



Foster Program Manual

Austin Animal Center
7201 Levander Loop, Building A
Austin, Texas 78702

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Is Fostering for the Austin Animal Center Right for You?

FAQ

Here are some frequently asked questions that may help you decide.

What is fostering?

Fostering is providing a temporary home for a homeless pet, who for whatever reason, needs to be housed outside of the shelter. Fostering is truly lifesaving.

Why should I foster?

Fostering can be a wonderful experience for you and your family. You can feel good knowing that you have made a positive difference in an animal's life, and each animal fostered in a home opens up a cage or kennel space for us to save another animal! Fostering can also provide individual attention that certain special needs animals require. Foster commitments range from just a couple of days to several months, so you can choose foster options that fit with your lifestyle.

Do I need to have any special training or skills to be foster parent?

Foster families should be compassionate, caring and patient. You will be informed of your foster animal's known history, medical and behavioral health before they are placed in your care, and our foster coordinator will help answer questions and provide resources and information.

What are the requirements?

- Be willing to abide by policies and procedures in the manual and foster care agreement
- Be able to access email regularly
- Be able to provide transport to and from AAC
- Provide some supplies and food for foster animals
- Spend time with foster pets and treat them like your own animals while they're in your care
- Have up-to-date rabies vaccinations for all animals in the home

What types of animals need foster care?

- Kittens and puppies too young to be in the shelter
- Animals recovering from illness or injury
- Animals that need a break from the shelter environment
- Pets with special medical or behavioral challenges

How long do animals need to be in foster care?

Every situation is different! Our foster needs range from one day to until the animal is adopted, which can take several months.

How much time do foster parents have to devote to the animal(s) in their care?

It depends on the situation. Foster animals need all of the same things that owned animals do, and may even need more attention if they are recovering from illness/injury, or need extra exercise.

What are some of the potential risks of fostering an animal?

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences that you can have, but there are some potential risks. While rare, below you will read some of the possible risks.

- Owned animals could catch a disease and/or a parasite from a foster animal
- Foster families, members of their household, or visitors could catch a disease and/or parasite from a foster animal (We do not, as a practice, send animals with known diseases transmittable to humans to foster)
- Owned animals could be injured or killed by a foster animal.
- Foster families, members of the household, or visitors could be injured by a foster animal
- Foster animals could die in foster care or have to return to the shelter to be euthanized
- Foster animals may destroy personal items

What happens if my foster animal needs medical care?

AAC will provide all medical care for the animals in its foster program.

Can foster parents adopt their foster animals?

Yes. Foster care providers may adopt their foster pet(s), but should notify the foster coordinator of their decision as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Testimonials from Current Foster Care Providers

Without fosters, Austin could not be No-Kill. Animals who are too young, sick, hurt, or simply not behaviorally suited for the shelter need a helping hand to bridge them to their forever home. We recently had three senior cats surrendered whose owner had a stroke. If I were in that situation I would want to know that someone would take my babies under their wings until a new home could be found for them. When you foster an animal, you're also frequently helping a person out as well. And as an extra big bonus, fostering lets me get my kitten fix over and over again! – Beth B. (Cat and kitten foster)



It always warms my heart to hear from people, too. Adopters have randomly stopped me with hugs months later at the grocery store. I've opened the mail to find a crayon-drawn thank you card. Some of my favorite moments are reading the updates that adopters share with me. They send photos of their new family member settling in to the good life, napping with new friends, wearing their first Halloween costume, and even joining the family portrait. I can't help but smile. I feel tremendous satisfaction knowing that I've fostered an animal in need. I've fostered happiness in someone's life. I've fostered joy in my own soul. – Kelley R. (Kitten foster)



I usually have medical fosters, which are dogs or cats that are recovering from surgery or illness. I Foster because it gives me great pleasure, I love to see an animal get through all of life's hurdles and get adopted by a wonderful new family. My kids love fostering because they always have a "new" animal to cuddle or play with. I feel it also helps my kids to understand that as people we should care for all living things, and take care of them to the best of our abilities, and I feel that translates to our relationships with other people as well. Besides, who knows one of my children may be a future veterinarian, or a vet tech, just like their mom. – Nancy L. (Medical foster)



It feels good knowing that in our own small way, we have made a difference in their lives and have helped Austin remain a no kill city, which I love! I also foster because it is a wonderful experience for my children. It teaches them about giving of themselves and teaches them responsibility in helping take care of the many puppies we have had in our home over the years. It also allows them to always have puppies around to play with! I also love that we have met some really great families over the years and remain friends with several of them. It is an amazing thing to see a dog who came into my home emaciated, covered in fleas, scared to death and taking care of a litter of puppies to six months later seeing her at her new home completely pampered and loved and cherished by the wonderful couple that adopted her. – Kimberly L. (Dog, puppy and kitten foster)

Foster Program Policies and Procedures

Legal Guardianship

All animals in foster care are the property of the Austin Animal Center and are subject to all applicable Austin Animal Center policies, rules and restrictions.

