

Michigan Pet Fund Alliance Michigan Rescue Certification Program



Adopted:

DRAFT

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1. Background & Purpose of the Rescue Certification Program

Each year over 110,000 homeless cats and dogs in Michigan are euthanized. The majority of these companion animals are healthy or treatable and could be rehomed if organizations worked together – especially Michigan shelter and rescue organizations.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development is responsible for the oversight of 197 licensed animal shelters. Although the Department of Agriculture’s purview is limited in scope there are minimum standards that are expected to be met. However there are no minimum standards or oversight for rescue organizations - most of which use a home-based fostering system. Any person or group can call themselves a rescue and begin a *homeless pet rescue operation*. Although the vast majority of rescue organizations are formed with the pure intent of finding new homes for homeless companion animals, some have resulted in hoarding operations, others have become a means of profit, and some are run with no standards. These *bad apples* in the rescue community have caused mistrust with the public, shelters, and reputable rescues organizations while at the same time have resulted in poor conditions and treatment of those which are most vulnerable - homeless companion animals with no voice.

The intent of the Rescue Certification Program is to provide standards and public assurance that the rescue organization is reputable.

It is the intent of the Rescue Certification Program to:

- Provide model standards for rescue organizations;
- Provide the public assurances that the organization operates according to model standards;
- Provide assurances to adoption event hosts that they are associated with a reputable rescue organization;
- Provide assurances to animal welfare funders of professional capacity;
- Provide assurances to shelters that the rescue organization operates to standards that are reputable and have been vetted for partnerships.

The program is wholly voluntary. It is open to all breed rescues, dog only rescues, cat only rescues, purebred rescues, rabbit, ferret, pocket pets and others. However it should be noted that the program as described in this document is focused on cat and dog rescue organizations. Other species rescues should contact the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance expressing interest in

certification. The certification committee will work one on one with the rescue to address the specifics for that species.

Rescue organizations apply for the certification annually and when granted are provided documentation that can be displayed on websites, printed material, and at adoption events.

Ultimately the purpose of the Certification Program is to improve capacity and partnership between the rescue community and the shelter community so that all healthy and treatable homeless cats and dogs are rehomed and euthanasia is an act of mercy reserved only for the severely ill and vicious.

2. About the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

The Michigan Pet Fund Alliance established in 2003 is a not for profit charitable 501 (c) (3) organization. The mission of the Michigan Pet Fund is to ***End the killing of healthy and treatable homeless cats and dogs in Michigan.*** Our vision is to: **Collaborate with Michigan animal shelters and rescue organizations to achieve No Kill through training, technical assistance, education and advocacy.**

As a statewide organization that works on behalf of homeless cats and dogs with Michigan shelters, rescue organizations and a variety of stakeholders, the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance is uniquely positioned to offer this certification program. In an attempt to represent various interests, the original Task Force which prepared this program along with the Rescue Certification Committee represents a variety of points of view: all breed rescue organizations, purebred rescue organizations, rescue volunteers, shelters, those opposed to puppy mills, etc.

It is intended that the Certification Program be viewed as a positive step to increasing the value Michigan residents place on rescue organizations and to help standardize and model good organization practices and procedures for the benefit of the homeless animals. The Michigan Pet Fund Alliances encourages all organizations to be honest, transparent in their operations, and for rescues to provide self-policing amongst each other. However if an organization fails to uphold these goals, an official grievance process has been developed. It is our hope that this process is never exercised.

Michigan Pet Fund Alliance will provide annual education and training for rescue organizations to assist them in obtaining certification.

It is our expectation that with standardized practices within the certified rescue community, shelters will eagerly embrace collaboration with these organizations which will greatly benefit the homeless cat and dog community.

Finally, it is our hope that this program can serve as a model for other states and be instrumental in saving more lives.

The Certification Program encourages all organizations to be honest, transparent and self-policing. It is a positive step to increasing the value placed on rescue organizations.

Michigan No Kill Formula

1. Michigan animal welfare advocates, shelters and rescues make it about the mission and nothing else.
2. Michigan citizens hold shelters accountable for their tax dollars and charitable contributions and reject the status quo of sheltering.
3. All Michigan shelters adopt and implement the programs of the No Kill Equation and 21st century sheltering practices.
4. Michigan shelters and rescue organizations begin a new era of collaboration.
5. Michigan shelters begin to collaborate with each other to relieve overcrowding, share program expertise and resources.
6. Michigan rescue organizations start to collaborate with each other to share program expertise and resources and assist with hard to place animals.
7. All shelters and rescues organizations spay/neuter prior to adoption.
8. High-volume, low cost spay/neuter programs are established through-out the state for low-income residents.
9. Feral cat Trap Neuter Return programs are established through-out the state.
10. Transport into the state from puppy-mill breeders/brokers, auction animals and organized transport from out of state shelters are discontinued until such time as all healthy and treatable homeless dogs and cats in Michigan are saved.
11. Michigan pet and supply stores stop selling puppies and feature only adoptable animals.

3. Certification Program Criteria

A Certified Rescue Organization is transparent, operates as a professional successful business and most importantly has a high standard of care at all times for the animals in their care. The items checked in the first column below are the requirements to qualify as a Certified Rescue organization. The second column identifies model practices for Rescue Organizations of excellence or as we refer to them, 5-star Platinum organizations – those that go above and beyond. Rescue Organization that demonstrated that they meet the 5-Star Platinum requirements will be noted in all listings of Certified Rescue organizations and will obtain a different color badge/seal. Following the requirement list is a description of the operation standards for a professional successful Certified Rescue and standards of care.

Certification Requirements

5-Star Platinum



Mission Statement	✓	✓
Bylaws/Operating Documents	✓	✓
Narrative Description of Organization	✓	✓
IRS 501 (c)(3) status	✓	✓
Insurance		✓
Filing of 990, 990-EZ, 990-N	✓	✓
Electronic Financial Records		✓
Annual Budget		✓
Annual consult with CPA/Accountant		✓
Adoption Application	✓	✓
Adoption Criteria (reasonable)	✓	✓
Adoption Material		✓
Adoption Contract	✓	✓

Adoption Fees (posted)	✓	✓
Volunteer Application & Liability Waiver	✓	✓
Volunteer Criteria		✓
Volunteer Manual & Job Descriptions	✓	✓
Volunteer Contract		✓
Foster Application	✓	✓
Foster Criteria	✓	✓
Foster Care Manual	✓	✓
Foster Care Contract	✓	✓
Medical Protocols	✓	✓
Complete Animal Records	✓	✓
Electronic Animal Records		✓
Spay/Neuter	✓	✓
Rehabilitation plan	✓	✓
10-day minimum foster	✓	✓
Adoption Event (meet & Greet)- Occasional	✓	✓
Adoption Events – Regularly Scheduled		✓
Web Presence	✓	✓
Web Site		✓
Telephone & Mailing Address	✓	✓
Compliance with Obtaining Animals	✓	✓
Annual Continuing Education		✓

a. Organization Requirements – The following description address organization requirements:

i. Public Description & Purpose – A description of the rescue organization in detail including purpose which is easily available to the general public. The description should include:

- Mission Statement – See www.michiganpetfund.org website for examples of Mission Statements
- Bylaws or operating documents – See www.michiganpetfund.org website for examples of bylaws
- Narrative description of the rescue organization – See www.michiganpetfund.org website for examples of a narrative description for a rescue organization.

ii. Insurance - Each rescue group will purchase and have current liability insurance for their Directors, Officers, and Volunteers. The limit and deductible is left up to the discretion of each individual rescue group. Resources for insurance programs are listed in the appendix.

Certified Rescue Organizations must be designated as a charitable organization operating under a Board of Directors per IRS Section 170(b)(1)(A)

iii. IRS charitable 501 (c) (3) corporation – Certified rescue organizations must be designated as a charitable organization operating under a Board of Directors by the Internal Revenue Service as described under Section 170(b)(1)(A) as eligible to receive tax deductible charitable contributions from the public.

Animal rescues are classified as charitable organizations and as such, qualify for exemption from federal income taxes if they are able to fulfill all the IRS requirements to do so.

In order to become a charitable 501(c)(3) organizations, a rescue group must follow these steps.

1. Apply for incorporation in Michigan

State of Michigan guidelines for forming a corporation can be found on form BCS/CD-269. This publication can be located using the following link:

http://mi.gov/documents/dleg/BCS_CD_269_281961_7.pdf

Form 502 is used to file the Articles of Incorporation. The cost to incorporate in Michigan is \$20.00. Form 502 can be found using the following link:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/CIS_Form_502_2457_7.pdf

2. Apply for an Employer Identification Number. This is an IRS requirement. Application can be made at the following web site:
<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=102767,00.html>
3. Once the organization is incorporated, the process can begin to qualify with the IRS for charitable 501(c)(3) status. This is done by following the instructions for IRS form 1023. Instructions are found here:
<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1024.pdf>

Groups or individuals are available to assist organizations desiring to obtain 501 (c)(3) status that will help the process. A listing of such groups/individuals can be found on the website: www.michiganpetfund.org.

iv. Financial Records – Certified rescue organization are tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is essential that the 501(c)(3) stay in good standing with the IRS, State and Local governments for financial and tax purposes. Good standing requires filing a 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N on an annual basis to the IRS. Additional requirements may include annual or periodic reports to the Secretary of State, Attorney General, Department of Agriculture & Rural Development or some other state agency including directors and office's information, annual shelter report and financial reports. It may also include reports annually to local government like Personal Property Tax reports even if exempt. Any change in the 501(c)(3)'s good standing must be notified to Michigan Pet Fund Alliance immediately.

