



## 2026 PEDIGREE Foundation Annual Grants Cycle Application Guidelines

Since 2008, PEDIGREE Foundation has awarded \$15.3 million in grant funding to animal shelters and foster-based rescue organizations across the country to increase dog adoption, helping more than 1 million dogs. Our goal is to support more than \$1M in grant funding this year, and we encourage every interested 501(c)(3) shelter and rescue to apply. Our vision is a day when all dogs are safe, secure, cared for and loved – and we know this depends on the tireless and compassionate work you do every day.

PEDIGREE Foundation plans to offer the following **grant opportunities** in its 2026 Annual Grants Cycle, running from **March 2 to April 13**:

- **DOGS RULE.® Grant (\$50,000 a year for two years, \$100,000 total)** – In 2026, one grant may be offered over the course of two years to support an innovative best practice initiative focused on increasing adoption rates in the areas of foster, behavior or transport. This grant includes additional requirements, such as engaging in potential speaking engagements and the creation of a toolkit to share your learnings, both of which must be completed by the end of the two-year partnership. See specific guidelines for this application below. [Apply here](#) or at [pedigreefoundation.org/shelters-grant](https://pedigreefoundation.org/shelters-grant).
- **Program Development Grants (\$10,000 - \$15,000)** – Program grants may be available to support existing or new initiatives aimed at increasing adoption rates, with funding available for the categories of foster, behavior, or transport. See specific guidelines for this application below. [Apply here](#) or at [pedigreefoundation.org/shelters-grant](https://pedigreefoundation.org/shelters-grant).

### Grant Program Categories

PEDIGREE Foundation intends to focus on grant requests in the following **three program categories**:

- **Foster programs** that place dogs in temporary, loving homes while awaiting adoption. These programs rely on foster caregivers to provide care, advocacy, and socialization, with continued emphasis this year on programming that increases adoption outcomes.
- **Behavior programs** that focus on socialization, training, and stress relief to help dogs overcome behaviors that may prevent them from being adopted into loving homes. This includes both in-shelter and post-adoption behavior support programs.



- **Transport programs** that help organizations move dogs from overpopulated areas to regions with better adoption opportunities, with a particular focus on transporting them directly into foster and adoption programs.

Please be aware that we are unable to fund requests for medical supplies or veterinary care-related expenses, including spay and neuter programs, treatments, vaccines, medical equipment and similar costs.

### Eligibility Requirements

#### **Organizational Eligibility**

PEDIGREE Foundation grants are available exclusively to **U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit animal welfare organizations**, including **animal shelters and foster-based rescue organizations**, whose programs focus on **dog adoption**. Eligible programming may include, but is not limited to, **foster care, behavior support, and transport initiatives** that advance adoption outcomes.

To be eligible for funding, organizations must:

- Be recognized by the **U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization** and have maintained **current, valid status for at least two years** at the time of application.
- Maintain **active and current 501(c)(3) status** throughout the application and grant period. Applications from organizations without current status will not be considered.
- Use grant funds **solely for the purposes outlined in the approved application** and within the designated grant period. Any unspent funds must be returned unless prior written approval for extended use is obtained.
- Have **fulfilled reporting requirements for any previous PEDIGREE Foundation grants**. Organizations with outstanding reporting obligations will be **ineligible for consideration in 2026**.

**Municipal shelters** are not eligible to apply directly. Municipal shelters partnering with a qualified **501(c)(3) "Friends of" organization** must have the nonprofit partner submit the application on their behalf.

#### **Grant Focus**



PEDIGREE Foundation grants are intended to support **lifesaving initiatives for dogs** in animal shelters and foster-based rescues. Grants specifically aim to:

- **Increase adoption rates** through programs or new initiatives within the animal welfare community.
- **Enhance care and programs** for dogs in animal shelters or foster-based rescues to improve adoption outcomes and reduce the length of stay.

### **Application Requirements**

To be considered for a PEDIGREE Foundation grant, organizations must submit a **completed online application**. Because application guidelines and processes may have changed since your last submission, it is essential to:

1. **Review all instructions carefully** before beginning your application.
2. **Complete the application accurately and fully**, providing all requested information. Incomplete, inaccurate, or improperly submitted applications **will not be considered for funding**.

