

The following policies and procedures apply to home turnovers and animal surrenders.

The Ontario County Humane Society, hereinafter referred to as OCHS, maintains a strict no-kill policy due to available space for all residents. Maintaining an appropriate population is crucial to preserving our no-kill status. In 2019 *Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program* (MSMP) at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine performed an evaluation of OCHS and determined an appropriate population while noting *"it is important to recognize that capacity is determined by many different factors, in addition to the physical number of housing units. Furthermore, physical capacity is not simply the number of cages available, but the number of humane housing units."* MSMP determined that OCHS can humanely house a population consisting of 20 dogs and 20 cats, as well as a limited number of small and exotic animals on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the facility's physical capacity, OCHS maintains a contract with Ontario County and its jurisdictions to enforce dog control and prevent animal cruelty. It should be noted that this contract does not include cat control and OCHS is not required to accept cats but does so when space allows and in an effort to humanely care for Ontario County's cat population. This contract impacts the available space at all times due to the necessity of available humane housing units in the event of seized and/or "at large" animals which have the potential to be in excess.

Due to these contributing factors, the OCHS population must be carefully monitored and maintained to promote the health and wellness of all residents now and in the future and to ensure available humane housing units for lost animals and victims of abuse. To maintain an appropriate population and minimize stress behaviors seen in shelter animals, all home turnovers (voluntary owner surrender) will be required to participate in OCHS's S.O.S. Program (*Supporting Opportunities for Success*) for a minimum of 2 weeks. The S.O.S. Program utilizes social media in finding appropriate homes for unwanted and homeless animals and allows seamless transition from one home to another without the need to enter the facility. Participation in the S.O.S. Program does not guarantee placement, nor does it guarantee placement with OCHS should a suitable home not be found after two weeks. If a suitable home is not found after the mandatory two-week period, eligible animals will be added to a waiting list while in anticipation of available space with OCHS. The waiting period on said list will be determined based on the current population at OCHS and the order in which the animal falls on said list.

Eligibility for surrender is determined using multiple considerations including but not limited to physical location, medical history, behavioral history, and the ability to pay mandatory surrender fees. OCHS is not able to accept home turnovers and animal surrenders from surrounding counties and eligible surrenders must reside within Ontario County. All available medical history (vaccines, neuter status, conditions, medications, regular checkups, etc.) will be required before an animal can be approved for surrender. Failure to provide medical history and/or unvaccinated/unaltered animals may be subject to increased fees. In addition to medical history, a thorough behavioral evaluation must be done by OCHS staff to determine the likelihood of successful placement.

Should an animal reside in Ontario County, complete the mandatory two-week period of participation with S.O.S., provide a complete medical history if available, pay the mandatory surrender fees, pass a behavioral evaluation completed by OCHS staff, and fall within OCHS population guidelines stated above, at this time said animal may be eligible for surrender with OCHS.