Foster care providers must return foster animals at any time upon the request of the foster coordinator or other Austin Animal Center staff. Austin Animal Center staff may request the return of a foster animal for many reasons, including but not limited to: the opportunity to be reclaimed by a previous owner or the opportunity to be transferred to a partner organization.

If a foster care provider is found to have improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and the Austin Animal Center may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the animal.

The Austin Animal Center reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.

Housing and Care Requirements

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate controlled homes where the temperature is kept between 60 and 80° F.
- Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by Austin Animal Center's veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.

Puppies and Dogs

- Puppies should never be left unsupervised outdoors, and high traffic areas, such as the park, animal stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc., should be avoided, as puppies can be susceptible to deadly diseases that could be lurking there.
- Dogs can go outside for supervised play time/exercise. While outdoors, foster dogs must be kept on leash or in a securely fenced yard. Some dogs can jump/climb over or dig under fences surprisingly fast, so please be cautious when leaving foster dogs unsupervised.
- Foster dogs that do not have a prior history with each other should not be combined in a foster home unless the foster care provider has sought and been given permission by the foster coordinator.
- Foster dogs are prohibited from socializing with other dogs, except those living in the foster care provider's home.
- Foster dogs are prohibited from going to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
- During walks, a minimum 10-feet should be maintained between fosters dogs and other animals, except those also living in the foster care provider's home.

Kittens and Cats

- Kittens and cats in foster care should be kept indoors only. When being transported, cats and kittens must be kept in secure carriers.

Additional Requirements

- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.
- Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between animals in your home and foster animals, Austin Animal Center will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster pet for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.
- If a foster pet gets loose, the foster care provider should contact the foster coordinator immediately.

Supplies

AAC will provide foster care providers with certain supplies –

- Food for puppies and kittens (this includes formula when needed)
- Any medications, supplements or prescription diets that have been prescribed by our veterinary staff
- Other items (based on availability and need)

Health and Temperament

AAC will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

Foster care providers are required to be as accurate as possible about their foster animal's health and behavior. This will assist the shelter in determining the proper medical treatment, training and/or behavioral rehabilitation for the animal.

Foster Animal Adoptions

- All foster animals must be fixed (spayed/neutered) and microchipped before they can go to their forever homes.
- Potential adopters must go through an approval process. For additional details and instructions, see the "My foster animal has an adopter, now what?" section on page 9.
- Foster care providers may adopt their foster pet(s), but should notify the foster coordinator of their decision as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

How it Works

Getting Started

After your foster application has been received and approved, you will receive a welcome email and we will invite you to join our volunteer and foster software system, GivePulse, which is how we communicate with foster care providers.

Prior to fostering any animals, you will be required to sign the foster agreement (see pages 18-19), which will be kept on file at the shelter. In addition, within three months of completing the foster application and joining GivePulse, you will be required to attend a foster program orientation.

Please note, if at any time you have questions regarding the foster program, potential foster animals, etc., those questions should be directed at the foster coordinator.

Picking Up a New Foster Animal

If you are interested in fostering a particular animal or litter that you have been notified about via GivePulse, please contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible. Once we receive your interest, we will verify that the animal is still available, answer any questions that you may have, and confirm a pick up date and time. All questions regarding an animal's history, behavior, medical needs, special care instructions, etc. should be directed at the foster coordinator prior to pick up.

You may also visit the shelter to browse long stay animals (those that have been at the shelter for 30+ days) that are available for foster care. These animals can be identified by the colorful signs on their kennels noting that they are available for foster or adoption. Just look for the signs as you are walking through the kennels.

When picking up a new foster animal, please go to the MAIN LOBBY and into the CASHIER's office. Let the Customer Service staff member know that you are a foster and that you are picking up a foster animal. You will need to have the animal's ID number (found in the original GivePulse posting or on the animal's kennel card) with you. After picking up your foster animal you will receive a "Foster Pet Schedule" email with additional details regarding their care and their future medical needs. Please be on the lookout for this email, it will be sent within three days from the day that you pick up.