Sound administration and accounting records are not just recommended but are required by law. It is required that annual registrations and financial reports are completed and accurate at the state and federal level. Detailed accounting records must be maintained for all aspects of the 501(c)(3)'s finances including revenues and expenditures. It is required that financial books and records are kept in an organized format; it is also recommended that organizations utilize accounting software.

It is also necessary to maintain contribution records which will include at minimum the following information: Date, Name, Address and Donation Amount.

Funds should never be commingled. Personal funds must always be kept separate from 501(c)(3)'s funds without exception.

Though it is not required, we highly recommend that 501(c)(3)'s utilize an accountant and/or CPA to maintain and/or prepare financial records. Depending on the level of

donations, the IRS may require an outside independent audit completed by a CPA. It is mandatory that Certified Rescues comply with this requirement if it applies to them.

It is also required that the 501(c)(3) prepare and have available an Annual Financial Report for the public. This information is required to be given to anyone who asks for it. Including an annual 990, 990-EZ or 990-N directly on the 501(c)(3)'s website is a good way to achieve transparency with the public. This document details how money is raised and spent on a public platform.

It is also highly recommended that the 501(c)(3) prepare an annual budget. Steps to do this are as follows:

1. Start the budgeting process early, at least two months in advance of the upcoming year.
2. Review the previous year's budget or programs versus actual income/expenses to determine financial outcomes.
3. Determine if there are any new expenses in the upcoming year not currently accounted for on the current budget.
4. Estimate increases in expenditures: inflation, increases in rents, etc.
5. Estimate income: contributions, adoption fees, sales of goods, and/or grants.
6. Have the board of directors review budget for approval.
7. Review the budget and make changes as appropriate.

It is important to keep financial records backed up and safe. These documents should be kept with a back-up system (physically and/or digitally) for seven years.

As 501(c)(3)'s grow and mature, so does the amount of reporting that is required. Please consult with a CPA or accountant on your organizations specific needs.

It is recommended that Certified Rescues meet at least annually with an accountant or CPA so that records and processes are performed to current standards and requirements.

v. Applications, Manuals, Contracts, Criteria, Job Descriptions – Certified Rescues are required to have written policy which guides their operation. Written policy is reflected in Applications, Manuals, Contracts, Criteria and Jo Descriptions. The website www.michiganpetfund.org contains several samples of the following items.

1. Adoption Program – Creating a successful adoption program requires substantial thought and planning. Some items to consider:

- Will you only adopt to a specific geographic region?
- How will you process incoming applications?
- How much time will it require to respond to an applicant?
- Where will you perform adoptions?
- Will you provide pending periods or adjustment periods before finalizing an adoption?
- What are your adoption fees and what do they include?
- Will you require all household members to meet the pet?
- Will you require that animals be returned to your organization if the adopter can no longer honor their commitment?

The volunteers responsible for adoptions need training, knowledge and experience. Determine who should run the adoption program, including follow-ups once the animal is placed.

Adoption Application

Rescue organizations must screen applicants through an application process. The information gathered should assist the organization in appropriately matching an applicant with an adoptable animal. It is unfair to both the applicant and animal to not invest the time in matching and recommending the right fit for everyone. For example, a 90-year-old who lives alone should not adopt a puppy. The lifespan of the pet should be taken into account. It is a standard operating procedure to perform vet checks, home checks, property ownership checks and/or rental/landlord checks on adoption applicants. Some organizations also perform background checks.

Adoption Criteria

Rescue organizations should use set criteria for determining whether or not an applicant can adopt, looking out for the animal's best interest at all times. It is recommended that organizations consider whether or not the applicant has shown to make responsible decisions for past pets. It is fair to analyze whether or not this is the best time for the applicant to adopt. It is the organization's responsibility to ensure that the adopter will provide a safe, healthy, permanent home. Established criteria should include age minimums for adopters, standards of care to be provided for the pet and intended use of the pet. Some criteria should be imposed case-by-case, based on the animal's specific needs, such as required fencing or not.

Written policy is an indicator of a professionally run organization. The policy manifests in a written Vision, Mission, Manuals, Criteria, Contracts and even Applications Forms.

It is important that criteria be **reasonable** and **balanced**. Overly strict criteria or waiting for the “perfect” home keeps the animal in foster longer leaving the foster home unavailable for new homeless animals which might result in conditions where shelters may euthanize for space.

Adoption Materials

Adopters want to provide their pet with the best care they can. Many times, they simply don't know how best to do that. Some of the most common reasons for animal surrenders and returns are behavior issues, moving, allergies and new baby. Provide information from the get-go to prevent these problems from emerging. Organizations should provide adopters with all medical records for their adopted pet, as well as information regarding proper care and behavior.

Consider providing adopters with any of the following information:

- lists of poisonous plants and foods
- quality pet food ratings and how to choose a quality food
- how to choose a boarding kennel
- how to keep pets safe in heat and cold
- how to avoid holiday hazards
- dangers and consequences of declawing and debarking
- behavior handouts and helpline phone numbers
- positive reinforcement techniques and information
- at-home training and commands
- obedience training courses
- animal care information
- health and medical information, including parasites and routine care
- pet first aid and emergency information
- resources for estate planning to include pets
- lost pet prevention guide – what to do when a pet is lost, importance of collar and tags, microchip information
- allergy information
- preparing a pet for baby's arrival
- moving with your pet

Behavior information to consider including for dog adoptions:

- puppy housetraining
- puppy nipping and rough play
- development stages of puppies
- puppy chewing
- positive reinforcement

- importance of educating your dog
- re-housetraing an adult dog
- crate training
- escape artist
- digging issues
- dog toys and how to use them
- children and dogs
- introducing to your new pet to resident pets
- canine rivalry
- overcoming fears
- stress relief
- separation anxiety
- understanding aggression
- nothing in life is free and understanding dominance

Behavior information to consider including for cat adoptions:

- starting out right with the litter box
- solving litter box problems
- destructive scratching
- development stages of kittens
- positive reinforcement
- dangers of outdoors for cats and kittens
- escape artist
- cat toys and how to use them
- play with your cat
- children and cats
- introducing to your new pet to resident pets
- overcoming fears
- stress relief

Adoption Contracts

Organizations must require and enforce adoption contracts. Adoption contracts must spell out exactly what is expected of the adopter and of the organization, including how to handle animal returns and how to handle contract breaches or violations. The contract should spell out the consequences for contract violations.

Adoption Fees

Adoption fees must be consistent. Certified rescues cannot promote one adoption fee, and then change it for a specific animal. This is known as “bait and switch” and is an unethical practice. Materials should detail what is included in the adoption fee

and what types of payment are acceptable. Organizations cannot subsist solely on adoption fees. Donations and fundraising are a must. It is rarely a successful strategy to charge an adoption fee equal to the expenses the organization invested in the animal.

2. Volunteer Program - Animal rescues must have volunteers. They are a non-profit organization's life-blood and backbone. Discover their passions, skills, experiences and abilities to make the most of their volunteer experience. Provide them with resources and training. Offering training to your volunteers makes them feel wanted, involved, confident and part of the team. Volunteers want to help and just need someone to show them how. The more your volunteers know, the more they can help your organization and make a difference for the animals. Consider tracking foster care and volunteer "hours" or "credits" and rewarding or recognizing outstanding volunteers.

Consider creating an organizational chart to visually explore a communication and reporting structure for your volunteers. In most organizations, one person can't be the point person for all volunteers. If you offer programs, recruit coordinators to manage them.

Potential volunteer roles to consider:

- volunteer recruitment
- volunteer retention and recognition
- volunteer training
- foster care
- events
- fundraising
- animal intake
- animal behavior and training
- animal photos and bios
- medical care
- transport
- adoptions
- adoption follow-up
- TNR
- accounting
- legal issues
- supply inventory
- website and graphic design
- marketing and PR
- social media
- internal communication

- partnerships and collaborations
- customer service

Volunteers must be provided with detailed job descriptions so they can serve the organization and animals appropriately. Job descriptions give your volunteers their best chance for success in the role you're asking them to fulfill.

Value your volunteers, but remember it's OK to dismiss volunteers who are not meeting the needs or goals of the organization. Your worst volunteer is your best reputation. One disruptive, uncooperative or combative volunteer can cost you reliable, committed volunteers. Consider providing a complaint process, so volunteers are heard and can express concerns.

Volunteer Application

An application to volunteer is a necessity in order to match them to an appropriate role. An application helps the organization determine how best the Rescue and the applicant can benefit from a relationship. The application also gathers necessary contact information and animal handling experience/knowledge. List the volunteer roles you offer, so the applicant can choose the areas where they think they can best contribute. Ask for emergency contact information in case something happens.

Liability waivers are important as well. Have an attorney draft or approve one for your organization's use.

Volunteer Criteria

Establishing criteria for volunteering helps you determine your needs and how best to match applicants and volunteer roles. Some roles require Internet access, some require more extensive experience, knowledge or training and some require more people skills, versus animal skills. If you allow minors (under age 18) to volunteer, you need to spell out what they're allowed to do and provide a liability waiver to the parents or guardians. Determine how you will handle unknown minors or school, community and church groups who want to contribute.

