

QUESTIONS TO HELP FACILITATE ADOPTIONS

1. Think of the interview as a discussion, not an interrogation. Just as the job applicant needs to know about the job and the company, the adopter needs to know about the dog. Just as an employer needs to know about the applicant, UAF needs to know about the adopter. The discussion should be two-sided, with you both giving and receiving information. Approach every interview as a chance to learn something new about a person/family.

2. Ask questions that cannot be answered yes or no. For example, instead of asking “Is your yard fenced?” ask “How is your yard fenced?” Instead of “Are you married?” ask “How many people live in your residence? If your sentence starts with “Did” or “Does” or “Do” it will probably get a yes or no response.

3. If you ask a question and get a yes or no, follow-up with another question. For example, “Have you ever owned a dog before (or a dog of this breed or size or coat type, etc.). If the person answers yes, you could ask: “When was that? What happened to the dog? What did you like about that breed (or size or coat color, etc.)? What did you dislike about it?”

4. I don't ask all the following questions of every person, but here are some of the questions I ask:

- a. What attracts you about this dog (breed or coat etc?)
- b. Have you ever had a dog like this before?
- c. Do you have any other dogs? What are they like? (Which leads to a wonderful discussion about their other dogs because good dog owners love to talk about their dogs and you will learn a lot about the person and the relationship with the other dogs .)
- d. Where would the dog sleep? Where do your other dogs sleep?
- e. What kind of a job do you have? What are your hours? Is there anyone else at home that would be with the dog while you are at work? How much and when would the dog be alone? Where would the dog be when you are gone? (This can lead to discussion of crates, baby gates, doggy doors, etc.)
- f. Do you travel often? Will the dog go with you when you travel? What will you do with the dog when you are traveling if the dog doesn't go with you?
- g. If the person hasn't had a dog before, I ask “Why are you considering getting a dog? What do you want to do with the dog?” (Usually it's just companionship, but sometimes they want to do something fun, like Frisbee or hiking or having a running companion. And then sometimes people give strange answers like “I want it to play with my children in my unfenced front yard (and not run away) and guard the kids from strangers.”)

Polite turndowns: Remembering that this adoption process is a matchmaking affair, some of the ways I say “no” are:

- a. “I don't think this dog is going to work out in your situation. We will probably have another dog before long that meets your needs better. Please check back.”
- b. “I don't think this dog is suited to your lifestyle and would not adapt well. We will probably have another dog before long that meets your needs better. Please check back.”