to find collaborative resolutions.

CONCLUSION

KCAS is committed to collaborating with Rescue Partners to expand our services, increase lifesaving opportunities, and strengthen our collective impact. We are deeply grateful for the

compassion, dedication, and partnership of each RP, and we look forward to continued work together on behalf of the animals we all serve.

I hereby certify that I have read the Kern County Animal Services' policy statement for rescue partners and agree, on behalf of myself and _____(name of rescue organization), that I understand the policy and the responsibilities required of _____ (rescue organization). On behalf of myself and my organization, we agree to comply with all requirements as outlined in the policy statement.

Executed on _____, 20____, under penalty of perjury.

By: _____

Representing: _____(rescue organization)