Volunteer Manual

The key to a successful volunteer program is arming your volunteers with information as to what is expected of them, how the organization functions and the rules to abide by. A manual provides your volunteers with their "how to" guide to everything about the rescue. It is a critical component of every rescue organization. Make sure every volunteer at every level receives one.

Content to include in an organization's volunteer manual:

- Mission statement
- Who we are and what we do
- History of the organization
- Goals of the organization
- Goals of the volunteer program
- Position statements
- Definitions: Open Admission, Limited Admission, Adoption Guarantee and No Kill Designations
- Sheltering information
- Training opportunities
- Organizational chart
- Contact list
- Volunteer roles and job descriptions
- Policies and procedures
- Expense reimbursement and tax deductions
- Volunteer rights, responsibilities and privileges
- Volunteer recognition program
- Appropriate attire
- Representing the organization in public and with the media
- Reporting grievances
- Injury guidelines
- Recommended reading
- Pet Poison Control number

Volunteer Contract

Volunteer contracts can make the concept of giving time and energy to an organization real. Volunteering is a commitment and if the organization is investing time and money to train volunteers, it is important to retain them. A contract spells out a meeting of the minds and an agreement between the volunteer and the organization, including what is expected of the volunteers and the organization. Consideration should be given to having all contracts reviewed by an attorney to ensure they are enforceable.

3. Foster Care Program - Foster care is a necessity for animal rescues. It is a great benefit to an adoption program to be able to gather such valuable information about the animals since they are living in home environments. The downside is that the animal, in most cases, grows attached to the foster family, which can cause a rougher transition to a new home, versus an animal going from kennel to home.

Running a foster care program requires constant recruitment to find new and more foster care homes, as existing ones will need breaks, adopt their fosters, burn out and experience life changes that prevent them from fostering again. It is critical to

always be responsive to them and hold up your end of the agreement. Fostering should be a family decision – everyone on board; otherwise, it is unfair to the animal and is bound to cause issues.

Foster Care Application

An application to foster a pet is essentially the same process as applying to adopt, only in most cases fostering is temporary. The applicant must still show that they will provide adequate care and housing. The organization must match the foster care applicant with an animal appropriate for their household. Many fosters later decide to adopt their foster pet, so it is important to consider whether or not they also meet your adoption criteria. An application helps the organization determine that and gathers the necessary contact info and animal handling experience/knowledge.

Foster Care Criteria

Criteria for fostering in most cases will mirror your adoption criteria. Renters should be required to show proof that they are allowed to have the specific pet they are applying to foster. The organization should make sure there are no breed bans in the area they live that might apply to the animal they're applying to foster. Organizations should perform vet checks to verify that the applicants provide current and past pets with standard medical care, such as vaccinations and spay/neuter. It is important to consider whether or not the foster care home applicant meets your adoption requirements. If the foster chooses to adopt, but does not meet adoption requirements, this will seem unfair and create a problem.

Foster Care Manual

The key to a successful foster care program is arming your volunteers with information as to how the foster care program functions, what is expected of them, policies for fostering and the rules to abide by. A manual provides your volunteers with their “how to” guide about the foster care program, as well as important information to help the animals in their care. It is a critical component of every rescue organization. Foster care manuals should include the resources and supplies that the Rescue will provide, as well as how the fosters can be the pet's best ally by providing updated profile information, photos and video.

Content to include in an organization's foster care manual:

- Volunteer foster care job descriptions and responsibilities
- Foster care contact information
- Medical protocol for foster animals
- Pet Poison Control number
- Emergency numbers
- Spay and neuter of foster animals

- How we place animals into foster care
- Fostering newborn kittens and puppies
- Fostering juvenile kittens and puppies
- Fostering under-socialized animals
- Fostering ill, injured and surgery-recovering animals
- Suggestions on cleaning procedures
- Animal bites
- Suggestions for completing foster animal bios and foster-to-adopter forms
- Additional education for behavior problems
- Return and adoption of foster animals
- Form: Dog foster to adopting family
- Foster care contract
- Disease directory

Foster Care Contract

Foster care contracts protect both the volunteer and the organization. Foster care is a serious commitment. The organization is entrusting the foster care home with the health and safety of animals. A contract spells out a meeting of the minds as to what is expected of both parties and an agreement between the foster care home and the organization.

b. Animal Care Requirements – The following standards of care are necessary for rescue certification:

i. Care Philosophy – Organizations must subscribe to the philosophy of “do no harm” and the Five Freedoms:

Organizations must first subscribe to the philosophy of “do no harm”...which includes refusal to allow cosmetic alteration of an animal or performance of unnecessary surgical procedures.

1st Freedom from Hunger and Thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor

2nd Freedom from Discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3rd Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4th Freedom to Express Normal Behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

5th Freedom from Fear and Distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

“Do No Harm” includes but is not limited to refusal to cosmetically alter an animal when the surgery is not medically necessary for the animal's health. Such surgeries include but are not limited to declawing, debarking, ear and tail cropping. “Do No Harm” also includes refraining from obtaining dogs from auction, brokers or breeders. The majority of animals from auctions, brokers and some breeders are often raised in unsanitary and inhumane conditions. Such facilities are little more than warehouses. Little regard is given to the breeding animal’s well- being or health and the resultant puppies are often ill or have genetic problems. Removing what millers refer to as “excess or unwanted stock” which is what rescues do when they obtain animals from these sources, only perpetuates the practice and results in the rescue being part of the problem.

ii. Records – The organization shall maintain digital records for all aspects of the rescue including, intake/surrender forms, veterinarian records, adoptions records, foster records, volunteer records, etc.

At a minimum, digital records must be kept of each animal taken into the rescue including:

1) Surrender/Intake Information:

- Where obtained
- Date obtained
- Type of animal
- Male/Female
- Spayed/Neutered
- Approximate Age

2) Where the animal went

- Adopted, Euthanized, Transferred, Died, Lost
- Name, Address, Phone Number of where animal went
- Date Animal Left Rescue

3) Medical Information

- Scanned Vet Records
- Or a single place where medical information is kept such as Shelter Manager (www.sheltermanager.com) or an Excel Spreadsheet

4) Animal’s photo - The animal’s photo may be kept solely on Petfinder under the following conditions:

- The animal is marked with a unique ID Number (containing letters, numbers or special characters) and,
- That ID number is also used in all of the animal’s digital records and,

- The Petfinder listings are never deleted, but rather moved to “Adopted” and retained on the system.

There are multiple free ways to accomplish digital recordkeeping at a very low if any cost:

- Google Documents (free)
- Shelter Manager (free) www.sheltermanager.com
- Windows/Mac storage (free)

A certified rescue organization is not limited to these digital storage solutions.

iii. Medical Protocols – Recognizing that there is no single type of rescue group, with many differences in the type of animals, the financial resources, and the space available, the following requirements are the minimum acceptable standards to be certified.

All rescue group needs to have a relationship with at least one veterinarian. This veterinarian will be the place to take sick animals, animals that need rabies vaccinations and animals that require testing for heartworm and Intestinal parasites. This veterinarian can be an important ally in your attempt to adopt out healthy animals.

All animals should be given a close exam. Any signs of illness/injury should be noted on the intake report. Ideally all dogs and cats should receive a thorough physical exam by a veterinarian prior to adoption.

The following are protocols that the rescue groups must have performed unless medical records and the rescue’s veterinarian suggest alternative protocols:

All puppies and kittens must be vaccinated immediately upon intake with Distemper/Parvo for puppies and Panleukopenia/URI for kittens. The vaccinations should be repeated every 3 weeks. If the rescue has substantial turn-over, with new animals coming and going within the same households or locations, they are at an increased risk of these serious diseases and need to be boosted every 2 weeks until they are 4 months of age.

All adult animals with no known history of vaccination must be vaccinated upon intake.

All dogs and cats regardless of age must be wormed for intestinal parasites upon intake.

All dogs and cats must be given a flea product, if needed, Capstar for immediate 24 hour protection or topical for 30 day protection. Flea collars and low quality products do not work effectively and should not be used.

All animals must be given a close exam. Any signs of illness/injury should be noted on the intake report.

Signs to look for:

1. Attitude-Playful behavior is a good indicator of health, especially in young animals. Lethargic animals need to see a veterinarian ASAP.
2. Clear eyes-no discharge.
3. Clear, clean nostrils.
4. Skin that is free of crusts, bald patches, masses and sores.
5. Gait-the animal should walk without lameness.
6. Coughing.
7. Diarrhea.
8. Vomiting
9. Appetite-a healthy appetite is usually a sign of health.
10. Injuries.

Any animal with signs of illness or injury must be taken to a veterinarian for treatment.

All cats with flakey, crusty areas of hair loss, especially on the face, ears and paws, must be isolated from all contact with other animals and people until being checked by a veterinarian for ringworm.

Ideally the following should be part of standard protocols:

Dogs and cats benefit from a thorough physical exam by a veterinarian.

Dogs should be housed separately from cats and young animals should be housed separately from adults.

If possible new intakes should be isolated from other animals for 7 to 10 days, a reasonable amount of time for incubating disease to become symptomatic. All dogs and cats 4 months of age and older must be vaccinated for rabies, by law this must be performed by a veterinarian. At 4 months of age cats can be tested for Feline Leukemia/Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (this can be done much earlier but would have to be repeated at 4 to 6 months of age). All dogs 6 months of age must to be tested for Heartworm disease.

