



ABOUT OUR ADOPTION FEES

We often receive questions about our adoption fees, and how they are determined. "I could go out and buy a puppy for the same amount or less that you charge for a rescue dog," is a comment sometimes made.

We understand that in these difficult economic times, everyone needs to be concerned about their budget. We also know that the upfront cost of adoption is only the first of many expenses pet owners must be prepared to cover in order to provide responsibly for their new family member. The long term financial commitment that goes along with acquiring a new dog is a significant one. In fact, more and more Golden Retrievers are being surrendered to our program because their families are unable to afford ongoing care for their dogs...truly a heartbreaking situation. We are more than willing to take these dogs into rescue, help with their medical care or other needs, and find them new homes.

Puppy vs. rescue?

We'd like to share some of the information used to set our adoption fees. First, however, consider that to purchase a Golden Retriever puppy from a *reputable* breeder today (i.e., one who carefully screens the parents for genetic problems affecting hips, eyes, elbows, or heart functioning; is breeding to improve the quality of the breed, not just to make money; and who pays careful attention to early socialization of the pups), you can expect to pay about \$1700.00 or more. You'll then have the additional expenses of spay/neuter surgery, deworming, and puppy and adult inoculations.

"Bargain" puppies purchased for a few hundred dollars are likely to cost you much more in the long run due to the high probability of health or temperament issues they will develop in the future. (To learn more about finding a reputable breeder, please see the website for the Golden Retriever Club of America, www.grca.org, or review our brochure on "[So You Want a Golden Retriever Puppy?](#)") You can read more about the risks involved with purchasing a poorly bred puppy in [this article](#) by well-known pet care journalist Gina Spadafori.

Here's a real life example of how puppy expenses can quickly add up. Recently, we accepted a 10-month-old puppy into our program whose family found him "too much to handle," – a phrase we hear over and over again in rescue. Ironically, the pup's family had applied to adopt from DVGRR a few months before. At that time, we told them we did not feel a young Golden would be a good match for them, due to some physical limitations and lack of a fully fenced yard. We would have potentially considered them for an older dog, but they opted to purchase a puppy before the application process was completed. Now they were surrendering the teen-age pup to us for all the reasons we had concerns about from the beginning.

And the cost factor? From the records submitted with the dog, we calculated that they had spent close to \$1200 between the purchase price of the puppy (\$500) and the routine vet expenses (\$700) incurred while he was with them. The adoption fee for a senior Golden (much more appropriate for their lifestyle) would have been \$325.

Our careful attention to health needs

At DVGRR, we provide for the needs of every Golden that enters our program. When you adopt a Golden from us, routine health care needs and screenings have already been taken care of. All DVGRR Golden Retrievers receive the following (shown with average costs):

- Full physical exam from our veterinarian: \$45
- Spay/neuter surgery if needed: \$275-330
- All necessary vaccinations, including Bordetella (kennel cough), DHPPL (distemper combination), and rabies: \$80
- Deworming on arrival: \$60
- Blood test to screen for heartworm, Lyme disease, ehrlichia, and anaplasma: \$100
- Medication/treatment needed to address any of these four conditions, if found: \$20-500+
- Other diagnostic services as needed, which may include thyroid testing (\$75), senior wellness blood screening (\$140), and urinalysis (\$25)
- Monthly administration of flea/tick and heartworm preventive: \$20/month

- All medications required during their stay with us (pain medication, antibiotics, joint supplements, thyroid medication, ear/skin treatments, etc.): \$20-100+
- Lifetime identification through microchipping: \$35
- Full bath and grooming: \$40-60
- Daily training, exercise, and high quality food

If recommended by our veterinary team, we also cover:

- Dental care (cleaning and/or extractions) : \$250+
- X-rays: \$50-150
- Lump removal and biopsy: \$150-250+
- Consultation with specialists: \$150-300+
- Surgery to repair eye, orthopedic, or other acute medical problems: \$200-2500+

It is not unusual for us to spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars to ensure that the medical needs of a DVGRR dog are addressed prior to adoption. And, the items above do not even consider the additional expenses we incur for day-to-day staffing, maintenance, or operations of our Golden Gateway kennel facility. Taking all that into account, our average cost per dog is \$3200.00.

Our adoption fees clearly do not fully cover all costs involved in the care, training and feeding of our Golden Retrievers, which is why we conduct ongoing fundraising efforts. We are committed to doing as much as we reasonably can to insure the success of each placement and the healthy future of each dog, and we expend a tremendous amount of time and effort to accomplish this. 100% of our adoption fee goes toward veterinary care for the next Golden that needs us.

We believe our program is one of the best in the country in terms of wellness for our Golden Retrievers and we strive to provide our adopters with some “freedom from the unknown” regarding medical care.

An ongoing commitment

By providing this information, we are not trying to garner sympathy or plead poverty. We are, however, hoping to educate our supporters and adopters to the realities we face on a daily basis. In many cases, we are picking up the medical costs (sometimes quite excessive) that a former owner was unable or unwilling to cover for their Golden. We are 100% committed to our mission and our desire to do the very best for each dog in our program. We hope that in understanding this, our adopters and supporters will be willing to help our efforts in any way they can, so that we can continue offering this outstanding care to each and every deserving dog that reaches our doorstep.