



What Does Open Admissions Mean?

Foothills Animal Shelter is dedicated to providing support to our surrounding community through education, services that strengthen the human-pet bond, and humane care for the animals we serve. What is remarkable is that in addition to our mission, our doors are open to any animal, regardless of behavioral, medical, breed, or age-related issues—that is why we are proud to be an open admission shelter.

Open admission means we bring animals into our shelter that encompass the spectrum of age, health, and temperament. They may be old, ill, injured, neglected, unwanted, lost, or behaviorally unsound. In every case, we carefully consider each animal's special behavior and physical needs. To guide us, we live by a set of widely-followed principles known as the Five Freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigor.
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

As pet lovers and experts in animal welfare, we take these freedoms very seriously. Many of the animals who walk through our doors are deemed healthy and adoptable, and after standard veterinary care such as vaccines, spay or neuter surgeries, and microchipping, are adopted into their new homes. We employ healthcare and behavioral teams to make sure we have a thorough understanding of the needs of each animal in our care and use allocated resources and available funding to provide additional medical or surgical care for conditions that are treatable or manageable.

Some of the animals who enter our shelter have health needs that cannot be successfully treated or conditions that will not allow enough stability for adoption. Others still may present a safety risk to themselves or the community.

In these circumstances, we must make the difficult decision to humanely euthanize an animal, bringing an end to pain and discomfort. A lifetime confined to a kennel or suffering interminable pain is not a humane choice for our family pets or the companion animals we are charged with caring for at Foothills Animal Shelter.

Foothills Animal Shelter does not euthanize healthy animals, nor is there is set time limit for how long an animal may remain in our care.

To us, the measure of success is our ability to truly measure and value life itself, honoring and respecting the best interest of every animal. This is why we reject the term "no-kill" as the standard to strive for in our community and beyond.

We are working to end pet overpopulation through our spay/neuter program; we are striving to provide supportive services to families in need so animals have greater chances for success. We lean into our strong bonds with community partners such as animal control and local law enforcement to educate the public about animal welfare and to put an end to animal abuse and cruelty.

Please support the concept of open admission so that, as a community, we can provide the very best treatment for the companion animals in our community who depend on us for their care.