Regardless of resources all adopters should be educated on appropriate pet care, including veterinary care, heartworm, FeLeuk, parasites, housing and feeding.

iv. Behavior – Certified Rescue groups are not expected to conduct scientific temperament tests on animals in their care. They *are*, however expected to understand each animal’s behavior as much as possible prior to the animal becoming available for adoption. In order to do this, a dog must be in a safe, stable environment for a minimum of 10 days. Cats may take as long as a few weeks (and in some situations, a few months) to get comfortable enough where they show their true personality in a new environment. Properly integrating a cat into a new home with other animals often requires patience, but is very integral to maintaining a happy relationship between other animals and humans. If not introduced properly, it could set back the cat's personality, making it harder for it to get adopted.

For dogs, below is a list of behaviors that a rescue group must know about for every dog in their care:

- Does the dog have a known bite history?
- Is the dog high-energy, calm, shy, pushy, and fearful?
- Is the dog barky?
- Is the dog housetrained?
- Is the dog crate trained?
- Does the dog show any aggression around food?
- Does the dog show any aggression if a toy is taken away?
- Does the dog display aggression toward other dogs?
- Does the dog initiate play with other dogs?
- Has the dog been around cats and if yes, what is the dog’s reaction?
- Does the dog chew on inappropriate items such as pillows or furniture?
- Does the dog know any basic obedience commands (sit, down, etc.)?
- Does the dog take a treat gently from a human’s hand?
- Does the dog show any fear or show aggression to being touched?
- Has the dog had experience around young children?
- Is the dog able to be groomed without an issue?
- Does the dog display any separation anxiety?

Certified Rescue groups are not expected to conduct scientific temperament tests on animals in their care. They *are*, however expected to understand each animal’s behavior as much as possible prior to adoption.

- If the dog is a purebred, is it conforming to known breed characteristics?
- Does the dog travel well in a car?

For cats, below is a list of behaviors that a rescue group must know about for every cat in their care:

- Is the cat friendly or shy?
- Does the cat like to sit in your lap?
- Does the cat cuddle in bed?
- Does the cat hide?
- Does the cat approach people?
- Is the cat comfortable being approached?
- Does it like other cats?
- Does it like dogs?
- Does it like young kids?
- Has the cat ever attacked another animal or human?
- Is it an alpha cat?
- Does it scratch or bite? Has it ever bitten anyone?
- Does the cat use the litter box?
- Has it ever had any litter box issues?
- Does it like to look outside windows?
- Does it jump on counters or tables?
- Does it climb curtains?
- Does it play?
- What kinds of toys does it like?
- When playing, does it play aggressively or nicely?
- Does the cat know its name?
- Does it meow a lot?
- How active is the cat - does it sleep a lot or require a lot of attention?

The inability to identify and work on these behaviors indicates that the dog or cat has not been with the rescue group long enough for a true assessment and should not be made available for adoption until these questions can be answered.

Rescue groups must have a plan in place for animals that come in needing rehabilitation. This means that an animal will not be available for adoption until the issue needing rehabilitation has been addressed by appropriately skilled person(s). This may be a foster home that has proven experience in dealing with the issue at hand, it may include

medical tests to rule out an underlying medical issue, or it may require paying for professional behavioral assistance.

In cases where rehabilitation is not successful or not an option at all, a rescue group must be prepared to make a difficult decision. Animal sanctuaries may be a first option but they are very limited and it is unusual that space might be found available. In worst case scenarios where the animal can harm a human due to uncontrolled aggression and a sanctuary cannot be found, it may be necessary for the animal to be humanely euthanized. Humane euthanization means the animal is taken to a veterinary clinic and a representative of the rescue group stays with it. Unless there is a working arrangement with a shelter, it is an unacceptable practice for a rescue group to transfer their problem by dropping off an animal in their possession to a shelter and requesting the shelter to euthanize it. Once an animal is accepted into a rescue, the group must be responsible for the animal and deal with all problems.

v. Spay/Neuter - All dogs and cats older than 8 weeks and healthy must be sterilized prior to adoption. If an animal is ill when the surgery is scheduled the animal must remain in foster care until it is healthy enough to be sterilized.

All dogs and cats older than 8 weeks and healthy must be sterilized prior to adoption. If an animal is ill when the surgery is scheduled the animal must remain in foster care until it is healthy enough to be sterilized.

If a dog is found to have heartworm in Stage 1 or 2 the dog should be placed on Doxycycline and anti-inflammatory for 2 weeks then sterilized prior to treatment. Dogs that have more advanced heartworm disease should be treated first and then sterilized 6 months later. The dogs should remain in foster care or the adoption should not be finalized until the sterilization is complete. If an animal is found to be permanently unhealthy a letter from a veterinarian must be obtained detailing the animal's permanent health problem that would prevent it from being sterilized.

Philosophy:

Nationally the rate of S/N after adoption, even in the case of a deposit or prepaid surgery, is less than 50%. If we do not want to be part of the pet overpopulation problem we must be vigilant in guaranteeing that the pets adopted are sterilized. Pediatric Spay/Neuter is safe and easy with no related health issues that are proven by research. The website has additional information on medical protocols www.michiganpetfund.org.

c. Animal Marketing Requirements

i. Adoption Events - Rescue groups are encouraged to attend Adoption Events as their time and funding permits. At this time, a central directory listing Adoption Events does not exist; however an internet search of 'pet adoption events in Michigan' will yield results.

There are also weekend adoption events held in local PetSmart, PETCO and many independent pet stores. These are arranged individually with the store managers; however certified rescues are strongly encouraged to avoid adoption events or conduct other activities at stores that sell cats or dogs or other live animals. Animals supplied to pet shops including birds, puppies, and small mammals are often raised in unsanitary and inhumane conditions. Such facilities are little more than warehouses where animals are bred for mass production. Similar facilities and conditions also exist for reptiles and small mammals. Animals bred by "private breeders" aka "backyard breeders" typically fare no better. Whether they are bred in backyards or at mass production facilities, there is little or no regulatory oversight. Many reptiles and fish are taken from the wild. Some exotic species, including many birds and reptiles, are poorly adapted to captivity and, as such, it is difficult if not impossible to meet their needs in a pet shop setting. Conducting events at such stores support not only the store but also the continuation of inhumane breeding of the animals.

ii. Web Presence - Having a presence online is very helpful for getting exposure for your rescue. There are many free websites available that can help you get your adoptable pets exposed to increase adoptions, solicit donations (supplies and money), and promote any fundraising or adoption events.

Some of the more common FREE websites available include:

1. Petfinder (www.petfinder.com). Perhaps the most popular and well known website that potential adopters use to find their new pet. A veterinarian reference is needed to obtain a free website and profile posting.
2. Adopt A Pet (www.adoptapet.com)
3. Facebook. Pages are recommended for social networking while Groups may be more appropriate for staff and volunteer communications.

4. Yahoo Groups. Many rescues are migrating away from using yahoo groups for staff and volunteer communications and using Facebook groups instead. Yahoo groups only work with yahoo emails.

5. Craigslist. Use caution with Craigslist. Some groups use Craigslist to post animals and event information.

Certified Rescues are encouraged to set up their own website address which will probably result in incurred costs. Consider seeking a website savvy volunteer who may be willing to create and update the website.

The content on your website is very important. Although potential adopters may vary in the amount of information they want to know about your organization, it is probably best to provide as much information as possible so that potential adopters and donors feel comfortable about working with your group.

Suggested information you may want to consider having on the organization's website includes:

1. Logo
2. List of adoptable animals. Include photo, description, age, sex, breed, price and what the process is for meeting them.
3. Dates and locations of future adoption events. Directions or maps can be helpful.
4. Contact information: Names of Board members. Phone number and email address.
5. An address for the organization. Many foster-home based rescue organization use a P.O. Box as a mailing address as opposed to a home address due to concerns about receiving unexpected drop-offs of animals, in addition to potential adopters showing up at inconvenient times to "look at the animals". P.O. Boxes are fine – it is important that all organization have a mailing address.
6. Adoption fees and process for adopting.
7. Your non-profit status. Are you 501(c)(3), and if not, when are planning to apply/progress towards achieving it?
8. Your group's Mission Statement.

According to MDA&RD, stray animals are to be held by local animal control for a certain number of days. Rescues who find or take in stray animals must contact the local animal control facility for direction on how to handle the stray.

9. Fundraising link (i.e. PayPal) or address where donations can be sent.
10. Items needed (wish list) and locations where they can be dropped off.
11. Photos of volunteers, fundraising events, building (recommend to focus on the animals more so than the people)
12. News from recent fundraisers, or good news stories about recently rescued or adopted pets (Featured Pet).

iii. Telephone & Mailing address – Certified rescues will publish a telephone number, mailing address and e-mail address for the rescue. The telephone if answered by voice mail or an answering machine should have calls returned within 3 days.

d. Legal Requirements

- i. Strays** – A 'stray' dog is defined as: A domestic animal that is wandering at large or is lost. This includes abandoned, homeless or unwanted dog that may have been deserted or given up by their owner.

According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, stray dogs are to be held by local animal control for a certain number of days depending on whether they have identification or not. Rescues who find or take in stray dogs must contact the local animal control facility for direction on how to handle the stray. Some animal control facilities may allow rescues to care for the stray animal during the holding period provided they supply information about the animal, including a description, where the animal was found and the date it was brought in. The animal control facility is required to post this information to the public and allow access for potential owners to see the animal during the holding period. The animal control officer can require that the rescue bring the dog to their facility to be held.

