

How Animal Rescues Can Assist in a Good Way

Indigenous communities have special relationships with dogs, and well-meaning rescue groups may have misconceptions about these relationships. With proper guidance, rescue groups can play a key role in providing assistance in a good way, using a holistic approach that honours tradition and spirit.

Using these tips below, your rescue can start building meaningful partnerships and become recognized within the community as an organization who is trustworthy and respectful with a focus on communication and collaboration.



#1. Education

Provide culturally relevant education and anti-racism training to individuals from your organization working within the community. Understanding the history and ongoing trauma faced by Indigenous peoples throughout Canada is crucial if working closely with the communities, and is a vital step toward truth and reconciliation. Understanding a community's cultural traditions and historical relationships with animals is also an important part of this preparation.



#2. Partnership

Focus on building relationships rather than the “helicopter-in, helicopter-out” method. Knowing the history of an area, getting involved with community events, and collaborating with community members and leadership are essential. This approach will also help you recognize what is already going well in a community, and provide support where needed rather than doubling efforts that are ongoing locally.



#3. Listen

Listen to community needs and tailor services accordingly. Ask what their priorities are and how you can help facilitate. For example, if a community did not ask for assistance with re-homing dogs, do not go into the area with the intention of picking up dogs. Many of these dogs are individually or community owned and loved and cared for. It is important to not make assumptions about what a community wants or needs based on your own (outsider) perspective.



#4. Policy

Have policies in place to return dogs who were accidentally picked up and removed from the community. Mistakes happen, and when they do be sure to have a plan to return any dogs who were pulled from the community. This will require a system of identification and location of pickup to facilitate reuniting dogs with their families.