

# Telephone Screening Form for Cat Adoptions

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**Make this statement:** I am looking for the best possible home for our cat. Would you mind if I ask you a few questions?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A PET? \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED AT YOUR PRESENT ADDRESS? \_\_\_\_\_

HOW MANY ADULTS LIVE IN YOUR HOME? \_\_\_\_\_

ARE THERE CHILDREN? WHAT ARE THEIR AGES? \_\_\_\_\_

WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANIMAL? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT KIND OF AREA DO YOU LIVE IN? CITY \_\_\_\_\_ SUBURB \_\_\_\_\_ RURAL \_\_\_\_\_

HOW MANY ANIMALS ARE YOU LEGALLY ALLOWED TO HAVE ON YOUR PROPERTY? \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Do you want the cat for yourself, or is it for a gift?**

For me personally [0]

Gift for other person [State that you will have to interview the recipient first]

**2. Are you a student or active military?**

Yes [-20]  No [0]

**3. Do you own or rent your residence?**

Own [+10]  Rent [0]

**(If they rent) Will your landlord give you written permission to have a cat?**

Yes [+3]  No [Do not adopt to this person!]

**(If Yes) Will you show me the landlord's written permission that you can keep a cat (or cats) on the premises?**

Yes [+3]  No [Do not adopt to this person!]

**4. Do you have a cat or dog now?**

Yes [+1]

**How Many?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How long have you had your pet?**

0-3 years [0]  3-6 years (+2)  6+ years (+5)

**Does your pet get along OK with cats? (Go to #8 next)**

Yes [+5]  No [-20]  Don't Know [0]

No [0]

**5. Have you ever had a cat or dog?**

Yes [+2]  No [0] *Go to #11*

**6. How long did you have your pet?**

0-3 years (0)  3-6 years (+2)  6+ years (+5)

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## 7. What happened to your pet?

- Got rid of it** (Ask for details - choose all that apply)  
 Unavoidable [0]  Owner Inconvenience [-20]  Adopted w/fee [+2]  
 To Trusted Friend/Family [+5]  To Pound (-10)  "Free to Good Home" [-15]
- Died of a health problem**  
Was the animal treated by a vet for this problem?  Yes [+5]  No [-10]
- Ran away** (Ask for details)  
 Owner negligence [-20]  Fluke Accident [0]
- Killed in traffic** (Ask for details)  
 Owner negligence [-20]  Fluke Accident [0]
- Poisoned/Shot/Murdered** (Ask for details. If they still live in the same place and/or the circumstances have not changed, do not adopt to this person!)

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Does (did) the pet have its shots?

- Yes [+3]  No [-10]

## 9. Who is (was) your Veterinarian?

- Names a vet [+2]  Has (had) none [-10]  Don't remember name [0]  
**(Names a vet) May we contact your vet as a reference?**  
 Yes [+3]  No [-10]

## 10. Is (was) the pet spayed or neutered?

- Yes [+5]  No [-10]

## 11. Are you interested in breeding?

- Yes [-20]  No [0]

## 12. Do you think that an animal should have at least one litter before being fixed?

- Yes [-10]  No [0]

## 13. Will this cat be an indoor or outdoor pet?

- Indoor [+5]  Outdoor [-20]  Both [-20]

## 14. Do you plan on having the cat de-clawed?

- Yes [-15]  No [+5]

## 15. If you moved, what would you do with the cat?

- Take the cat with me [+5]  I'd have to find it a home [-20]

## 16. Does everybody in your family want an adopted cat?

- Yes [+2]  No [-20]  Single Person [0]

## 17. Is anyone in your household allergic to cats?

- Yes (Do not adopt to this person!)  No [0]

## 18. May I visit your home to see how and where the animal would be living?

- Yes [+3]  No [-20]

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>GRADE: 30 or more</b> | <b>Excellent.</b> Based on their score, these people should provide an ideal home. Arrange for you to visit their home and for them to meet the prospective cat. |
| <b>GRADE: 21 - 29</b>    | <b>Good.</b> Keep them on your list of potential adopters. Meet with them personally and visit their home to form a more solid opinion of them.                  |
| <b>GRADE: 15 - 20</b>    | <b>Fair.</b> Proceed with caution. You definitely should visit their home and get to know more about them before adopting an animal to them.                     |
| <b>GRADE: Below 15</b>   | <b>Poor.</b> Unless there are very unusual circumstances, we would not adopt to these people.  |

## GUIDELINES

Do not reveal to the person being interviewed what you are looking for in a pet owner. Some people may then tell you only what you want to hear. At the same time, don't "grill" them. Instead, make conversation and you will be surprised at what they reveal about themselves.

The first gray section of this form gives you a general background on the person and an idea of what kind of environment might be provided for the cat. The prospective adopters set the tone right away when they describe what they are looking for in a pet. It could be a companion for a lonely person, playmate for their children, buddy for another pet or an act of kindness in providing a home for an unfortunate animal. The number of adults and children in the home and their ages will indicate to you whether the cat would be suitable or not, since you are familiar with the animal's personality.

How long they have lived at their present location usually gives you some idea of their stability. If they have moved into their neighborhood recently, ask how long they lived at their last residence. The location of the prospective home may also help you in the decision making process in many ways. For instance, the community they live in determines how many animals may be kept on the property. Don't let them adopt an animal if it puts them over their legal limit!

In all cases, do not make a snap decision while on the telephone. Tell them that other people are on your prospective list and that you will call them back. Then tally up their points, review your notes and compare them with other prospects. If you feel that you have found a good home, call them back and make arrangements for them to see the cat and for you to visit their home.

This screening form should be used in conjunction with other techniques, such as face-to-face interviews, home visits and conversations with the person's friends and references. None of the conditions in this screening form are absolute. They are guidelines and should not be used alone to make a definitive decision regarding someone's suitability as an adopter. While, in our opinion, getting a -20 on any given question is generally a "show stopper", **there are always exceptions to every rule.** For instance, the form deducts a lot of points if the person is a student or in the military. This is because these demographic groups are known to abandon pets much more often than the average pet owner does. But if they score high in other areas, get to know them better and ask for character references. They may be totally dedicated to a pet and would never abandon it.

Another example would be someone who has recently lost an old and/or beloved pet and has been referred to you by a reputable veterinarian. This is practically a "no-brainer", regardless of the circumstances.

Use your discretion with the points system. If you feel that someone went above and beyond the norm in any of the situations, you should feel free to give them a higher score than listed. For instance, if someone went to extraordinary lengths to try and save a former pet with a health problem, they would merit more than 5 points on item #7. Alternatively, if you feel more strongly about any of the negative items, you may want to deduct more points.

Careful thought and common sense are required to be successful in this process. Also it is necessary to be flexible, keep an open mind and use your good judgment.