

**RAINBOW RAT REFUGE INC.**

**INTAKE POLICY**



**rainbow rat**  
refuge

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## OVERVIEW

We have an intake policy in place to ensure we are prioritizing rats that are most in need, and can responsibly care for them. Because we have this Intake Policy, we have never been in debt or had outstanding veterinary bills. This Intake Policy has enabled us to minimize risk of financial strain and closure, and it sets us up for sustainability; so our work can continue long-term. The assessment of capacity includes consideration of coordination and support for Foster Families, financial situation in terms of ability to afford medical and daily care, and is necessary in order to adequately assess, rehabilitate if needed, and get to know the rats' personalities well to ensure adoption matches are made with care.

This Intake Policy includes the following sections:

- Assessing capacity for intakes
- Where we accept intakes from
- Prioritization process

As a relatively new, small-scale, foster-based, and volunteer-run nonprofit, there are limitations to how many rats we can take into our care. We do what we can and provide high-quality care to every animal that we give refuge to. Using this approach, we were able to give refuge to over 150 rats in our first year and a half of operations. We arrange for every rat in our care to see a qualified veterinary professional (DVM or RVT). When we are not able to accept rats, we refer individuals and organizations to other reputable animal welfare organizations who meet our minimum requirements in regards to ethical rescue practices.

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## ASSESSING CAPACITY FOR INTAKES

### General capacity

We have a maximum number of 20 rats in our care at a time, except in the following circumstances:

1. A rat in our care gives birth to a litter of kittens
2. An emergency situation arises, such as:
  - a. Rats are dropped off at our shipping address, or foster families homes
  - b. Provincial Animal Welfare Services contacts us and is in need of urgent assistance and placement of rats
  - c. There is a community crisis in which rats' health are at imminent risk. (Ex. They have been abandoned outdoors in the community, and all local shelters and humane societies are at capacity)
  - d. We are made aware of a situation in which a rat's life is at imminent risk and we are it's best option for survival. (Ex. There is an abandoned or orphaned kitten in need of a nursing mother or hand-rearing)

- e. We are asked to assist with a situation in which the rats' current family's health is at imminent risk (Ex. Facing hospitalization)
3. Adopted rats are returned to our care

### **Physical capacity considerations**

1. Suitable foster home is lined up and available to accept intakes
2. Setup is complete and adequate supplies are secured
3. Transportation needs can be met

### **Financial capacity considerations**

1. Minimum of \$4,000 in our Emergency Vet Fund (averaged out to \$200/rat when at maximum capacity of 20 rats)
2. Balance of \$0 owing on credit card
3. Additional \$100-200/rat available for routine veterinary care, which includes spay/neuter, or minor health problems (dependant on appointment availability at our partner veterinary clinics)

### **Volunteer and partnership capacity considerations**

1. Foster Coordinator is able to manage additional foster rats
2. Communications Coordinator is able to manage additional social media tasks
3. Administrator is able to manage additional administrative tasks
4. A regular veterinary office is accepting new patients from us and has appointments available within a reasonable timeframe

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## **WHERE WE ACCEPT INTAKES FROM**

- Humane societies, shelters, and rescues who are overwhelmed who are at capacity, handling exceptional behavioural or medical cases, having difficulty in finding adoptive homes, or have many rats awaiting intake on their waitlist
- Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) in cases of animal cruelty and neglect
- No owner surrenders except in certain situations: there is imminent risk to the rats' or family's health, adopted rats are returned to us, and as outlined in more detail under the "General capacity" section. Reasons for denying owner surrenders include:
  - These rats are commonly in safe situations, unlike many rats needing intake, and often the best option is for them to remain with their family. We aim to problem solve with families and support them in keeping their rats first
  - We are not best suited for handling owner surrenders as we do not have ideal experience in this area, or practical capacity at this time (Ex. Navigating owner regret and hostility, absence of a physical shelter.) Humane societies and shelters typically have extensive experience in this area and are better able to assist in these kind of situations.
- We DO NOT breed rats, or pay for rats under any circumstances.

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## **PRIORITIZATION PROCESS**

We have had up to 5 animal welfare organizations on our waitlist at a time. It is the responsibility of the Intake Coordinator to ensure rats in highest need are prioritized. Prioritization is an ongoing process based on subjective and objective factors:

- Subjective: Urgency of the situation (Ex. Life at risk via euthanasia, loose outdoors, etc.)
- Subjective: Capacity and level of overwhelm of the transferring organization
- Objective: Number of rats and manageability of population (Ex. 10 vs. 70)
- Objective: Behavioural and medical needs of rats
- Objective: Current location of rats (boarding facility, in shelter, in foster, with a community member, etc.)