

Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond: Adoption Process

Lab Rescue of Greater Richmond follows an established process to promote successful adoptions. Here are the highlights:

1. **Application:** The first step in our process is a written application. You can obtain our application by downloading it from our website at www.labrescue-richmond.org or e-mailing us at LabRescueofGR@yahoo.com. We will e-mail you our application. You may submit your completed application by mail, by fax, or by e-mail. (If you choose to use e-mail, the application must be scanned into JPEG files and sent as attachments to an e-mail.) We usually respond to faxed or e-mailed applications within about a week. We respond to mailed applications within about three weeks. We respond to all applications as long as the contact information, particularly phone number and e-mail address, are legible.
2. **Interview:** Once we receive your completed application, you will be contacted by one of our volunteer Adoption Coordinators (AC). The AC will schedule a phone interview with you. All adults in the household must be interviewed, but this can be done at the same time or at different times, depending on your schedule. The AC will talk with you about your dog experience and your plans for caring for your Lab. She will decide whether or not you are approved to continue the process. Most applicants are approved. If we have serious concerns that your philosophy of dog ownership differs from ours, however, we will not approve your application. It doesn't mean that you're not a fit dog owner; it means that we reserve the right to place our dogs in homes that we feel are the best fit for our dogs. The few applicants we do not approve are generally quite gracious in agreeing that we disagree, and we appreciate that.
3. **Review adoption protocol and process:** Once your application is approved, your AC will review our adoption protocols (the main points of the contract you will sign if you adopt) and process. If you agree to abide by these guidelines, then you move to the next step.
4. **Looking for your new family member:** Your adoption coordinator will have approved you to adopt a dog within certain parameters of age, activity level, temperament, socialization, and training. Few adopters are eligible to adopt just any dog. Matching the right dog with the right home is our most important service. Your AC will tell you about possible matches and you will choose which dog you'd like to meet first. Most of our dogs are adopted by referral. Your AC will discuss your situation with the dog's fosters and see if it sounds like a good match. If it does, you'll be provided with contact information for the dog's foster and it is your responsibility to contact the foster and set up an appointment. There are several important points to keep in mind before you schedule a referral:
 - All members of the household, human and canine, must attend a referral. No adoptions will take place until all family members have met the prospective adoptee. If all members of the household cannot attend, you should not schedule a referral.
 - You must be prepared to take your new family member home if you meet a dog and want to adopt. Adoptions are first come, first served, and if you choose not to adopt, the dog is available for the next referral.
 - Despite this rule, you should never agree to adopt if you have reservations. Trust your feelings. If you're uncertain if the dog is right for you, take time to reconsider. There are more than enough dogs to go around. Another great dog will come your way if this one finds a home in the meantime.
 - Most of our Labs come with few, if any, belongings. Be sure you are equipped at home to care for your dog before you take a dog home, and take a collar and leash with you when you are visiting dogs. A tag is a good idea, too, even if it only has your name and phone numbers and doesn't yet have your dog's name. If you do not have a tag, your dog should wear the Lab Rescue tag until you have placed your own tag on the dog.

When you visit a dog on referral, take time to visit with the dog indoors and out. Ask questions of the foster parents. They're not in a hurry; they want their foster dog to find the best possible home. If you decide to adopt, you will take your dog home. Please have a collar and leash. The foster will provide you with the dog's vet records. (If they are not available, let your AC know right away.) Please notify your AC immediately of your decision. If any questions arise during the visit, you and the foster are encouraged to contact your AC or a board member for consultation. If the foster has any concerns that the match is not appropriate, the foster will not release the dog and will consult the AC or a board member. This situation is rare, but is important because the foster is the person who sees the interaction between the dog, whom they know better than anyone else, and the prospective adopters.

Occasionally, Lab Rescue holds public meet and greet events. The same rules regarding the presence of all family members and first come, first served hold. If you plan to attend a meet and greet event, please notify your AC in advance. You should bring a copy of your application (especially if you haven't yet been contacted by an AC) to the event. Keep in mind that these events can be stressful for our dogs, our volunteers, and our applicants. Dogs might respond to the event by being barkier than usual or shyer than usual. They are easily distracted by the presence of so many people and other dogs. Please keep this in mind when considering the dogs present. If you find the dog you would like to adopt at a meet and greet event, you will need to make an appointment to meet the dog again at his or her foster home to pick up your new family member.

5. **The adoption:** When you find your new Lab, you will sign the contract and any addenda and pay the adoption fee of \$250.00 (\$200.00 if your Lab is 8 years of age or older). We accept cash and checks only. Be sure you receive your new Lab's veterinary records. If they are not available, notify your adoption coordinator immediately so that they can be located and given to you.
6. **After the adoption:** Please be sure to contact us if you have any questions or concerns after the adoption. We are available to answer your questions throughout your dog's life. Following the adoption, you'll be contacted by a volunteer to schedule a home visit. The visits are brief and we check to see if your new Lab and you are adjusting to life together. We will also require proof that you have taken your dog to your vet for a physical exam, that you are giving monthly heartworm preventive, and that you have enrolled your dog in obedience training if that was a condition of your adoption.

Please remember to license your dog with your city or county if it is required by local law.

Please remember to keep your dog's adoption records. Should you contact us in the future about your dog, we'll need the dog's original name (Many owner's change the dogs' names.) and date of adoption. If you want to adopt from us again in the future, it will help to know who your adoption coordinator was.

Notes:

Application submitted _____ (date) by fax e-mail mail.

My adoption coordinator is: _____ Phone #: _____

E-mail address: _____