What we learned about the adoption process: Potential pet adopters usually begin the search for a new family member online or in person. **Barriers that commonly appear in this initial stage include:**

- Adopters can’t find the pet or breed that they want.
- They can’t find much info about adoptable pets in general.
- It’s difficult to find pets near them.
- Photos, health and behavior histories, and/or descriptions of pets’ personalities are poor or nonexistent.

Next, a pet is selected, but it can be difficult to obtain significant information. **Common obstacles include:**

- Adopters receive no or slow response to their questions via phone or email from the shelter or rescue group.
- The shelter or rescue group won’t provide info on an animal until an adoption application is submitted.
- The shelter or rescue group is not conveniently located.
- No background or history is available on the adoptable animal.
Completing an application rounds out the process. This stage still may prove extensive and cumbersome, due to the following:

- Requirements are very strict and/or the application is very lengthy.
- The application is rejected because of a particular issue (e.g., no fenced yard, hours worked).
- The adopter is made to wait before adopting the pet (e.g., a home check or additional step is required).

What we can do to improve the adoption process:

- Provide opportunities for adopters to spend time with animals.
- Create standardized behavioral and medical criteria to help adopters find the right pet.
- Give adopters the ability to take an animal home the same day.
- So adopters see the most current information, give organizations tools that can update profiles automatically across databases and social media.
- Create a “one-stop” application for adopters that can be accessed by multiple organizations.