For examples of previous award programming, please review our past award recipients [here](#) as a reference.

### **Applying for a 2026 Annual Grant**

After thoroughly reviewing the grant guidelines below, please submit your application using the link provided. You may apply for both a DOGS RULE.® grant and a Program Development grant in the same grant cycle, but only one grant will be awarded per organization, with the highest eligible grant being granted.

### **DOGS RULE.® Grant Guidelines**

This is a TWO-YEAR grant - \$50,000 per year (2026 & 2027), for a total of \$100,000 in funding. One DOGS RULE.® grant may be awarded for 2026.

To apply for a PEDIGREE Foundation DOGS RULE.® grant, the proposed program must be an innovative initiative focused on foster care, transport, or behavior. Special emphasis will be placed on grant requests focused on foster programming that increases adoption outcomes. The program should have the potential to become a best practice model that other animal shelters and foster-based rescue organizations can adapt to increase dog adoption rates.



Applicants are required to submit a detailed narrative describing the program for which they intend to use the grant funds. This narrative must include the following components:

- **Program Purpose and Strategy:** Applicants should clearly describe the program’s objective, addressing a specific, current community need, and explain why it is necessary. They must outline the strategy and approach for achieving the program’s goals, including the steps, methods, and resources required. Additionally, applicants should highlight the program’s potential benefits to the organization, such as increased capacity, improved efficiency, reduced length of stay for animals, or increased adoption rates.
- **Specific Goals with Measurable Metrics for Success:** The program’s goals should be clearly defined and measurable. Applicants must present specific, time-bound objectives that are directly linked to the purpose of the program. For each goal, applicants should describe how success will be measured, such as through quantitative data (e.g., increased adoption rates, reduced length of stay). Providing a clear framework for evaluating the program’s impact ensures accountability and transparency.
- **Organization’s Demonstrated Community Involvement and Partnerships:** Applicants should highlight existing or planned collaborations with community organizations, agencies, or stakeholders, providing concrete examples of how these partnerships enhance the organization’s effectiveness and expand its reach. This could include partnerships with animal shelters, veterinary clinics, local businesses, and other community outreach efforts.
- **Organization’s Evidence of Active Board and Volunteer Support:** Applicants should demonstrate strong support from the Board of Directors and volunteers, highlighting Board involvement (e.g., meeting frequency, active participation) and detailing the number of volunteers, their roles, and how they are integrated into the organization (e.g., training, services, events).
- **Sustainability Plan:** Applicants should outline a sustainability plan detailing how the program will continue after the grant period, including strategies for securing future funding (e.g., grants, event revenue, or specific campaigns). The plan should demonstrate that the program is designed for ongoing success and impact, ensuring its ability to serve pets in the future.



**All required supplemental materials must be submitted by the application deadline.**

- Applicants must provide **audited** financial statements for 2023 and 2024 (or 2025, if available), conducted by a third party. At least two years of audited statements are required; unaudited financials will not be accepted for this grant program.
- 990 forms for 2023 and 2024 (or 2025 990 forms if already filed).
- A copy of the organization's operating budget for the current year.
- Applicants must include a **detailed program budget** for two years that adequately supports its intended outcomes for their grant submission.
- A current list of Board of Directors
- Statement outlining the Executive Director or CEO's experience in animal welfare (a resume may be submitted in place of this statement).

Please note that organizations awarded this grant must submit their 990 forms annually for each year they receive funding under the two-year grant. The financial information provided by applicants must reflect organizational and financial stability.

Semi-finalists will have an unannounced, on-site visit by an auditor to evaluate the current state of animal care and assess whether the program aligns with Foundation criteria. Failure to pass the on-site audit will result in disqualification from receiving any grant award. Organizations awarded the DOGS RULE.® grant may also receive a follow-up on-site visit during the two-year grant period to demonstrate how the funds have been utilized and show the program's progress and results to date.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Grant evaluations take a comprehensive approach, considering factors such as the program's narrative, financials, and its potential to develop into a shareable best practice within the animal welfare community.