Rescues cannot adopt out stray dogs that have not gone through the animal control system and waited the hold period for the owner to have an opportunity to reclaim.

- ii. Compliance with state and local laws/ordinances** – Certified rescues will comply with state, and/or local laws, and obtain if required licenses, permits or deviations. The website www.michiganpetfund.org contains a description of state and local laws which may pertain to a rescue organization, specifically shelter licenses, kennel licenses and number of allowable animals per household.

e. Other Requirements

i. Obtaining Rescue Animals – The following listing indicates which are acceptable and which are not acceptable for Michigan Certified Rescue Organizations to obtain a companion animal for rescue.

1. Strays	
a. Abandon animals in homes	Conditional ¹
b. Realtor calls. Owner or stray?	Conditional ²
c. Live Trapped (private property, TNR)	Conditional ³
d. Running at large	Conditional ⁴
2. Shelters	
a. Municipal	Yes
b. Humane Societies	Yes
c. Rescue	Yes
d. Out of state	No
3. Owner Surrenders (with form)+	Yes ⁵
4. Drop offs/Abandon	
a. Animal Hospital or Vet	Yes
b. Dumped outside shelter	Yes
c. Groomer drop offs	Yes
d. Board Facilities	Yes
5. Returned adoptions	Yes
6. From birth	Yes
7. Other rescue groups	
a. Trade animals	Yes
b. Take in overflows , breed specific or special needs	Yes
c. Broker Rescues	No

¹ See page 28 concerning stray dogs

² See page 28 concerning stray dogs

³ Permission must be granted by property owner first

⁴ See page 28 concerning stray dogs

⁵ If puppies or kittens are taken from an Owner or TNR it is imperative and should be conditional that the rescue spay the mother to prevent future births

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| d. Transport rescues | No |
| e. Rescues working with ACOs | Yes |
| f. Out of State | No ⁶ |
| g. TNR | Yes |
| 8. Law Enforcement (Raids or Busts) | |
| a. Abuse/Cruelty | Yes |
| b. Fighting rings | Yes |
| c. Hoarders | Yes |
| d. Puppy mills/back yard breeders | Yes |
| 9. Breeders | |
| a. Kennel closing | Yes |
| b. Kennel downsizing | No |
| c. Retiring animals | No |
| d. Unwanted animals | No |
| e. Brokers | No |
| f. Auctions | No |
| g. Flea Markets/fairs | No |
| 10. Pet Stores that sell puppies/kittens | |
| a. Unwanted: ill, too old | No |
| b. Pet store closing | Yes |
| 11. Steal from bad owners | |
| | No |
| 12. Online Purchases | |
| a. Craigslist | No |
| b. Yahoo groups | No |
| c. Forums | No |

It should be noted that Certified Michigan Rescues will not obtain dogs and cats from breeders, brokers or auctions. Obtaining animals from these sources keeps them profitable and in operation. If the operation is profitable, it will continue and more animals will be bred for sale at future auctions and puppy mills. It is recognized that in the short-term it is difficult for a rescue organization not to respond to a homeless animal in need of placement, however, relieving breeders, and brokers of what they consider “excess stock”, supports the operation and perpetuates continuation.

⁶ Purebred rescue only

- ii. Out of state transport** – Michigan Certified rescues will not transport animals in from out of state with the exception of purebred rescue organization that cover several states. Purebred rescue organizations will obtain the required Department of Health certificate prior to transport of the animal into Michigan – see website www.michiganpetfund.org for the requirement.

4. Application Process

a. Call for Applications/Renewals – Every September 1st, the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance will call for application or renewal of certification. Rescue organizations will be required to submit an application on-line between September 1st and October 1st for first time certification along with prior year statistics. For renewal applications, the rescue organization will be provided a copy of the previous year’s application and asked to update any changes from the prior year in addition to submitting the prior year statistics and any new criteria that might be required due to the previous year’s program evaluation.

b. Application Review Process – The Certification Committee Chair will review all applications for completeness. Applicants whose applications are found to be incomplete will be notified that their application will not be provided to the Rescue Certification Committee for review and will not be considered until the following year with a new submittal. The Rescue Certification Committee will meet, review and discuss all applications. They will have authority to approve an application as is, approve it pending investigation and verification or disapprove it. All investigation and verification will occur prior to December 1st.

Certified Rescues follow model standards, provide annual animal statistics, respond in a timely and complete manner, are respected by their peers and most importantly accomplish their mission of placing their wards into loving homes.

The Rescue Certification Committee will provide the list of recommended rescues for certification to the Michigan Pet Fund Board on December 1st. The Board will make a final determination for certification. All applicants will be notified of the Michigan Pet Fund Boards determination prior to January 1.

c. Review Criteria – The following is a listing of the review criteria that the Rescue Certification Committee will use to evaluation applications:

- Meets the model standards of the programs and can produce them when requested
- Provides the annual animal statistics report and the statistics appear to be reasonable (intake to adoptions, number euthanized etc.)
- Responds to any follow-up information in a timely and complete manner
- Is not the subject of complaint by other organizations or Michigan Attorney General’s office

- No cruelty complaints exist against any person associated with the organization
- Have not been found in violation of the program through the grievance process

d. Issuing of Certification – The Michigan Pet Fund Alliance will provide to certified rescues a numbered seal indicating the year that they can display on their website, printed material and adoption events. A listing of all certified rescues for each year will be posted on the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance website by alphabetical order including their assigned certification number.

5. Training/Educational Resources

Certified Rescues and those desiring to become a Certified Rescue are encouraged to seek out and take advantage of training and education resources. The following is a sample of training/educational opportunities that may be helpful.

Conferences

- Annual Michigan No Kill Conference – Courses are offered to help prepare rescue organizations for Certification. Also available is a variety of sessions on animal welfare www.michiganpetfund.org.
- Annual MPAWS Conference www.mpaw.org/events.htm
- Annual National No Kill Conference <http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org/no-kill-conference>
- Best Friends Animal Society <http://events.bestfriends.org/Upcoming/nmhp>
- HSUS Annual Animal Expo <http://www.animalsheltering.org/training-events/expo/>

On-Line Webinars & Workshops

- Pet Smart Webinars <http://www.petsmartcharities.org/events-news/upcoming-webinars/>
- Hands On Network – Volunteer development <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/nonprofitgov/training>
- Humane Society University www.humanesocietyuniversity.org

On-Line Resources

- HSUS educational resources <http://www.animalsheltering.org/>
- Petfinder How to start an animal rescue group <http://www.petfinder.com/how-to-help-pets/starting-nonprofit-help-animals.html>
- Citizen Media Law Project – forming a non-profit corporation in Michigan <http://www.citmedialaw.org/legal-guide/forming-nonprofit-corporation-michigan>
- Michigan Nonprofit Association <http://www.mnaonline.org/>
- IRS Topics for Charities and Non-profits <http://www.irs.gov/charities/topic/index.html>
- Online web site for financial help to rescue animals http://www.ehow.com/way_5801154_financial-rescue-animals.html

- Best Friends Animal Society Resource Library
<http://www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/resourcelibrary/index.cfm>
- Animal Grants <http://www.fundsnetservices.com/searchresult/19/Animal-&-Wildlife-Grants/1/.html>
- [Humane Research Council](http://www.humaneresearch.com/) - access to research, analysis and strategies to make your organization successful <http://www.humaneresearch.com/>
- [Community Driven Institute](http://www.help4nonprofits.com/H4NP.htm) – Non-profit library of resources - <http://www.help4nonprofits.com/H4NP.htm>

Non Profit Books

- <http://www.nolo.com/products/how-to-form-a-nonprofit-corporation-NNP.html>
- <http://www.nolo.com/products/starting-and-building-a-nonprofit-SNON.html>

6. Grievance Process

Grievance Process

Introduction To retain the integrity of the Certification Program, a Grievance Process has been developed. This process is intended to insure that rescue organizations that are certified operate with consistent, high quality standards. A rescue may have their certification revoked if a grievance is filed against them and it is determined they have not continued to meet the criteria outlined in the program. This Certification Program is “self-regulating”, meaning that grievances may be filed against certified rescues by anyone. The Grievance Process is open to everyone, adopters, shelters, other rescue groups, partner organizations, etc. Grievances may lead to a Committee Review, corrective action or revocation. The intent of the program is to provide assurance that the Certified Rescue is reputable and acting in an ethical manner. Hopefully, the grievance process will lead to corrections and improvements.

Roles

Complainant – Person making a Grievance.

Grievance Coordinator – Person appointed by the Michigan Pet Fund Board to coordinate the process.

Certification Committee Leader – Chairperson of the Certification Committee.

Certification Committee – Committee appointed by the Michigan Pet Fund Board to annually certify rescues, evaluate the program and review and recommend on grievances.

The Grievance Coordinator and Certification Committee Leader could be filled by the same person.

Definition of a grievance: Any incident in which the result did not conform to the criteria of the Certification Program.

Submitting a grievance: A grievance may only be submitted against a rescue that is currently certified. A grievance may be made formally or informally in any of the following formats:

- a. Online grievance form.
- b. Downloadable form
- c. Email

To retain the integrity of the Rescue Certification Program, a Grievance Process has been developed to insure that Certified Rescues operate with consistent high quality standards.

- d. Phone
- e. US mail
- f. Fax

Anonymous grievances are not permitted. Note, grievances are not made public and complainant information is not provided to the rescue involving the incident.