The Main Lobby and Cashier's Office are open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. If you are not able to come during these hours and would like to make arrangements to pick-up earlier in the day, please contact the foster coordinator.

Medical Care

Sick or Injured Fosters

If you notice that your foster animal has mild, cold-like symptoms (sneezing or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), diarrhea or vomiting, but are alert, active, eating and drinking well, please notify the foster coordinator so that it can be determined how best to proceed.

If your foster animal has more severe symptoms, such as frequent vomiting, lethargy, yellow/green ocular or nasal discharge, previously undocumented hair loss, straining to urinate or defecate, etc., please notify the foster coordinator, and bring the animal to the Pet Resource Center to be seen by a veterinarian during our clinic hours. If you are fostering a litter of kittens or puppies, even if only one animal is showing symptoms, the entire litter should be brought in.

During clinic hours, as you enter the PET RESOURCE CENTER you will see a sign posted on the counter along with a sign in sheet. Please sign in and begin to fill out one of the "Foster Sick Check" forms (located next to the sign in sheet). It is our intention to have veterinary staff available to provide care for sick foster animals while you wait, and most animals coming in during these hours will be seen and discharged within one hour. However, please be aware that there are times that the veterinary staff assigned to clinic hours will be needed to handle more urgent/emergency situations, so wait times may be longer or you may be asked to drop off and pick up later.

The Pet Resource Center is open for clinic hours daily from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Outside of clinic hours, you may still bring sick animals to the Pet Resource Center, but you will have to drop them off, and we will call you once they have been seen by a veterinarian and are available for pickup. The Pet Resource Center is open Monday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please try to arrive no later than 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and no later than 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. If you are not able to come during these hours and would like to make arrangements to drop off earlier in the day, please contact the foster coordinator.

Booster Shots

All foster animals under four months of age should have their weight checked and be given booster shots every 3-4 weeks. This means that kittens and puppies that are very young when they go to foster care may receive as many as four boosters. Foster animals over four months of age when they go into foster care should return to the shelter for a booster shot just once, 3-4 weeks after their initial shot. For booster shots, stop by the PET RESOURCE CENTER with the animal(s) and their ID#(s) during clinic hours.

Due to the large number of animals in the foster program, it is up to the foster care provider to keep track of their foster's booster shot and prevention schedule.

The Pet Resource Center is open for clinic hours daily from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. If you are not able to come during these hours, please contact the foster coordinator.

Flea/Tick and Heartworm Prevention

All foster animals over eight weeks of age should be given flea/tick and heartworm prevention monthly. Since these medications are based on the weight of the animal, if your foster animal is still growing, you will need to follow the same protocol given above for booster shots. If you are fostering an adult animal whose weight has not changed, you can simply stop by the PET RESOURCE CENTER with the animal's ID# and request the medication as the due date approaches.

Due to the large number of animals in the foster program, it is up to the foster care provider to keep track of their foster's booster shot and prevention schedule.

The Pet Resource Center is open Monday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please try to arrive no later than 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and no later than 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. If you are not able to come during these hours and would like to make arrangements to come earlier in the day, please contact the foster coordinator.

Fading Kitten Syndrome

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes one that was previously healthy, "crashes" and begins to fade away. Symptoms include:

- Low body temperature – the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy - not getting up, unable to stand, not responding to touching/petting
- Gasping for breath
- Meowing/crying out

Please review the Fading Kitten Protocol found under "Fading Kitten Protocol" in the required reading section on page 14, or in the documents section of GivePulse.

Foster Puppies or Kittens with Fleas, Ticks or Other Parasites

If you notice that your foster kittens have fleas on them, they can be bathed with plain Dawn dish soap and a small comb can be used to remove the fleas. Afterwards, they should be dried thoroughly and steps should be taken to ensure that they stay warm. All bedding used before bathing should be washed with hot water and detergent and carpets should be vacuumed thoroughly.

For additional advice on how best to handle fleas/ticks and other parasites, please contact the foster coordinator.

Prescription Diets

If your foster animal is on a veterinary prescribed diet, refill requests must be submitted to the foster coordinator. Please plan ahead as it may take up to one week to fill your request.

