



PETS FOR PATRIOTS

SHELTER/RESCUE PARTNER PROGRAM

Updated May 2025

Pets for Patriots helps **United States military veterans** and **Gold Star families** adopt an emotionally healing friend while giving those animals most overlooked for adoption the loving homes they deserve

What makes us different

We are the only nationally operating 501(c)(3) charity that is:

- Open to **Gold Star spouses**, the husbands and wives of service members killed or declared missing in action (New! May 2025)
- Open to **veterans from WWII to active duty** and from all armed forces
- Focused on **overlooked shelter animals**: adult, special needs, long-term homeless dogs/cats, and large breed dogs
- Committed to **surrender prevention**



A call to duty

- **Collaborate with shelter/rescue partners** to place companion pets with military veterans and Gold Star spouses who need a pet to address PTSD, depression, loneliness; to fill the void of a loved one's deployment; to help heal the loss of a fallen hero
- **Provide access to affordable pet medical care** through community veterinary partners, savings through VIP Petcare, and discounts on Vetster for 24/7 pet telehealth
- **Ease stress of military transitions** on service members/families
- **Champion companion pet adoption**



Turnkey and free

Pets for Patriots provides an additional channel for your shelter/rescue to promote the most overlooked dogs and cats in your care - and is **100% free!**

- **Focus on most adoption-challenged:** dogs/cats who are adult, special needs, or chronically homeless, and large breed dogs
- **Free print and digital tools** to promote our partnership online, in shelter, and through local media/community channels
- **Forget Me Not campaign** available only to our shelter/rescue partners to shine a light on your long-term pets



Spotlight on long timers



📅 May 7, 2025 📁 Available for Adoption, Dog

Jacob is an easygoing fella who loves gentle walks and car rides!

[Read More →](#)



📅 May 7, 2025 📁 Available for Adoption, Dog

Bentley is a brilliant boy looking for a low-key solo pet home!

[Read More →](#)



📅 May 6, 2025 📁 Available for Adoption, Cat

Ash is a three-legged climbing cat who loves kids and other kitties!

[Read More →](#)

Our **Forget Me Not** campaign highlights program-eligible, long-timer dogs and cats in your care who are still searching for their heroes—and is an **exclusive shelter/rescue partner benefit**



Who and how we help

- **17* veterans commit suicide every day:** depression and PTSD are major contributors; pets give veterans a renewed sense of purpose and a reason to live
- **17,800** dogs and cats enter shelters daily:** many either fail to make it out alive or languish in long-term homelessness
- **Our program helps solve three problems:** provides healing to heroes/hero families; saves lives of vulnerable shelter animals; helps shelter/rescue partners make room for more animals in need

*2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, US Department of Veterans Affairs

** New Animal Shelter Data Indicates 6.5 Million Dogs and Cats Entered Shelters in 2023, Shelter Animals Count



Who and how we help

- **Loss of a spouse is recognized as one of life's most stressful events***: these burdens may be particularly acute for Gold Star spouses having lost a spouse in military action
- **'Widowhood effect' has negative health impacts***: companion pets are proven to boost physical and emotional health
- **Military families grieve—and heal—together**: pets make military families stronger through the shared responsibility of caring for a rescued pet

*2023 National Council on Aging



Making it special

Every shelter/rescue partner offers a 'member patriot special,' a 'thank you for your service and sacrifice' adoption benefit.

Some examples:

- Adoption fee discount or waiver (most popular!)
- 'Day one' essentials (food, leash, carrier, etc.)
- Low- or no-cost pet training (can limit to 'x' number of sessions or 'y' off standard fees)
- Coupons for local pet-care businesses



Good for people and pets

Our adopter benefits include:

- **\$200 pet retailer gift card** upon proof from the shelter of eligible adoption, to defray cost of 'welcome home' pet food and other essentials
- **Quality, affordable veterinary care** through local partner veterinarians, savings at VIP Petcare clinics nationwide, and discount on 24/7 pet telehealth from Vetster
- **Savings** on pet food, treats, medication, and supplies



Easy to administer

- **Free promotional tools** - both printer-friendly and digital - to promote our partnership
- **Free Search Engine Optimized page** on our site
- **One-page adoption checklist** to make it easy for your team to complete and adoption with options to send by email, fax, or through our online form



Program-eligible pets

A pet must meet just **ONE** of the following criteria:

- **Dog or cat at least 2 years of age**
- **Dog or cat with special needs** (birth defect, disability or chronic medical condition, **and** requiring lifelong care)... Not sure if a pet is special needs? Ask us at partner@petsforpatriots.org
- **Dog or cat homeless for 6 months+** (total continuous homelessness at your shelter and/or any shelter from which pet was transferred; time as a 'stray' does not count)
- **Dog 40+ pounds at time of adoption**



Pets for love, not work



**Dogs and cats adopted through Pets for Patriots
are for companionship and emotional support
only.**

We do not permit pets in our program to be
trained as service animals—without exception!