Logging a grievance: The Grievance Coordinator will be responsible for logging and tracking all grievances received. Each grievance will have a status assigned:

Open	Received, but not reviewed.
In process	Being reviewed by Committee or collecting more information.
Pending Corrective Action	Rescue was given criteria and conditions for correcting issues.
Closed	Grievance was not valid, action has been corrected or certification revoked.

PROCEDURE

Step 1: The complainant submits a grievance either formally or informally. The online designated form is preferred.

Formal: The designated online grievance form is filled out with as many details as possible: dates, times, location, names of those involved, links, photos etc. and is then submitted online to the Grievance Coordinator.

Informal: Grievances may come in the form of emails, letters, or phone calls. The Grievance Coordinator will mail a form to the complainant if the grievance is submitted in this manner.

Step 2: The Grievance Coordinator receives, logs and confirms to the complainant that the grievance has been received within five business days of submission. The Grievance Coordinator ensures the grievance is complete and may request further information from the complainant. The grievance details are then forwarded to the Certification Committee Leader for review.

Step 3: Using the process checklist, the Committee Leader ensures the grievance is reviewed within five business days of receipt from the Grievance Coordinator. The Committee Leader has the authority to choose to investigate further or designate someone to complete further investigation.

Step 4: The Certification Committee Leader or designee will complete any necessary further investigations to validate the grievance within five business days of receipt of the information. Findings will be sent back to the Certification Committee for review.

Step 5: The Certification Committee will address the complaint and determine the course of actions from the list below:

- a) File complaint as invalid, no further action required. Rescue is not notified. Update complaint status to Closed. Go to Step 10.
- b) Pursue corrective actions. Go to Step 6.

Step 6: The Certification Committee Leader will draft a notification letter to the Certified Rescue's primary contact that a grievance has been filed and ask for them to respond within 10 business days. At this time, the Certification Committee Leader can request that specific corrective actions be taken or allow the rescue to discuss the grievance. This letter should be sent via email with a read receipt.

Step 7: If the rescue does not respond within 10 business days, the Certification Committee Leader will make a phone call informing the rescue that certification may be revoked if there is no response within 5 business days of the phone call.

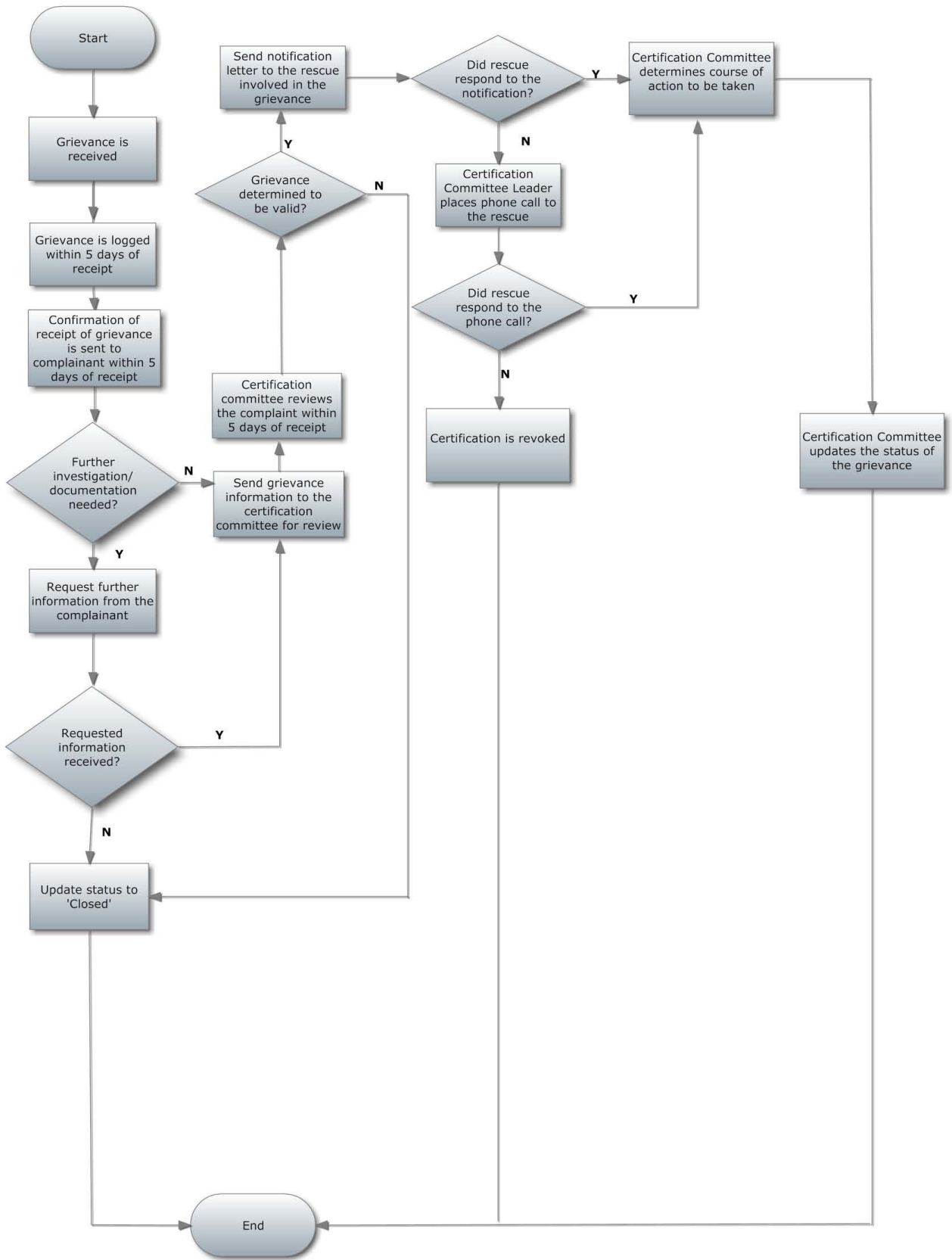
Step 8: If a response is received within 5 business days from the rescue, the Certification Committee determines next course of actions needed from the options below using the process guidelines. Go to Step 10.

- a. Allow the rescue to meet with the Certification Committee to discuss further.
- b. Allow the rescue to correct their processes with criteria and conditions.
(Corrective Action)
- c. Revoke their certification.

Step 9: If a rescue has been requested to correct their processes/actions, the Coordinator logs the status as "Pending Corrective Action". The Committee Leader will draft a list of criteria and conditions including target dates for improvements to be made.

Step 10: The disposition of the grievance will be logged, using the template in Step 2.

Step 11: If the certification status is revoked, the rescue will be removed from the website listing Certified Rescues and their on-line certification badge will be deactivated.



7. Annual Program Evaluation

The Rescue Certification Program is required to perform a yearly evaluation to ensure the program met its goals and to determine if any adjustments are needed. A sub-set of the Rescue Certification Committee will review the current program and document recommendations for modifications.

Annual Program Evaluation Input:

- Analysis of the number of Michigan rescue groups having applied for certification compared to the total number of eligible rescue groups in Michigan.
 - If a large percentage of Michigan rescue groups have not applied, further analysis of the acceptance criteria is recommended to determine what part of the criteria is preventing application and potential solutions.
- The percentage of rescue groups achieving certification versus those having been denied certification.
 - If 50% of those groups applying for certification are denied, it is recommended that the acceptance criteria be analyzed to determine if it needs modifications.
- Complaint Process log
 - This log may reveal trends showing potential additions to the acceptance criteria.
- Certification Program log
 - As the program is executed throughout the year, a log will be kept to note items that need further analysis.

A yearly evaluation will ensure the program meets its goals and provides a means to make any adjustments that may be necessary.

Annual Program Evaluation Output:

- Recommendations for changes are documented.
- An annual meeting of the Rescue Certification Committee will be held for the purpose of reviewing the recommendations.
- A vote is taken on each recommendation.
- Recommendations for changes will be forwarded to the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance Board of Directors for inclusion in the certification program.
- Items voted upon favorably are incorporated into the current program.
- Rejected items are documented in the Certification Program log, including the reason for the rejection. The Certification Program log will be used for the following year's evaluation and rejected items may be re-evaluated as input to the next year's annual evaluation.
- Notifications of any changes to the Certification Program are sent to existing certified rescue groups via e-mail.

8. Appendix

The Appendix has four sections:

- a. Terms and Definitions
- b. Certification Application
- c. Certification Check-list
- d. Resources

Additional program information is available on the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance website:

www.michiganpetfund.org

a. Terms and Definitions

Adoption Guarantee: a limited admission rescue organization that does not euthanize animals for any reason other than irreparable suffering; only method of euthanasia used is humane injection.

Animal shelter: facility housing adoptable animals that is open to the public

Dog flipping: a person or organization for money-making purposes obtains dogs for free or at a low cost by responding to ads in newspapers, Craig’s List, or purchases a group of animals at an auction. The flipper then advertises those same dogs for sale on Craig’s List or other venues for a higher price.

EIN: employer identification number, assigned by the IRS

Euthanasia: the merciful act of taking an animal’s life through humane injection for the sole purpose of ending the animal’s irreparable suffering.

Foster care: housing animals in a volunteer’s home as if it is their own.

Hoarding: mental illness of “collecting” animals and owning more than one can humanely care for.

Intake source: where the homeless animals comes from.

Killing: the act of taking an animal’s life in an inhumane manner and/or for any reason other than to end an animal’s irreparable suffering.

