

The SIT! Dog Adoption Program: Support, Inform, and Train Adopters

The best way to ensure successful adoptions is to give adopters the support and tools they need to help their dogs successfully adapt to life outside the shelter. This SIT! Program has three steps:

1. **SUPPORT:** LAAS would send automated text messages to adopters to check in about the adoption and provide support and tips. These texts would ask a few simple questions that would take seconds for the adopter to answer. Some of the texts would also remind adopters about the decompression time needed for dogs coming from a shelter and provide some easy tips. The texts would arrive at regular intervals, such as daily for the first five days, weekly for the next month, and monthly for three months.
2. **INFORM:** LAAS would post easy-to-find, easy-to-implement training videos online to alleviate common early problems, such as chewing and housebreaking. If the adopter responds to a text message “yes” about a particular problem, an automatic text would be sent to them with a link to the site containing training videos about that issue.
3. **TRAIN:** If the adopter is still reporting trouble, LAAS would provide free evening/weekend group dog training for the adopter.

The SIT! Program would be low-cost, but high-impact. Its efficacy would be readily ascertainable with responses to texts, views of the informational videos, attendance at the trainings, and changes in dog return rates at the shelters. The SIT! Program is also readily scalable, with very little additional cost.

Video content could eventually be expanded to also show potential adopters what to expect and how to succeed when adopting dogs from shelters. In fact, if successful, the videos and texts could be adapted to help prevent the owner surrenders that account for over 30% of all dogs in the LAAS shelters.

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