

# **YWCA** **IS ON A** **MISSION**

YWCA OKLAHOMA CITY  
EmPAWerment Program  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

*Board Approved 1/25/2024*

### ***YWCA OKC Mission Statement:***

YWCA Oklahoma City is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

### ***Purpose - Pet Program and On-Site Kennel:***

YWCA OKC operates a Pet Program and provides on-site kennel space to our clients as a courtesy. The program has been developed specifically for domesticated dogs and has expanded to accept cats. Other animals will be considered on an individual basis. Pet housing/care includes on-site kennels and may include partnerships with local veterinary doctors, a fostering program, and basic pet care through community partnerships. These partnerships operate in various ways depending on the individual needs of the client and their pet(s). The following policies and procedures provide generalized program guidelines but are not inclusive of every situation regarding to pet care.

Oversite of these policies and procedures and the program, in general, is provided by the YWCA OKC Pet Advocate, Shelter Directors, Sr. Leadership Team and Board of Directors.

The YWCA OKC Pet Program and on-site kennel strives to:

- Allow clients with pets to flee their abusive environment, enter shelter, and remain safe.
- Support the emotional needs of clients by allowing pet(s) to enter shelter environment with the client.
- Provide a safe, healthy environment for pets during a client's stay at the Thelma Gaylord Emergency Shelter. Pets will be housed either in the on-site kennel area, with a partner veterinarian or through a foster family.
- Assist clients in safety planning with their pet(s).
- Allow self-determination for clients in decision making regarding best care for their pets.

### ***Guidelines for Animal Admittance:***

YWCA OKC strives to remove the barriers associated with pet ownership for clients who have emergency shelter needs, while continuing to maintain safety for all our clients and their children. Therefore, the following guidelines apply when determining whether animals can be accepted into the YWCA OKC Pet Program:

- Acceptance of pets will be determined by available space (either in on-site kennels, with community partners or foster families) and evaluation by Pet Advocate as space is available.
- YWCA OKC may limit pet intakes due to capacity as needed.
- Pets not disclosed on initial shelter assessment or intake will not be accepted into the program unless extenuating circumstances occur and documented prior approval/screening is completed by pet advocate or designated YWCA employee.
- YWCA OKC on-site kennels can hold dogs up to 150 pounds. Dogs larger than 150 pounds will be

rehoused at a partner vet, animal boarding facility or with a foster family as soon as possible for the comfort of the animal.

- All pets must be current on vaccinations. If vaccination records cannot be provided, pets will receive essential vaccinations by a partner provider within 1 week of arrival.
- Dogs must have vaccinations including but not limited to Bordetella, Parvo, Distemper, Rabies, and Canine Hepatitis.
- Cats must have vaccinations including but not limited to FVRCP and Rabies.
- Flea and tick treatment will also be mandatory to help mitigate the spread and prevent kennel infestations. If needed, YWCA OKC staff will connect clients to partner providers to obtain such treatment.
- Pets must wear an identification collar at all times. This collar must include the animal's name, the owners name and the animal's current rabies tag.
- Pets must not show aggression towards other pets or people. We understand a change in environment is just as hard on pets as people, but aggressive pets will be removed and rehoused at a partner vet, animal boarding facility or with a foster family as soon as possible.
- Noisy pets who are, or become, vocally disruptive will be removed and rehoused at a partner vet or with a foster family as soon as possible, if available.
- Clients must complete the YWCA OKC Pet Shelter Agreement and YWCA OKC Pet Intake before their animal(s) will be accepted into the program.
- Clients must provide (as applicable) a copy of any Protective Order which includes pet(s).

### ***YWCA OKC Responsibilities:***

Following are the responsibilities of YWCA OKC regarding the Pet Program and on-site kennel:

- YWCA OKC will do its best to provide a safe, secure, pet friendly location for our client's with animal(s) either through on-site kennels, housing with partner veterinarians, boarding facility, or through a foster family. The YWCA OKC Pet Program is provided as a courtesy to our clients and there may be times when pets cannot be accommodated.
- YWCA OKC will provide easy access to items required for proper kennel care.
- YWCA OKC will make every effort to assist clients with finding low/no cost services and care for pet(s).
- YWCA OKC will work with clients to develop a safety plan, which includes their pet(s).
- YWCA OKC will make reports to Animal Welfare if abuse or neglect occurs on property.

### ***Client Responsibilities:***

Clients are fully responsible for the care of their pets while staying at YWCA OKC. These responsibilities include:

- Being respectful of residents who may not welcome the presence or have fear of dogs.
- Incurring all costs associated with caring for their animal, including food, medical care and regular occurring incidental costs associated with pet ownership. This includes any costs associated with housing pet(s) due to medical emergency or temporary abandonment.
- Feeding daily and ensuring pet has clean water at all times.
- Cleaning kennel daily. Including the removal of feces, washing of kennel floor as appropriate and ensuring kennel is odor free.
- Litter boxes must be cleaned daily
- Keeping pet(s) cleaned and groomed as appropriate.
- Providing and administering all medications required by the pet(s).
- Keeping pet(s) on a leash and in your control when not in kennel or in play yard. Owner is responsible for the animal's behavior in the play yard and on the YWCA OKC campus. Pets who are not well-socialized and display any concerning behaviors(i.e fence jumpers, escape artists, etc.) will need to remain leashed at all times, even in the play yard.
- Exercising pet(s) daily. Twice daily is encouraged. A fenced pet play yard is provided for pet owners behind the Administrative Building. If needed accommodations may be made for pet advocate or available staff to have scheduled play/exercise time to ensure well being of pet.
- Signing up for scheduled play yard time can be done with Pet Advocate or at the shelter front desk.
- Pets shall not interact with other clients and their animals as we cannot preemptively know each animal's temperament and/or reactions to interaction. This is to keep all pets/people in shelter safe.
- Cleaning up after pet(s) in the play yard or other pet messes on YWCA OKC grounds. Bags and a trash receptacle are provided by the exit gate of the playyard.
- YWCA OKC is not responsible for clients or their pet(s) while on the YWCA OKC campus as well as when walking outside of YWCA OKC property.

