

# THINKING ABOUT ADOPTING A DOG?

## *9 things to consider!*



**Aurora  
Animal  
Shelter**

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### IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME TO ADOPT A DOG?

Pet ownership brings on a whole new slew of responsibilities. It is important that you are ready to take on this new family member and whatever challenges this may bring. By adopting an animal you are agreeing to be responsible for this animal for the rest of its life. Do not expect a new dog to come into your home perfect. They will likely need behavior training, house training and plenty of time to adjust and decompress. See back page for additional information.



2

### DOES YOUR HOUSING SITUATION ALLOW PETS?

Many housing locations do not allow pets. Others may have restrictions on the weight, breed or age of dogs that they will allow in their facility. Be sure you are aware of your housing rules for pets.



3

### DOES YOUR WORK SCHEDULE ALIGN WITH YOUR DESIRE TO OWN A DOG?

While you may want to adopt, be sure you are considering the reality of your schedule. Many jobs require long hours (10+ hr shifts), regular or extended travel, etc that would make pet ownership a challenge without regular assistance with care.



4

### DOES YOUR BUDGET ALIGN WITH THE FINANCIAL COSTS OF A DOG?

There are a wide range of expenses that are associated with pet ownership. For a more in depth breakdown of potential costs, see back page, section 4. A good rule of thumb is to assume at least \$100 per month for the dogs needs, which

doesn't include the initial costs! See backpage for additional information.



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### WHAT PERSONALITY TRAITS, AGE, AND ENERGY LEVEL ALIGN WITH WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IN A DOG?

It is important to have a sense of each of these and how they will align with your lifestyle. One helpful way of thinking of this is by considering what you want to DO with your dog. Figure out if there are things that are nonnegotiable, or others that are less important. E.g. you know you want to be able to bring your dog around your young cousins every weekend; you know you need a dog who is kid friendly. See back page for additional information.



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### WHAT BREED ALIGNS WITH WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?

Researching dog breeds is a crucial step. While each animal is an individual, many breeds were bred for specific tasks.

Their lineage was selected to have specific traits that will tie closely to the breed's temperament, sociability, energy level, etc. Liking the way a dog looks does not necessarily mean they are the right fit for your lifestyle! See back page for additional information.



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### DO YOU HAVE PETS AT HOME?

If you already have pets at home, it is very important to consider how the new pet will fit in with them See back page for additional information.



8

### ARE THERE CHILDREN IN THE HOME?

It is very important to remember that not every dog will be a good fit with children. If children are a regular presence in your life it will be important to consider how your new dog will do with them! Keep in mind that this does not need to be YOUR children, or even children who live in the home. Think about if you regularly have over grandchildren, young cousins, nephews, friend's kids, etc. See the 'Dogs and Children' handout for more information.



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### BE PATIENT!

It may take meeting a number of dogs, talking to multiple organizations before finding the right fit for you, your household and your lifestyle. While it is very exciting to be moving forward with adopting and you are eager to have a furry companion, taking your time will set you and your future pet up for success!





**Are you prepared for the additional stressors that come with caring for another life?** Adopting a dog is a big change to your life and a big responsibility to take on. Figuring out how to meet your dog's needs can be extremely challenging when you have an already full plate emotionally, and/or

or an already full schedule. Innumerable frustrating incidents and accidents are likely to occur as your pet adjusts to their new home. If you are facing or processing an extreme life change it may be best to wait a few months before considering adopting.

**Also, be sure to consider:**

- Will you be able to provide them the training, attention and exercise that they will require?
- Are you prepared to provide a home for this animal for the rest of its life?
- Is everyone in the household in agreement about adopting a new pet?
- Do you have any upcoming travel that will require creating a pet care plan?



**Outline of some expenses associated with dog ownership:**

- Basic medical care (wellness checks, vaccines, flea/tick medication, etc.)
- Emergency medical needs (injuries or illnesses, ingesting something harmful, etc.)
- Monthly expenses such as food, toys, treats, poop bags, chews
- Training and Grooming
- Initial expenses (items such as leash, collar, bed, bowls, tags, etc.)

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**Personality Traits:** Think about personality traits you absolutely want your dog to have. Knowing descriptors such as protective, adventurous, sociable, cuddly, will help you to have a discussion with the shelter or rescue you are hoping to adopt from so that you can find the right fit for you! **Tip!** One

*helpful trick is to think of dogs you have met*

*or owned previously that you thought were particularly wonderful? What traits stick out the most to you?*

*E.g. you really appreciate that your friend's dog can be brought around crowds (such as parades, busy breweries) because the dog was so laid back.* **Age:** Dogs of any age can bond with people deeply and become integral parts of a family. However, the age of the pet may correlate to the how they fit into your life. Puppies are babies, and will require a LOT of time and energy for an extended length of time. Adolescents will still be energetic, but are likely to have a bit better sense of themselves and the world. Adult dogs will likely require less time and attention once they've

adjusted to your family and household routine. Age is a big consideration to keep in mind with what fits with your lifestyle. **Energy Level:** Consider what energy level you are interested in accommodating. It is important to be honest with yourself about what would suit your lifestyle. Often related to breed, it is VERY crucial to get a sense of what a dog's energy level is. While there may be some dogs that would be very satisfied with two 30 minute walks around their neighborhood a day, there are many dogs and breeds that will require MUCH more investment into exercise than that. Are you willing to spend hours per day outside, despite the weather, with a high energy dog to burn off some of their energy? Do not assume that a high energy dog will be satisfied by being simply kept in the yard, playing fetch or hiking once a week. See our Exercise handout for more information.



**The breed of a dog can be very helpful in getting insights into a dog's personality and needs.**

When considering different breeds, be sure you keep in mind what works best for your lifestyle and what your preferences are. If you have breeds you do or do not like, think about the qualities that make you feel that way.

Breed can be an indicator of potential:

- Size
- Grooming requirements
- Shedding
- Inclination to vocalize
- Prey drive
- Energy level



**If you already have a pet at home**

- Consider if they would want/adjust to a new dog in the home.
- There are a number of dogs that may be relatively dog friendly, but do not want to share their home/people. Or perhaps your older dog does not have interest in a young dog constantly attempting to play.
- If you own a small mammal or a cat, it will be important that the dog you adopt is not prone to chasing or harassing them.
- A multi-dog household can be wonderful, but it does mean 2x the responsibilities.
- If you have a high energy dog, a playmate may help to release energy. However, remember not to assume that they will make each other more manageable. Exercising a pet is the responsibility of the owner, meaning that you are now responsible for getting the energy out of two high energy dogs.
- Similarly, do not expect one of your dogs to 'train' the other. It will be up to you to train your new pup.