

TREAT BUCKETS

GOAL: The purpose of the treat buckets is to create positive associations with people and to reward desirable behavior from outside the kennel.

GENERAL RULES:

- All dogs in the shelter should have a stainless steel treat bucket attached to the outside of their kennel.
- Buckets should be kept partially full with a mixture of dry adult and puppy dog kibble. Using dog kibble (as opposed to special treats) may prevent digestive problems.
- Dogs that are anxious, aggressive, or extremely fearful may not eat dog kibble and should be offered high value treats (and not dog food) such as jerky treats or freeze-dried liver.
- A designated person should be assigned to check the buckets daily.
- Consistency is very important. All shelter staff and volunteers must learn how to reward good behavior and ignore unwanted behavior.

REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR:

- With dogs that are new to the shelter, four feet on the floor (not jumping up) results in praise and treat.
- Once dog reliably keeps four feet on the floor, begin to ask for a sit, which earns praise and treat.
- Once dog reliably sits on cue, do not say sit. Approach the dog's kennel and praise/treat as soon as the dog provides an 'automatic sit'.
- Do NOT ever reward the dog when it is barking, jumping or behaving aggressively. Wait for good behavior, and then reward good behavior!

FEARFUL DOGS:

- Toss a treat into their kennel every time you walk by (do not stop). You are attempting to teach the dog to have positive emotional associations with people. In this first stage of working with a fearful dog, the treat should be independent of the dog's behavior. Toss the treat EVEN IF they are behaving aggressively or anxiously.