Allowable adoptions

Adopters can have up to **two program-eligible pets** (dogs or cats) at any give time, adopted simultaneously or over time.

A great way to **help bonded pairs** and other compatible animals find loving homes!



Pets for Patriots conducts post-adoption
follow up for a minimum of one year to
**nurture the person-pet bond and reduce
pet surrender**

Eligible applicants

- **Active, reserve, or separated members of the U.S. military** from all armed forces; we serve veterans from WWII to those currently in service
- **Husband or wife of service member** killed or declared missing in military action
- **Adopting pet for himself/herself;** cannot adopt on behalf of another person and **MUST** be legal owner/signatory for the adoption; we'll reach out to you if another party may be the initial signatory due to a veteran's military obligations or a Gold Star member's personal circumstances
- **Approved by Pets for Patriots prior to adoption:** all members **MUST** present their Pets for Patriots approval email/letter to shelter staff, not just tell you their unique Pets for Patriots number



Easy as 1, 2, 3...

1 Individual applies to Pets for Patriots online or by phone, provides required documentation

Approval is often within 2 business days as long as applicant has his/her documents

2 Once approved, member visits local shelter/rescue partner to adopt a pet

You help match our member with a program-eligible dog or cat - or two!

3 Shelter/rescue promptly sends Pets for Patriots signed adoption contract, photo of adopter and pet

See online shelter welcome kit for a one-page adoption checklist...our partner 'cheat sheet!'

4 Pets for Patriots post-adoption benefits, and follow up for a year!

5 Member visits our local veterinary partner for affordable, quality care



QUESTIONS? WE'VE GOT ANSWERS!

**Read some of our most-asked
questions...**



Q: Is Pets for Patriots getting rid of its programs for veterans?

No! Due to the overwhelming success of our companion pet adoption program for military veterans we are expanding eligibility to include Gold Star spouses.

In time and as resources permit we aim to welcome applications from Gold Star parents, siblings, and adult children.



Q: How do we handle adopters who haven't yet applied to Pets for Patriots?

You can put the pet on a three-day hold, or offer a short (e.g., 7-day) foster-to-adopt to allow the individual time to apply to Pets for Patriots. Our usual turnaround is no more than two business days from the time we receive both an individual's online application and eligibility documents.

Adopters will forfeit all benefits of our program if they adopt a pet prior to being approved by us unless they **adopt on a weekend or federal holiday***, or we have made arrangements with you beforehand, such as for an adoption event or extenuating circumstance.

***See our 'weekend-holiday adoptions' guide!**



Q: Do we have to change our adoption criteria?

Absolutely not! We respect your work and will not ask you to change the criteria you use to evaluate potential adopters. We rely on our partners to help make the best person-pet matches in keeping with our pet eligibility criteria.

However, if you decline to adopt a pet to a veteran or Gold Star family member in our program we appreciate knowing why so that we can determine how to best serve that individual moving forward.



Q: Does Pets for Patriots pay the adoption fee?

No. The adoption fee is the adopter's responsibility.

However, we encourage our shelter/rescue partners to offer adoption fee discounts or waivers as their member patriot special, though it is not required.

Partners that discount adoption fees can often recoup the difference through dedicated appeals to their supporters. Donors respond to specific donation requests, and love helping heroes, hero families, and pets in their communities.



Q: Can we ask for military ID, discharge papers, or a Gold Star's proof of casualty document?

No. We are experienced at reviewing a wide range of documentation relating to a veteran's eligibility or a Gold Star applicant's proof of casualty for their fallen hero.

Further, those documents contain confidential and highly sensitive information.

You may ask for other ID that is part of your customary application process, e.g., driver's license, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.



Q: Can a Pets for Patriots member adopt more than one pet?

Yes! Pets for Patriots members may have up to two program-eligible pets at any time. **For both pets to receive full benefits, both must fit one of our adoption criteria.**

The member may adopt both pets simultaneously (bonded pairs or other similarly compatible animals) or over time.



**FETCH!
LET'S GET STARTED**

