

Working Cat Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where do the working cats come from?

A: These cats are brought in by the community that have been trapped as feral or stray cats. These cats do not have the right temperament to be a friendly household cat. Unfortunately, most people do not want the stray cat(s) hanging around outside their house so they trap them and bring them to us. At most shelters, if a cat cannot be adopted into a home, it is humanely euthanized. The working cat program is trying to eliminate the need for euthanasia.

Q: Will these cats let me pet them or carry them?

A: Most of the time, no. These cats are not socialized and want little contact from humans, which is why we cannot adopt them into indoor homes. Some of our feral cats have some social skills and do want to interact around feeding time, however may not want to be picked up.

Q: Will these cats bite?

A: Most of the time feral cats do not want much interaction with humans. Attacking or lunging from feral cats is extremely rare. When caring for them during the initial quarantine period, we do urge you to go slowly and not to pet them, just feed and clean the litter box.

Q: What do I do when I bring them home?

A: We suggest that the cat(s) live in a confined space for 2-4 weeks so they can become adjusted to their new surroundings and to you. Studies have shown that keeping cats confined to a small space for 4 weeks has proven to be the most successful way to help keep your working cat from running away from your property. You will need to feed them at least twice a day. Canned food is recommended, along with a code word like "kitty, kitty" or "dinner is ready" so that they get to learn the sound of your voice and when to come for meal time. This will help your new working cat make positive associations with you and its new home. You will also need to be able to change the litter box daily until the end of the quarantine period. If needed, we can loan you a crate during this period.

Q: Can I come to your shelter and pick out the cat I want?

A: These cats are kept away from the general population, as to not stress them out, so no, you cannot pick out a cat. However, if you tell us what kind of cat you want, we can do our best to accommodate your needs with the feral cats we have.

Q: What do I do about taking my cat to the veterinarian?

A: These cats can be humanely trapped and taken to the veterinarian when needed. If your cat becomes injured or ill, you will need to take it to a veterinarian. This is our only requirement.

Q: Can I trap the feral cats outside my house so you can use for your program?

A: No, we do not encourage this because cats always do best staying where they are. If you are interested in Trap, Neuter, Return, please contact LHS for more information.