

Open Arms Challenge

Welcoming Practices & Program Suggestions/Action Items

1. Processes are equitable and inclusive

- a. Every part of adoption process is non-restrictive and looks for good matches rather than reasons to deny
- b. Adoption paperwork (if needed) is concise and does not include questions that look for reasons to deny adoption
- c. Every part of volunteer and foster process, including paperwork, is open and does not look for reasons to deny
- d. Organization uses a hybrid of virtual and in person services to meet the needs of all community members in all neighborhoods
- e. Every part of the adoption process (marketing, counseling, paperwork) is available in multiple languages as needed by your community
- f. Transportation to organization and in-neighborhood services are offered to provide every service (adoption, foster, volunteering, pet care, etc.) to all areas of community

2. Customer success is ensured through customer service

- a. Voicemails and emails are returned promptly and with necessary information
- b. Visitors are welcomed and greeted promptly and directed appropriately
- c. Client-facing staff and marketing are honest and informative about availability and status of animals
- d. Organizations share additional resources if they cannot meet needs of client

3. Marketing is inclusive of all areas of your community

- a. All media is evaluated and used to best reach entire community
- b. Fosters are empowered as adoption ambassadors
- c. Organization uses direct communication to reach entire community (i.e., in-person, phone calls, in-community local businesses, events; meeting community members where they are.)
- d. Different modes of communication are used to reach all community members rather than one-size-fits-all communication approach

4. Organization embraces an open and welcoming culture

- a. Paid and unpaid staff training includes topics like open adoption and client services
- b. Board, leadership, paid and unpaid staff (volunteers) engage in Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and bias awareness training
- c. Organization works with a Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion consultant
- d. Policies are created or updated to become more inclusive (i.e., waived fees and requirements for adoption, volunteering, returning pets to home when appropriate)
- e. Organization commits to the [Best Friends Removing Roadblocks Pledge](#) and the organization's policies reflect this commitment
- f. Paid and unpaid staff are acknowledged and rewarded for customer success

5. Organization creates partnerships with organizations

- a. Organization finds partners in the community and works together to support all community members
- b. Programs are held at offsite locations in partnership with community businesses or organizations
- c. Paid and unpaid staff are recruited from community being supported through help of partners
- d. Community partners are consulted to help make changes

6. Other – an open and welcoming practice you're already doing that's not listed above

- a. Something not on this list that the participating organization is doing or plans to do.