In Case of an After Hours Emergency

If your foster animal is having an urgent, life threatening medical issue while the shelter is closed, you can take them to the North or South Austin Emergency Vet Clinics found here:

<http://www.eahnwa.com/>.

When you present your foster animal to the emergency clinic, you **must** inform the staff there that it is an Austin Animal Center foster animal and provide them with the animal's AAC ID#. The emergency clinic staff will then contact designated AAC staff to verify that treatment can be provided. If the foster parent is unable to provide emergency clinic staff with the animal's AAC ID#, the animal may still be treated, but at the foster parent's expense. In such cases the foster parent may apply for reimbursement from the shelter.

Foster animals taken to the emergency vet clinic for treatment will be kept overnight at the clinic and an Animal Protection officer will be contacted in the morning to transfer the animal back to the shelter for further treatment/care.

If your foster animal is having an issue after having surgery at Emancipet, please see the 'Complications After Having Surgery at Emancipet' section below.

Scheduling Spay/Neuter Surgery and Microchipping

Emancipet provides much of our foster program's spay/neuter services. There are three local clinics for your convenience:

East Austin 7201 Levander Loop, Buildings I & K Austin TX 78702	Central Austin 5129 Cameron Road Austin TX 78723	Pflugerville 15803 Windermere Drive #205A Pflugerville TX 78660
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To schedule your foster pets for surgery at Emancipet:

1. Visit Emancipet.org, click "appointments", then complete and submit the online request form
2. In the Pet's Name field, list the animal's shelter ID#
3. Use the Promotional Code "AAC Foster"
4. Emancipet staff will follow up with you with the details of your appointment.

Please note: Emancipet may be booked out several weeks in advance. Please contact them ASAP to schedule your appointment. On the day of your appointment, please be sure to allot adequate time for drop off and pick up.

If Emancipet is not able to schedule your foster animal for surgery in a timely manner or some other issue arises, please contact the foster coordinator to make arrangements for surgery to take place at AAC.

Complications After Having Surgery at Emancipet

If you have an urgent medical question or your foster animal seems to be having a complication after having surgery at Emancipet, please call Emancipet at 512-587-7729. Outside of their normal business hours, their medical team can be reached anytime at the "on-call" phone number listed at the beginning of the recording. Emancipet staff will be able to advise you how best to proceed.

How can I help my foster animal find a forever home?

When fostering an animal for AAC, **you** can be the animal's number one advocate! By acting as an adoption ambassador, you won't just be a foster care provider. You will be a photographer, videographer, biographer, a marketing specialist, and an adoption counselor!

- Take at least one clear, landscape-oriented (horizontal), photo of the foster animal and email it to the foster coordinator to be added to the shelter's website
- Take at least one clear, short video of the foster animal and email it to the foster coordinator to be added to the shelter's website
- Promote the foster animal on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor
- Create and post an ad for the foster animal on www.Craigslist.org
- Create and put up flyers for the foster animal in appropriate locations

For additional tips on marketing foster animals, please visit the links under “Marketing Foster Animals for Adoption” in the required reading sections on page 13 and 14.

Please be aware that animals in our foster program are not on a first come, first served basis. As the foster parent, you may take several applications and/or meet with different potential adopters before deciding which would be the best fit for the animal(s) in your care. However, foster care providers should check their email inbox, and spam folder daily for inquiries from potential adopters about the animal(s) in their care, and respectfully respond to all inquiries within 48 hours.

For tips on effective adoption counseling, please visit the links under “Effective Adoption Counseling Tips” in the required reading sections on pages 13 and 14.

My foster animal has an adopter, now what?

1. The adopter must go through the approval process either at the shelter with shelter staff, by submitting the online “visitor profile” found at AustinAnimalCenter.org or by completing an adoption packet (attached to the “Foster Pet Schedule” email and available on GivePulse) and returning it to the foster care provider. That’s right, YOU can process and approve their application! If the interested party chose one of the former options, the foster care provider should email the foster coordinator to request the details of the application and verify that the interested party has been approved.
2. Once you have confirmed that someone will be adopting your foster pet, contact the foster coordinator right away to let us know.
3. After the foster animal has been spayed/neutered and microchipped, it may be transferred to the adopter. Upon transferring the animal, the foster care provider should collect the appropriate adoption fee from the adopter.
4. The foster care providers must submit the adopter’s name and other identifying information or the completed adoption packet and the adoption fee to the foster coordinator within 3 business days.
5. After adopter’s information and adoption fee have been received by the foster coordinator, all of the animal’s paperwork and microchip information will be emailed to the adopter.

