

Fostering an Adult Dog

If you are dog savvy and have an opening in your home, we need your help!

Austin Animal Services is actively seeking foster homes for adult dogs. Typically, these are larger, older dogs, whose manners and training needs are higher than most. These are dogs that need special help getting adopted. Living at the shelter can cause them to deteriorate both emotionally and physically. We need the Austin Community to help us help these dogs.

Foster homes can provide a safe and calm environment in which the dog can relax and get away from the stress of the shelter. With a consistent schedule, rules, expectations, exercise and a dedicated leader we know these dogs can find forever homes.



How to Get Started:

- 1. Fill out the online foster application at <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/foster-care>**
- 2. Wait for e-mail approval from the Foster Coordinator.**
- 3. Respond to a posting from the Foster Coordinator to let the shelter know you are interested in a particular dog posted to the group, or visit the shelter and pick out a dog you think would be most compatible for your family and situation.**
- 4. Visit with any Customer Service Representative and review the medical and behavior notes about the dog. Make sure any issues are ones you feel comfortable addressing.**
- 5. Make sure everyone in your family meets the dog – especially children.**
- 6. Arrange a “Meet and Greet” with the Customer Service Rep for the shelter dog to meet your dog(s) here at the shelter if you have dog(s) at home.**
- 7. When all goes well, take the shelter dog home and integrate him into family life.**
- 8. Begin the transition from “Shelter Dog” to “Fabulous Irresistible Well Behaved Dog”!**
- 9. Update the Foster Coordinator regularly with new pictures, videos, and progress notes.**
- 10. Remember, we are here to help. All vet care is covered by the shelter and FREE training is available for all of our foster dogs.**

The Plan

In a caring and consistent environment, we know your foster pet will thrive and blossom. With plenty of exercise, training and attention, this dog can have an opportunity to shine like it may have been unable to do at the shelter.

Ideally, the dog will spend a few weeks with you getting used to life in a home, coming out of it's shell, or de-stressing from shelter-life habits. Start with rules and training immediately upon coming home. We have coordinated with local trainers to provide group classes – the foster coordinator will schedule the next available class in your area. Once the dog has made significant progress in it's behavior and adoptability, we will start marketing it to the public for adoption.

The Goal

Foster to Forever – the goal is for the dog to go straight from your foster home to its forever home. The work you will do with your foster dog is instrumental in helping it succeed with a new family. Your commitment to the dog until the new family is found is essential to the program.

We will help you in any way possible to make this journey a success for you, and the animal who, thanks to you, will never be the same. Fostering an adult dog, especially one whose changes of getting adopted from the shelter environment are slim, is literally turning it's life around. It will undoubtedly be one of the most rewarding things you will ever do.

The Details

Things we require . . .

- **MEET AND GREET** with other resident dogs
- **HOUSE RULES** – designated times for feeding, potty breaks, sleeping and exercise all help the dog relax and know what to expect. Like children, dogs work best with a set schedule.
- **DAILY EXERCISE** – walk, run, hike, swim (estimate at least 1 hour per day)
- **CRATE TRAINING** – gives the dog a den to retreat to and helps them adjust to living in a home when you are not there
- **BEHAVIOR TRAINING** – attending a Dog Obedience class with an approved trainer and doing all “homework” they assign
- **DAILY PLAYTIME** – all work and no play makes Fido a dull dog! Remember to have fun!
- **DAILY AFFECTION** – many of these dogs may never have known a soft and caring hand, belly rubs and back scratches are required
- **COMMITMENT** – a minimum of 8 weeks, in some case, longer. While the shelter will always take back a foster dog if the foster situation is no longer working, we want to reserve this as a very last resort.



Things we hope you can help with

ADVERTISING YOUR FOSTER DOG – photos , videos, biographies, flyers, posting to craigslist, facebook, etc

ADOPTION EVENTS – Showcase your foster pup to the public and some of our special adoption events, bring the pet to a “Pet of the Week Spot”

The Do NOT’s

- Off Leash dog parks
- Leave dog unattended with a cat
- Leave dog unattended with children
- Leave dog unattended in the back yard
- Leave dog in a crate for more than 6 hours in a row
- Let the dog on the furniture or sleep in bed with you (OK, we can’t enforce this, but we have to at least say it. Though it might be fine with you, it can send mixed signals to the dog about “who is in charge”.)

**A B C’s and 1 2 3’s
of
Getting Your Foster Dog Adopted!**

1. Online Presence at www.AustinAnimalCenter.org

A) PICTURES

- i. Send updated photo of your foster to animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov
- ii. Pictures should be updated about every 2 weeks

B) VIDEO

- i. Take a short (40-60 second) video of your foster dog being adorable
- ii. Upload it to YouTube.
- iii. Send the link to animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov

C) WRITE UP

- i. Write the story of your foster dog and send it in to animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov

If you have trouble with the ABCs - let the foster coordinator know, we’ll get you some help!

2. Training

Review the Training Database and find a trainer convenient to you

Contact the trainer and find out when the next available class meets

Go to class with your foster dog!

3. Getting the word out

A. Visit at least one “Hot Spot” per week with your foster dog.

i. Be sure foster dog is wearing an “Adopt Me” bandana

ii. Have contact information handy to give to potential adopters

B) Post an ad on Craigslist at least once a week

i. Fridays are best

ii. Be sure to include pictures, video and write up

C) Create a Facebook Page for your foster dog. Once a week tell a story about your foster dog, with pictures and video and update his “Fans”

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS!

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Pictures								
Video								
Write Up								
Training Class								
Hot Spot								
Craigslist Ad								
Facebook Page								

Our Expectations

Within 12 weeks of having the animal in your home, it should have received the training it needs, gotten an updated web presence on our website, been able to attend at least one adoption event and perhaps even be a ‘Pet of the Week’ on a local TV station. The next 12 weeks should be spent actively looking for a new home. At the end of 6 months, we need to decide – will you be adopting the animal and continuing to find it a new home on your own? Has it made your home it’s home and we need to make it official? Or does it need to come back to the shelter to find a new home? 6 months is the maximum we can support an adult dog in foster care.