### ***Safety Procedures in the Kennel and Common Areas:***

- Kennel area and lounge access is reserved to clients who have pets housed within the kennel. A number coded lock is on the door and the code is not to be shared with other clients or children.
- Only one client/family is allowed in the kennel, play yard, or lounge areas at a time.
- Clients must utilize sign in sheet in kennel area. Not signing in/out can impact your stay.
- Smoking is not permitted in the kennel area, play yard, or lounge areas. Smoking is permitted in designated smoking areas only.

- Shoes must be worn at all times inside the kennel area, play yard, or lounge areas.
- Clients may attend ONLY to their pet(s) and are discouraged from interactions with other kenneled pets.
- Children are not allowed in the kennel, play yard, or lounge areas unless accessing their own pet and must be accompanied by their parent/guardian.
- Accidents or injury in the kennel, play yard, or lounge areas must be reported to shelter staff immediately.
- Dogs removed from their kennel, play yard, or lounge areas must be on a leashed and securely led by owner.
- Kennels and lounge may not be moved or rearranged.

### ***Limiting Transmission of Disease:***

Animals in shelter environments can easily pass disease from one animal to another without proper care. Common modes of disease transmission are direct contact such as nose-to-nose, indirect through items such as cleaning utensils or hands, via the air, animals sneezing or coughing and through fleas, ticks or rodents.

To minimize the risk of disease transfer the following protocols apply:

- Immediately report any animal appearing sick to the shelter staff.
- Animals should not come into contact with other kenneled animals upon entering or exiting from their individual kennel.
- Kennels and play yard MUST be kept free of feces at all times.
- Cleaning equipment must be kept clean and is to be disinfected by clients after each use. Supplies for proper cleaning will be provided by shelter staff.

### ***Animals Medical Care:***

All medical care of pet(s) is the responsibility of the client. Any pet entering shelter with obvious veterinary needs will be addressed with the client and a best course of action determined. YWCA OKC advocates will work with our veterinary and community partners to *TRY* to find no/reduced cost care but clients are responsible for any incurred medical costs.

### ***Human Medical Emergencies:***

In the event of a medical emergency to a client who has an animal on-site, the YWCA Pet Advocate and Shelter Director(s) or designated YWCA Advocate will coordinate predetermined procedures regarding the care of the client's animal. This could include YWCA OKC rehousing

the animal with one of our community partners or staff and/or volunteers caring temporarily for the animals until client can resume responsibility for the animal, or fostering through OkHumanes's Animal Advocacy Program. In some cases animal surrender may be the only option. Clients will predetermine preferences for this scenario at the time of pet and client intake.

### ***Inclement Weather:***

Oklahoma weather is highly unpredictable and can change quickly. Although our best effort will be made to follow the procedures below, there may be times when it is not reasonable or safe to do so. We also realize that temperature tolerance varies from pet to pet. Clients need to be proactive in thinking about alternative locations for their pets during extreme temperatures and not rely 100% on YWCA OKC partners.

Regarding kenneled animals at YWCA OKC, the Pet Advocate will make the determination as to when the general animal population should be relocated for inclement weather.

Extreme Temperatures: Kenneled dogs will be allowed in the on-site kennel when average temperature inside the shaded kennel area is reasonable comfortable for the pets. Other accommodations may be made with the Pet Advocate depending on specific needs including breed, coat, age, physical condition, etc.

Heavy Rain/Thunderstorms: Storms in Oklahoma can appear quickly. In times of heavy rain and thunderstorms, an alternative on-site interior location will be identified for the protection and well-being of the animals.

Tornadoes: During threat of severe weather and tornadoes, YWCA OKC will utilize a partner facility (if available) to house all on-site pets. Should time or staffing not be available to transport pets, an alternative on-site interior location will be identified.

### ***Animal Abandonment/Abuse:***

YWCA OKC is not responsible for client's pet(s). All pets and their care are the full responsibility of the client. YWCA OKC will follow the guidelines below for animal abandonment.

- Pet(s) must be removed by the client within 12 hours of exiting the shelter.
- Any pet(s) left without care for more than 12 hours will first be offered to the client's emergency contact.
- If the emergency contact declines to pick up or cannot care for the pet(s), client agrees to forfeit all rights of ownership of the pet(s) to YWCA OKC who will then surrender the pet(s) to a local animal welfare/rescue agency.
- Any costs incurred for the animal due to abandonment will be the client's responsibility.

*Please be advised YWCA OKC may be required to report animal abuse to law enforcement authorities, including providing any veterinary records supplied or produced as a result of Resident's pet staying at shelter. These records may be provided to law enforcement or to the prosecutor's office for use in court, if animal cruelty charges arise.*

***Ultimate Responsibility:***

YWCA OKC holds *NO* responsibility for client's pet(s). Pet(s) are fully under the care of their owners who hold ultimate responsibility. YWCA OKC holds no liability in the case of injury, illness or death of a client's pet(s) sheltered onsite, with a foster family, or at a boarding facility.

***Violation of Policies:***

Should these pet policies be violated by a client, appropriate action will be determined by Shelter Director and/or appropriate YWCA OKC advocate. These actions could include a warning, corrective action plan, removal of the animal from YWCA OKC Pet Program, and possible exiting of client and pet(s) from shelter.