Limited Admission: an organization that may or may not maintain a physical sheltering location and does not accept into its shelter every animal brought to its facility; some animals are turned away based on adoptability and/or time/space; may use any method of euthanasia it chooses.

No Kill: an open admission shelter that maintains a physical sheltering location, does not turn animals away and does not euthanize animals for any reason other than physical, irreparable suffering; only method of euthanasia used is humane injection and saves 90% or better of the total intake.

Open Admission: an organization that maintains a physical sheltering location and accepts into its shelter every animal brought to its facility; none are turned away; may use any method of euthanasia it chooses.

Owner surrender: type of relinquishment of an animal that was owned.

Pediatric spay/neuter: the accepted veterinary practice of sterilizing kittens and puppies at 8 weeks old.

RTO: Return To Owner – usually referred to the act of reuniting a pet with their owner after it has been lost or escaped.

Strays: an animal found running at large, with or without identification.

TNR: Trap Neuter Return – a program to humanely trap un-socialized, or feral, cats; neuter and recover them, then return them to their original location where there must be a source of food and shelter.

Transfer: the act of reassigning ownership/guardianship and relocating of a homeless animal from one organization to another organization usually to take advantage of expertise, relieve capacity or increase chances of rehoming.

Animal Rescue Organization Definitions

Rescue Group: Rescue groups usually have a non-profit 501(c)(3) status. A rescue group is not usually shelter based, but share the same goal as animal shelters in placing homeless pets with adoptive families. Animal shelters are characterized as having a physical location dedicated to housing and caring for many different types of animals, where most rescues group work with specific breeds or types of animal and have volunteers who keep the animals in their homes until adoption, also known as foster care.

Rescue groups often obtain animals from local animal shelters, with the larger of these groups often transporting animals from locations that have a high number of homeless animals to locations where animals are more in demand. Some rescue groups are tied to national breed clubs for a given type of animal.

Most rescue organizations work to prevent abuse and treat its results. Overpopulation (especially through reckless breeding) is a major cause of animal neglect, so rescue organizations work actively to advocate spaying and neutering -- often through community education programs and "spay days."

BY SPECIES

Breed Specific Rescues: Many organizations, out of necessity, devote themselves to one species or breed. The needs of a dog are obviously vastly different from the needs of a rabbit. And some animals have breed-specific behaviors -- which can be made worse by inbreeding or

abusive conditions -- that are best handled by specialists. Some rescue groups are tied to national breed clubs for a given type of animal.

Cat Rescue: A cat rescue group is dedicated to finding new homes for homeless or stray cats and kittens. Types of cat rescues include: breed specific (Michigan Siamese Rescue), mixed breeds, exotic cats or kittens only.

Dog Rescue: A dog rescue group is dedicated to finding new homes for homeless dogs and puppies. Types of dog rescues include: breed specific, mixed breeds, all breeds, small breeds, and puppies only.

BY INTAKE SOURCE

Breeding Rescues: Some breeders also rescue animals that they specialize in. They may take back animals they have sold and re-home them. If they are not set up as a non-profit, this would be referred to as “re-selling” versus “adopting”.

Broker Rescue: A broker rescue group often works as a middleman rescue between other rescues groups, shelters, dog auctions or breeders usually between states. They may pull animals from a high kill shelter and place them with a variety of rescues in another state or region. Sometimes a puppy broker will front as a rescue organization deceiving the public into believing the puppies have been rescued, when they really have been purchased for resale.

Owner Surrender Rescue: Rescue organizations which rehome animals received from their current owner/guardian who is relinquishing the animal due to life circumstances or animal behavior/medical issues.

Shelter only intake: Rescue Organizations which obtain their animals directly from a licensed animal shelter.

Stray Rescue: Rescue organizations which obtain animals which are stray.

Some organizations further specialize by rescuing animals from specific situations.

Greyhound Rescues: Greyhound rescue groups typically help dogs that have been deemed too slow to be lucrative for racing.

Hoarding Case Rescues: Rescue organizations that respond to take animals directly from hoarders or from an animal control or cruelty organization that has intervened in a hoarding situation.

Pit Bull Rescue: In recent years, pit bulls have been vilified especially through dog fighting. Pit Bull rescues focus on finding homes for these breeds that are often hard to place and are discriminated against.

Puppy Mill/Auction Rescues: Some rescue groups primarily obtain their dogs from dog auctions in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri and Wisconsin. Dog auctions are organized for commercial-type kennels and serve as a major distribution channel for buyers and sellers from multiple states. Some rescue groups join other breeders/brokers in bidding on dogs and end up being the biggest “customers” at auctions adding to the profitability of the puppy mill industry.

Temporary Housing Rescue: A rescue organization that provides temporary foster housing for an animal which will eventually be returned to the original owner/guardian. Circumstances include services provided to military personal, individuals escaping domestic abuse and violence, individuals whose housing is subject to foreclosure or eviction, or other life crisis/circumstances.

BY HOUSING

Animal Protection Shelter: a facility operated by a person, humane society, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or any other nonprofit organization for the care of homeless animals. (S.B. 474 definition)

Animal Sanctuary: An animal sanctuary is a facility where animals are brought to live and be protected for the rest of their lives. Unlike animal shelters, sanctuaries do not seek to place animals with individuals or groups, instead maintaining each animal until his or her natural death. In some cases, an establishment may have characteristics of both a sanctuary and a shelter; for instance, some animals may be in residence temporarily until a good home is found and others may be permanent residents. The mission of sanctuaries is generally to be safe havens, where the animals receive the best care that the sanctuaries can provide. Animals are not bought, sold, or traded, nor are they used for animal testing. The resident animals are given the opportunity to behave as naturally as possible in a protective environment.

Foster-based Rescues: Foster homes provide healthy environments for homeless animals and those recovering from abuse or neglect. They allow the animals to get used to living with a stable, caring family. In cases of neglect or abuse, a foster home may help the animal regain its strength or health. Additionally, some animals need to go through a period of mourning for their former owners, even if those owners were neglectful. A foster family can also help with areas of training that the former owner may have overlooked. Fostered pets can be socialized, better adjusted -- and more adoptable.

Non-adoption rescue related groups

Animal Importer: An Animal Importer is a person/organization that brings dogs or cat into the state for the purpose of offering such dog or cat to any person for sale, adoption or transfer in exchange for any fee, sale, voluntary contribution, service or any other consideration.

Animal Sanctuary only: A facility where unadoptable animals are brought to live and be protected for their remainder of their natural life.

Cat Trap Neuter Return (TNR): A rescue which works to improve the quality of life for feral cats and reduce the intake of kittens to a shelter by trapping, neutering and returning feral cats to their original location. Often the rescue will discern domestic cats that may have joined the colony due to being lost or abandoned and take younger kittens that can be socialized to be adopted.

Transport Rescue: Transport Rescues provide transportation to homeless animals usually for purpose of taking them to a location to increase the possibilities of their adoption. Transport Rescues can operate locally, regionally, long distance and international. PetSmart Charities Rescue Waggin' takes animals from high kill shelters and transports them to destination shelters. Transport Rescues are used during natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. Other Transport Rescues operate to increase spay/neuter to participate at low-cost clinics.

b. Program Application

**Michigan Animal Rescue Certification Program
Application Agreement & Qualification Form**

This application must be completed by the president or executive director of the rescue organization.

Name of person completing this application:

Title within the organization:

Email:

Phone number:

Name of organization:

Mailing address:

Physical address (if any):

Phone number:

Website:

Email:

Date and location of incorporation:

Mission statement:

Public description and purpose:

Organization history:

Names of Board of Directors:

1. **Are you a federally designated 501c3 non-profit organization?** Yes No
(in the next step you will be instructed how to submit your proof of exemption)

EIN:

2. **Do you carry general liability insurance?** Yes No

3. **Which did you file in the most recent tax year?**

- € 990
- € 990-EZ
- € 990-N

4. **Do you have paid staff?** Yes No
If so, how many?

5. **Do you have unpaid volunteers?** Yes No
If so, how many?

Do you require an application to volunteer? Yes No
(in the next step you will be instructed how to submit a copy of your volunteer application)

6. **Do you use foster care homes to house animals?** Yes No
If so, how many?

If so, how long do animals typically stay in foster care homes before they are adopted?

If you do not use foster care homes at all, where are animals housed?

In addition to foster care homes, do you use other housing options?

If so, what are they? Please be specific.

If so, how long do animals typically stay in these other housing options before they are adopted?

Do you require an application to foster?

(in the next step you will be instructed how to submit a copy of your foster care application)

Do you perform any of the following on foster care applicants? (check all that apply)

- Vet checks
- Home checks
- Landlord/rental checks
- Property ownership checks
- Background checks

7. Do you operate an animal shelter that is open to the public? Yes No

If so, what are the hours of operation?

8. Are all animals in the rescue spayed or neutered prior to adoption? Yes No
(Acceptable to spay/neuter at 8 weeks old with appropriate weight and health check.)

