



## **PAWS Client Service Policies**

PAWS Niagara is dedicated to doing whatever we can to help people with disabling illnesses keep their animal companions. However, due to limited resources and the ever-growing need for our services, it is necessary that we follow these policies.

*Note: PAWS determines eligibility on an individual basis and takes into account financial need. One may qualify for partial services.*

### **Eligibility**

#### **1.) Clients:**

Any resident of Niagara Region who is able to present a letter confirming a disabling illness diagnosis and possibly proof of low income.

Once a client no longer has the animal companions with which he/she registered at the PAWS intake, that person will no longer be considered a PAWS client.

#### **2.) Animals:**

Each client will receive assistance for up to two animals only. Ongoing assistance will be provided for these animals for as long as possible.

PAWS will not cover any additional animals who may be added to a client's household. Our mission is to help people with a terminal illness and other disabling illnesses *keep* their animals--not to assist people in getting new animals or in replacing animals who pass away or are lost.

Except for rare cases in which the animal's health prohibits surgery, all PAWS animals must be spayed or neutered before they can be activated as a PAWS client. If an animal has not been spayed or neutered at the time of client intake, the client must have his or her companion animal spayed/neutered within ninety(90) days or they will be required to begin the intake process from the start.

Due to potential health hazards for our clients, and because of our concern for the animals, PAWS will not cover any animals who are under nine months of age. Reptiles, wildlife, amphibians, primates, ferrets or other animals who pose significant health risks will also be exempt from coverage.

#### **3.) Annual Certification**

If necessary, an annual recertification will take place to ensure that all clients are still eligible to receive services.

#### **4.) Special Note:**

Although we are concerned about the health and well-being of both human and animal clients, if a human client passes away, his/her animals do not automatically remain PAWS clients. Animals *may* still receive benefits if their new guardian is eligible to become a client. This new caretaker can and will bypass whatever waiting list exists in order to immediately become a client. However, the new guardian must go through an official intake process and will not receive services without proof of eligibility.

### **Intake Process**



All clients must have an intake interview and complete all required paperwork. The Client Services Coordinator or designated PAWS staff member or volunteer will complete this interview and ensure that eligibility requirements are met.

### **Services: Payments and Procedures**

PAWS will provide all services (except veterinary care) to clients free of charge. These services may include monthly allotments of food and litter; volunteer assistance with dogwalking, kitty litter maintenance and aquarium cleaning; animal bathing and nail clipping; transportation to veterinary or grooming appointments; foster care; and educational materials. We can not *guarantee* any of our services.

#### **1.) Food:**

Due to financial constraints, PAWS will not be able to cover all necessary dietary needs for client animals. The monthly food allotments are meant to be **supplemental** only. In most cases, the food allotments will last approximately two weeks.

As much as possible we will strive to provide a consistent diet for client animals under our auspices, however specific brands may vary depending on donations received. If animals require special diets we will make sure these diets are available provided we have a veterinarian-approved special diet form on file.

Clients may visit the Food Bank once every four weeks. If a client is not able to attend in person, he/she may send someone else as long as the PAWS office is notified by the preceding Thursday at noon. Clients or their representatives must show their Client ID card when picking up food.

If a client is homebound special arrangements will be made for food delivery. This service is reserved for clients who are truly in need of it. Any special arrangements will be made at the discretion of the Client Service Coordinator.

#### **2.) Veterinary Care:**

PAWS cannot offer assistance with veterinary costs at this time.

#### **3.) Volunteer Assistance:**

As much as possible we will try to fulfill all requests for volunteer assistance with in-home care, transportation, foster care, etc. Volunteers will not be available for any services not directly related to animal care.

#### **4.) Client I.D. Cards:**

All clients will be issued an identification card. This card must be presented whenever a client receives services.

### **Responsibilities**

Clients are responsible for notifying PAWS of any changes in phone number, address, animal status, or income within 10 days of the change.

Clients are responsible for securing a home for their companion animal(s) in the event of client's inability to continue caring for the animal.



### **Loss of Status**

PAWS clients will lose their status under these conditions:

- 1) They no longer have the animal(s) whom they had at intake
- 2) They move out of Niagara Region
- 3) They are abusive to staff, Board,volunteers or any vet or service provider associated with PAWS \*
- 4) They are unwilling to comply with PAWS policies and procedures
- 5) They misrepresent their information about financial and health status

\*A client will receive a verbal caution if his/her behavior is considered abusive. This caution will be followed by a letter explaining our policies and an invitation to meet with our Director of Client Services to discuss the situation. If a second abusive incident occurs, the client will receive a letter explaining that he/she will no longer be considered a client.