- The applicant's organizational history should demonstrate, through census data, a strong commitment to sustainable outcomes, healthy dog care and the active promotion of shelter and foster-based rescue adoptions.
- Applications will be evaluated based on the program's innovative approach and its potential to serve as a best practice model that other animal shelters and rescues can adopt to increase dog adoption rates.



- The program budget will be assessed for its clarity and thoroughness, specifically in identifying costs associated with the program and demonstrating the capacity to effectively allocate funds within the two-year timeframe.

**The following are ineligible for funding under the DOGS RULE.® grant:**

- Programs that are not run within an animal shelter or rescue
- Programs that do not directly influence dog adoptions
- Medical supplies or veterinary care related expenses
- Capital campaigns or capital projects
- General operating expenses or debt
- Grants for individuals
- Endowment funding
- Event sponsorship

**Reporting Requirements and Additional Information**

- Grant recipients will receive a PEDIGREE Foundation Style Guide to assist with communication efforts when publicly acknowledging the grant award or sharing a story from the program.
- Grant recipients are required to sign a grant agreement and a limited licensing agreement, which permits them to use the PEDIGREE Foundation logo for one year.
- The DOGS RULE.® recipient will be required to host at least one webinar related to their program and also create a best practice policy manual or toolkit by the end of the two-year partnership.
- During or after completing the two-year period, grant recipient agrees to make best efforts to share their learnings by speaking at one or more animal welfare conferences on behalf of the grant recipient while highlighting support from PEDIGREE Foundation. The goal is to share insights and experiences from the DOGS RULE.® grant-funded program with other animal shelters and rescues, allowing them to apply these learnings to their own operations. Before submitting the speaking application to conference organizers, the Recipient must provide relevant program materials to PEDIGREE Foundation staff for review and approval.



- Organizations awarded a DOGS RULE.® grant must submit both interim and final reports, including a narrative that outlines the program’s progress and provides an objective comparison to the goals and metrics set in the original application. These reports must be submitted to PEDIGREE Foundation by the specified deadlines. Additionally, the reports should include at least **8 success stories** linked to the grant funding, accompanied by high-resolution photos and/or videos that showcase the journey of a dog (or dogs) from your shelter to their forever home.
- The funds granted are to be used within the upcoming two-year period for the purposes outlined in your application. Any unspent funds must be returned by the end of the grant period, unless you have consulted with the Foundation and received approval to extend their use.
- Grant applicants must adhere to the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, as published by The Association of Shelter Veterinarians.
- **Applications must be fully completed, signed by an authorizing official, and submitted by the application deadline of April 13, 2026, at midnight CT.**
- Grants will be awarded in the Fall of the application year.

### **Oversight Process**

All funding decisions are made by members of the Board of Directors for PEDIGREE Foundation at their sole discretion.

**PEDIGREE Foundation reserves the right to conduct unannounced site inspections.**

### **Program Development Grant Guidelines**

This is a one-year grant, with funding requests ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000. You may apply for one Program Development grant per year, with the funds to be used in the following calendar year.

To be eligible for a PEDIGREE Foundation Program Development grant, the proposed program must focus on improving your organization’s dog adoption rates in the areas of foster, behavior, or transport. Special emphasis will be placed on grant requests focused on foster programming that increases adoption outcomes. This could involve expanding existing programs or launching new



ones that are important to your organization but do not meet the criteria for the PEDIGREE Foundation DOGS RULE.® grant.

**Applicants are required to submit a detailed narrative describing the program for which they intend to use the grant funds. This narrative must include the following components:**