If not, provide detailed explanation:

9. What types of animals do you rescue and re-home? (check all that apply)

- Puppies
- Adult Dogs
- Senior dogs
- All breeds
- Specific breed: _____
- Kittens
- Adult Cats
- Senior Cats
- TNR of feral cats
- House rabbits
- Ferrets
- Guinea pigs
- Hamsters
- Gerbils
- Rats
- Mice
- Chinchillas
- Other: _____

10. Intake sources (check all that apply)

- Animal shelters
- Owner surrenders
- Other rescues

- € Born in rescue
 - € Strays
 - € Broker rescue
 - € Puppy mill throwaways
 - € Auctions
 - € Hoarding cases
 - € Breeding rescue
 - € TNR
 - € DOA
 - € Other:
-

11. Reporting intake numbers: (must be done annually)

Total number of animals rescued in 2011:

- Puppies (6 months and younger upon intake):
 - Intake from shelters:
 - Intake from owner surrenders:
 - Intake as strays:
 - Other:
- Kittens (6 months and younger upon intake):
 - Intake from shelters:
 - Intake from owner surrenders:
 - Intake as strays:
 - Other:
- Adult Cats (7 months and older upon intake):
 - Intake from shelters:
 - Intake from owner surrenders:
 - Intake as strays:
 - Other:
- Adult Dogs (7 months and older upon intake):
 - Intake from shelters:
 - Intake from owner surrenders:
 - Intake as strays:
 - Other:

12. Reporting outcome numbers: (must be done annually)

Total number of animals adopted in 2011:

- Puppies (6 months and younger at adoption):
 - Adopted:
 - Transferred:
 - Euthanized:
 - Died:
 - Lost:
 - TNR:
 - RTO:

- Kittens (6 months and younger at adoption):
 - Adopted:
 - Transferred:
 - Euthanized:
 - Died:
 - Lost:
 - TNR:
 - RTO:

- Adult Cats (7 months and older at adoption):
 - Adopted:
 - Transferred:
 - Euthanized:
 - Died:
 - Lost:
 - TNR:
 - RTO:

- Adult Dogs (7 months and older at adoption):
 - Adopted:
 - Transferred:
 - Euthanized:
 - Died:
 - Lost:
 - TNR:
 - RTO:

13. Goals for 2012:

Intake:

Adoptions:

14. Type of animal housing operations: (check all that apply)

- Foster care homes
- Animal shelter that is open to the public
- Facility that is NOT open to the public
- Public boarding kennels
Which
ones? _____
- Public business or store
Which
ones? _____
- Vet's office/medical board: _____
- Other: _____

15. Provide detailed medical protocol for incoming animals:

16. What is your ill or injured animal veterinary protocol?

17. What is your internal and external parasite control protocol?

18. Do you microchip? (check all that apply)

- Dogs
- Cats
- Puppies
- Kittens

19. How many veterinarian clinics do you use?

List the two used most often:

Veterinarian name:

Veterinarian location:

Veterinarian phone number:

Veterinarian name:

Veterinarian location:

Veterinarian phone number:

20. Do you temperament test your incoming animals? Yes No

Describe temperament testing program:

21. Provide detailed description of your animal adoption program and application process:

(in the next step you will be instructed how to submit a copy of your adoption application and contracts)

Minimum age at which animals are adopted out?

22. Do you perform any of the following for adoption applications? (check all that apply)

- Vet checks
- Home checks
- Landlord/rental checks
- Property ownership checks
- Background checks

23. Provide detailed description of your animal adoption criteria:

24. Please provide your adoption fees in detail:

In addition to the actual animal, what is included in the adoption fee?

(Examples: pet insurance, post-adoption health check, microchip registration, training classes)

25. Do you hold adoption events?

If so, when and where?

26. Provide detailed description of your animal return policy.

27. Provide detailed description of your customer service program.

28. Do you conduct fundraising? Yes No

29. Types of fundraising events:

Care Philosophy: Do No Harm

Organizations must subscribe to the philosophy of “do no harm,” act responsibly in providing care for the animals in its custody and demonstrate concern for their health and well-being at all times. “Do No Harm” includes, but is not limited to, refusal to cosmetically alter an animal when the surgery is not medically necessary for the animal's health. Such surgeries include, but are not limited to, declawing, debarking, ear and tail cropping.

- We agree
- We do not agree

THREE REFERENCES:

Name:
Relationship:
Email:
Phone number:

Name:
Relationship:
Email:
Phone number:

Name:
Relationship:
Email:
Phone number:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Organization has the responsibility of understanding animal behavior, stress signs, evaluating for adoptable, potentially adoptable or unadoptable temperament and taking into account at all times the health and safety of people and the animals.

- Yes, I agree.
- No, I do not agree.

Organization shall be liable for any and all Losses arising from, in connection with, or based on any

Claim relating to any false information provided or an alleged breach of Organization’s obligations under this Application Agreement and Qualification Form. Additionally, Organization will at its expense indemnify, defend and hold harmless Michigan Pet Fund and its affiliates, and their respective officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, successors and assigns, from and against any and all such Losses.

Yes, I agree.

No, I do not agree.

For the purposes of the foregoing indemnity, “Claim” means any third party demand, or any civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative claim, action, or proceeding (including arbitration) asserted, commenced or threatened against an entity or person. “Losses” means all losses, liabilities, damages, liens, and claims, and all related costs, expenses, and other charges suffered or incurred as a result of or in connection with a Claim, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and disbursements, costs of investigation, litigation, settlement, and judgment, and any taxes, interest, penalties, and fines with respect to any of the foregoing.

Yes, I agree.

No, I do not agree.

Organization representative understands the policies and criteria required of the Michigan Animal Rescue Certification Program. It is also understood that the certification may be discontinued at any time for violation of the policies and criteria, with notification from the Michigan Animal Rescue Certification Task Force.

Yes, I agree.

No, I do not agree.

By signing and submitting this application, you attest that you are authorized to represent this organization and that you read, understood and answered truthfully each question in this application.

Organization name:

Representative name:

Date:

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

I have read and understand the Michigan Rescue Certification Program Application Agreement & Qualification Form:

YES, I agree and understand the agreement and electronically sign.

NO, I do not agree or understand the agreement.

c. Application Checklist

Michigan Rescue Certification Application Checklist

Before you begin to fill out the Application, make sure you have the following items:

- EIN Number
- Names of all Board members
- Organization Contact information
- Copy of the Mission Statement
- Copy of the Public description and purpose of the organization
- History of the organization
- Number of volunteers
- Number of foster homes
- Average stay of an animal in a foster home or boarding facility
- Number of animals – puppies, kittens, cats and dogs
 - Intake from shelters
 - Intake from owner surrender
 - Intake as strays
 - Other
 - Adopted
 - Transferred
 - Euthanized
 - Died
 - Lost
 - TNRed
- Next year's goals
- Medical protocols
- Veterinarian(s) contact information
- Names and contact information of three references
- Digital documents
 - IRS Determination Letter
 - IRS W-9 Form
 - Volunteer Application
 - Foster Care Application
 - Adoption Application
 - Adoption Contract

d. Resources

Adoption Resources

Adopt a Pet – www.adoptapet.com

Petfinder – www.petfinder.com

Fundraising/Organization Resources/Grants

Charity Navigator – charity review site <http://www.charitynavigator.org/>

www.grantSMART.org

[Guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org) -list your rescue at no charge so funders can find you.

Network for Good - help with fund raising – www.fundraising123.org

[Foundation Center](http://www.foundationcenter.org) - There is no online access unless you pay a fee. However, you can do customized searches of grants at the Farmington Hills or WSU Library. For the Farmington library, you do not have to live there, only provide your driver's license or your library card if your library member cooperates with them.

<http://foundationcenter.org/collections/ccmi.html>

Graphic Design Resources

[Grassroots.org](http://www.grassroots.org) - provides graphic design, website hosting, web building, project consulting, tools and much more for FREE!

[CreativePaw.org](http://www.creativepaw.org) - creative professionals for animal welfare - design work for rescues

Insurance Resources

Petfinder Animal Welfare Insurance Program

www.petfinder.com/admin-content/animalwelfareinsuranceprogram.html

Nonprofit Risk Management Center

[www.Nonprofitrisk.org](http://www.nonprofitrisk.org)

Nonprofits Insurance Alliance Group

[www.Insurancefor nonprofits.org](http://www.insurancefor nonprofits.org)

Prince Associates Inc. Insurance Managers

www.animalshelterinsurance.com

Philadelphia Insurance Cos.

www.phly.com

Insurance Group USA

www.insurancegroupusa.com

Great American Insurance Group

www.greatamericaninsurance.com

John O. Bronson Co.

www.johnbronson.com

Lost and Found Pets

<http://petharbor.com/>

<http://www.oliveralert.com/>

Pets911.com – post lost, found and adoptable pets

Photographs

[Stock.xchng](http://stock.xchng) - professional photos at low cost or FREE! <http://www.sxc.hu/>

Product Resources

Diatomaceous – Food-grade diatomaceous earth is a natural pest control for both external and internal use in animals for fleas, ticks, mites and worms.

Rescue Resources

Pet food bank for rescues - www.rescuebank.org

Rally to Rescue from Purina Pro Plan - <http://www.rallytorescue.org/>

TNR Training - <http://www.allaboutanimalsrescue.org/tnrtraining.html>

Software

You can use these sites to generate adoption forms, foster sign up forms, etc. There are versions that are free and then options to upgrade to a paid service.

<http://www.response-o-matic.com/>

<http://www.emailmeform.com/>

<http://www.freedback.com/features.php>

Techsoup.org - donated and discounted software for non-profits.

Pet Pointe – animal management software - <http://petpoint.com/>

Volunteer Resources

Energize Inc. – retention and recognition for volunteers - <http://www.energizeinc.com>

Volunteer match - find volunteers in your area: www.volunteermatch.org

Website Resources

Firestats - track your web site statistics (if your hosting provider doesn't provide them for you).
<http://firestats.cc/>