



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the adoption process?**

Please look at the animals in the adoption areas and read the basic information on their kennel cards. Once you have selected an animal, please ask the staff for more information and to show you the animal. When you are ready to adopt, please complete an application. Staff will review it and it needs to be approved before the pet can go home with you.

### **What are the Adoption Fees?**

Cat: \$35    Kitten: \$135    Barn Cat: \$30    Large Dog (>25 lbs): \$100    Small Dog or Puppy: \$130

All cats and dogs are spayed/neutered, wormed, micro chipped, receive a medical evaluation and one month of free health insurance from Shelter Care, and have received at least their first set of vaccinations, including rabies if they are old enough. Cats have tested negative for Feline Leukemia and FIV. All animals receive a behavioral evaluation.

### **Why do the dogs bark so much?**

Shelters can be a stressful place for animals. There are constantly visitors, other animals, noises, and smells that can upset them. There are several things you can do to help reduce the dogs' stress when you are walking through the dog yard. Dogs pick up on your energy and body language. Being calm and not staring will help the dogs realize you are not a threat. Big hats, kids, and people with alcohol on their breath are some things that frequently cause the dogs to bark. It doesn't mean they are aggressive. It means that something has aroused them and they are vocalizing their concern or they are trying to get your attention. The staff will show potential adopters dogs in the Get to Know You zone. You will get a much better read on their personality when they are away from all the other dogs and visitors.

### **Are you a No-Kill Shelter?**

"No Kill" is a highly misunderstood term. Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter is a "no kill" shelter and has been for many years. This is a term that is widely used in the shelter industry. It is very confusing because it suggests no animal is ever euthanized. Facilities that never euthanize are called animal sanctuaries. HOV is not a sanctuary. Put simply, "no kill" means that no adoptable animal will be euthanized, no matter how long that animal stays at the shelter. Animals with medical conditions that cannot be treated or those that present a threat to the community because of aggressive behavior will be humanely euthanized. The save rate at HOV is 77%, compared to most "no kill" shelters that have save rates in the range of 75-80%.

### **How do you get your animals?**

Animals come to the shelter for a variety of reasons. Owners may surrender their pets because they are moving, having personal problems, no longer have time or the pet needs training. Others come to the shelter as lost animals and are never claimed. Some are abandoned or victims of abuse. Each animal has a story and we can pull the file and share information with potential adopters.

### **How many adoptions do you do?**

In 2008, HOV reunited 549 pets with their families and found new homes for 1,435 animals.

**How many animals are at the shelter?**

The average daily census in 2008 was 265 animals. HOV serves approximately 2,500 stray, abandoned and surrendered animals every year from southwestern Montana. HOV rejects no companion animals and requires no surrender fee.

**How much are rabbits?**

All rabbits are micro chipped and spayed/neutered and the adoption fee is \$45.

**Does HOV accept pocket pets?**

HOV is no longer accepting gerbils, hamsters, rats and mice due to the lack of resources in both caring for them long term and successfully placing them into homes. These short-lived pocket sized companions are often surrendered toward the end of their lifespan with both temperament and medical issues making them difficult if not impossible to successfully adopt. These little pets belong in homes where they can be handled regularly, which our shelter environment cannot offer.

If you are looking to adopt a gerbil, hamster, mouse or rat, we are keeping a list of people looking to re-home their pets. If you are a guardian looking to re-home your pocket pet, we can take your information and pass it on to potential adopters. Other options are advertising them in the newspaper, advertising on [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) or contacting the store you purchased them from, as some stores will accept them back.

**Can HOV spay/neuter and vaccinate owned animals?**

HOV spays and neuters feral and semi-feral cats at no charge one day each month. Please call 388-9399, ext 100, if you need help trapping a feral colony on your property. We do not have the resources at this time to provide vaccination services to the public. The Montana Spay Neuter Task Force holds free clinics two times a year. They can be reached at [www.mtspayneutertaskforce.org](http://www.mtspayneutertaskforce.org) and their phone is 209-2293.

**Does HOV accept feral cats?**

Yes, HOV accepts feral cats; however, all feral cats will be humanely euthanized after a period of four days. During that period, staff establishes whether they could be someone's lost pet and whether they are truly feral. Feral cats cannot be re-homed to a new location because instead of remaining in that new location, they will return to their former home. Semi-feral cats, however, are spayed/neutered and put up for adoption for a minimal fee as barn cats.

**What is HOV's policy on accepting pregnant females and orphans less than four weeks of age?**

All pregnant dogs, cats and rabbits are spayed immediately if they are surrendered by their owner, or after a four-day period if they are a stray. This is due to lack of resources and our commitment to reduce pet over-population. Orphaned animals that cannot eat on their own (under four weeks) are humanely euthanized because they have compromised immune systems and usually develop into poorly socialized and/or aggressive pets.

**How is HOV funded?**

Heart of the Valley is a public 501(c) 3 non-profit organization funded by donations. We are supported primarily through the generosity of individuals and businesses.

**Do you need volunteers?**

Yes, volunteers are an integral part of the organization, and many of our programs depend exclusively on the support and participation of citizens from the community. Please complete an application today and put your love of animals into action by walking dogs, cuddling cats, helping in the office, providing foster care or in a variety of other ways.

**Thank you for your support!**