



What is a working cat?

A working cat is a domestic cat that is not suitable as a pet, so is placed in an environment where they can flourish, working alongside humans to control rodent populations. These types of cats include:

- Cats who are social but too feisty when they interact with people, and thrive by having “work” to do
- Cats who are shy or fearful of people, and prefer the company of other cats and animals
- Cats whose litterbox habits make them unsuitable to live indoors (and for whom medical issues have been ruled out)

Please note: Asheville Humane Society does not adopt out cats for working cat placement if they are suitable to be household companions.

Can I touch a working cat?

Most of the cats that are designated as working cats do not crave human touch because they have grown up in feral colonies. A feral colony is a group of cats who live outside that are not socialized with humans. It is possible to build a relationship with some, but it takes time and patience, and they may never be completely tame.

What do I need to provide for my working cat?

Working cats will always need fresh food and water, and available shelter somewhere on the property. Ideally, the cat will be trapped in a humane live trap once per year for vet visits and vaccinations.



What comes with my working cat adoption?

When you adopt a working cat from Asheville Humane Society, the cat will have been vetted, including being spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped.

In some cases, your working cat will have a tipped ear, meaning the very tip of the ear has been removed. Ear-tipping is a widely accepted means of marking a community cat who has been spayed or neutered. It also often identifies them as being part of a colony with a caretaker. Ear-tipping prevents an already-spayed or neutered cat the stress of re-trapping and an unnecessary surgery.

How do I introduce my working cat to their new home?

When you take your new working cat home, you will want to keep him in a fully enclosed space (this can be a tack room, a shed, a garage, etc.). If you do not have a fully enclosed space, you can house the cat in a large wire dog crate in a place that will be protected from the elements.

The enclosure will need to have a hide box, food and water, and a litter box (if using a dog crate, make sure it is big enough to accommodate these items). The cat will need to be kept in the enclosure as long as possible, ideally two full weeks, and you should feed the cat at the same time every day. This will ensure that once you let the cat out of the enclosure, they will know where "home" is located.

Tips for Success:

*If using a crate, place the litter box, food, and water close to the crate door so that you can easily remove them without stressing out the cat! Place the hide box towards the back of the crate so the cat can hide while you replace litter, food, and water.

*Cover part of the crate with a towel or sheet, and leave the other half open to allow ample air flow.

*Once the two weeks are up, leave the door to the room or crate open so the cat can access this space freely until they are completely comfortable with their surroundings.

*It is normal for cats to hide during the day and emerge at night to eat, drink, etc.

*Working cats usually enjoy the company of other cats over the company of humans, so adopting more than one working cat might keep them from feeling lonely.

Good luck, and congratulations on your new working cat!

Working Cat Success Story:

"We adopted our (originally feral) barn cat, Parker, from you and he's the best cat ever! He is so popular with everyone at the barn and so very loved! The day we picked him up he was a feral little guy who growled at us the entire way home. He spent three weeks adjusting in a huge crate in our barn aisle watching the daily happenings and getting wet food as a bit of a bribe to want to stay here once we let him out. The day I let him out he hid some while people were around but was practically glued to my leg most of the day. A switch had flipped in him when he had settled. Parker turned into a loving (slightly needy) little guy who hunts all the creatures we don't want while still being sweet to the kids that pick him up and snuggle him. We could not have asked for a better barn cat!" ~Bri