- **Program Purpose and Strategy:** Applicants should clearly describe the program’s objective, addressing a specific, current community need, and explain why it is necessary. They must outline the strategy and approach for achieving the program’s goals, including the steps, methods, and resources required. Additionally, applicants should highlight the program’s potential benefits to the organization, such as increased capacity, improved efficiency, reduced length of stay for animals, or increased adoption rates.
- **Specific Goals with Measurable Metrics for Success:** The program’s goals should be clearly defined and measurable. Applicants must present specific, time-bound objectives that are directly linked to the purpose of the program. For each goal, applicants should describe how success will be measured, such as through quantitative data (e.g., increased adoption rates, reduced length of stay). Providing a clear framework for evaluating the program’s impact ensures accountability and transparency.
- **Organization’s Demonstrated Community Involvement and Partnerships:** Applicants should highlight existing or planned collaborations with community organizations, agencies, or stakeholders, providing concrete examples of how these partnerships enhance the organization’s effectiveness and expand its reach. This could include partnerships with animal shelters, veterinary clinics, local businesses, and other community outreach efforts.
- **Organization’s Evidence of Active Board and Volunteer Support:** Applicants should demonstrate strong support from the Board of Directors and volunteers, highlighting board involvement (e.g., meeting frequency, active participation) and detailing the number of volunteers, their roles, and how they are integrated into the organization (e.g., training, services, events).
- **Sustainability Plan:** Applicants should outline a sustainability plan detailing how the program will continue after the grant period, including strategies for securing future funding (e.g., grants,



event revenue, or specific campaigns). The plan should demonstrate that the program is designed for ongoing success and impact, ensuring its ability to serve pets in the future.

**All required supplemental materials must be submitted by the application deadline.**

- Applicants must provide unaudited financial statements for 2023 and 2024 (or 2025, if available). At least two years of financial statements are required.
- 990 forms for 2023 and 2024 (or 2025 990 forms if already filed).
- Applicants must include a **detailed program budget** for that adequately supports its intended outcomes for their grant submission.
- A current list of Board of Directors
- Statement outlining the Executive Director or CEO's experience in animal welfare (a resume may be submitted in place of this statement).

Semi-finalists will have an unannounced, on-site visit by an auditor to evaluate the current state of animal care and assess whether the program aligns with Foundation criteria. Failure to pass the on-site audit will result in disqualification from receiving any grant award.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Grant evaluations follow a comprehensive approach, considering, but not limited to, the program's narrative, financials, and its potential to evolve into a shareable best practice within the animal welfare community.

- The applicant's organizational history should demonstrate, through census data, a strong commitment to sustainable outcomes, healthy dog care and the active promotion of shelter and rescue adoptions.
- Applications will be evaluated based on the program's innovative approach and its potential to create or expand an existing program.
- The program budget will be assessed for its clarity and thoroughness, specifically in identifying costs associated with the program and demonstrating the capacity to effectively allocate funds within the one-year timeframe.

**The following are ineligible for funding under a Program Development grant:**

- Programs that are not run within an animal shelter or rescue



- Programs that do not directly influence dog adoptions
- Medical supplies or veterinary care related expenses
- Capital campaigns or capital projects
- General operating expenses or debt
- Grants for individuals
- Endowment funding
- Event sponsorship

### Reporting Requirements and Additional Information

- Grant recipients will receive a PEDIGREE Foundation Style Guide to assist with communication efforts when publicly acknowledging the grant award or sharing a story from the program.
- Grant recipients are required to sign a grant agreement and a limited licensing agreement, which permits them to use the PEDIGREE Foundation logo for one year
- Organizations awarded a Program Development grant must submit both interim and final reports, including a narrative that outlines the program's progress and provides an objective comparison to the goals and metrics set in the original application. These reports must be submitted to PEDIGREE Foundation by the specified deadlines. Additionally, the reports should include at least **4 success stories** linked to the grant funding, accompanied by high-resolution photos and/or videos that showcase the journey of a dog (or dogs) from your shelter to their forever home.
- The funds granted are to be used within the upcoming one-year period for the purposes outlined in your application. Any unspent funds must be returned by the end of the grant period, unless you have consulted with the Foundation and received approval to extend their use.
- Grant applicants must adhere to the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, as published by The Association of Shelter Veterinarians.
- **Applications must be fully completed, signed by an authorizing official, and submitted by the application deadline of April 13, 2026, at midnight CT.**



- Grants will be awarded in the Fall of the application year.

### **Oversight Process**

All funding decisions are made by members of the Board of Directors for PEDIGREE Foundation at their sole discretion.

**PEDIGREE Foundation reserves the right to conduct unannounced site inspections.**