Adoption Events

Another option for foster care providers seeking forever homes for the animals in their care are adoption events. These events are typically held on weekends, at various locations throughout Austin and the surrounding area. Details about these events are posted to GivePulse as they become available.

Returning Foster Animals to the Shelter

If you need to return a foster pet to the shelter for any reason, please contact the foster coordinator so that we can make arrangements for you to do so. When returning foster pets to the shelter, you will go to the PET RESOURCE CENTER with the animal and their ID# and let Customer Service staff know you are returning a foster pet.

You must complete a behavior profile for the animal(s) that you are returning. This can be done via email beforehand. Both the Foster Cat Profile and the Foster Dog Profile can be found on GivePulse.

The Pet Resource Center is open Monday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please try to arrive no later than 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and no later than 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. If you are not able to come during these hours and would like to make arrangements to come earlier in the day, please contact the foster coordinator.

Deceased Animals

In some cases, sick or weak pets may die in foster care. If your foster animal passes away, please contact the foster coordinator. You will be asked to provide detailed information as to what happened at the time of the death so that we can determine if other foster animals in your care may be at risk. You will be asked to bring the body back to AAC and a necropsy may be performed.

Short Term Fostering Overnights and Outings

Want to give a shelter dog a break from the stress of the shelter and an opportunity for new experiences? Want to get valuable information about the dog's personality, behavior and needs, thereby helping adopters or rescuers make more informed decisions? The shelter has two different options for short term fostering.

1. Overnights: Check out a foster in the evening and return the next morning
2. Outing: Check out a foster dog for one hour or an afternoon

Please note:

- *Fosters interested in short term fostering opportunities are required to complete the Foster Program Orientation and Outings and Overnights Training.*
- *These types of outings are most important for longer stay dogs (dogs that have been at the shelter for more than 30 days), those who have behavioral challenges, or those that are overwhelmed in the shelter setting.*

Requirements:

- You must be an approved foster and have a completed and signed Foster Agreement on file.
- You must have completed the additional training that is required for short term fostering opportunities.
- You must be available to pick up and return the dog during regular business hours.
- You must review the "Public Outings and Walks - Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog" section on page 12

Steps:

1. If you are interested in taking a specific dog for an overnight or outing, please contact the foster coordinator to verify that the dog is available, review the dog's behavior records, and to confirm a pickup date and time. If you were not able to confirm with the foster coordinator in advance, please check in with customer service staff in the Cashier's Office for more information about the dog that you are interested in.
2. Once you have confirmed with staff that you will be picking up a specific dog. Staff will make a note in the dog's record concerning where it is going and when it will be returning.
3. When you are ready to pick the dog up, you will need to visit the Cashier's Office and speak to customer service staff.
4. Customer service will need to see a valid ID, get your DL#, confirm your current address/contact information, and have you sign a Foster Agreement if you haven't already.

Timing for taking a dog out:

For an overnight:

- Make arrangements ahead of time for taking a dog out.
- Pick up the dog prior to 7 p.m. in order to complete arrangements.
- Return the dog to its kennel at 11 a.m. the following day, so it will be available for customer viewing.
- Be sure to notify the animal care staffer in the run that the dog has been returned so staff can assure that the dog is fed.

For an outing:

- Pick up anytime between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- Return the dog to its kennel by 7 p.m.
- Remember being available for customer viewing during open hours increases the dog's chance of being adopted from the shelter. Heaviest customer times are generally on weekends, right after shelter opening, mid to late afternoons, and during special adoption events. The best time of day for an outing will also depend on the times of greatest activity or calm for a particular dog, and their specific needs.

Kennel Sign & Supplies:

Supplies and signage are located in the Cashier's Office.

- Hang the appropriate sign on the interior door of the dog's kennel, with its kennel card, so that staff and visitors will know that the dog is an overnight or outing.
- Grab an "Adopt Me" vest or bandana to help draw attention to your lucky shelter pup during your outing.
- When returning the dog to its kennel, remove the sign that you placed when taking the dog out, and return it to the Cashier's Office.

Keep the following in mind:

- If the dog will be visiting a place other than your home during your time together, consider whether they will truly benefit from, and enjoy the particular environment to which you will be taking them. Think about the surroundings, the traffic (both people and other animals), and whether or not the environment may cause further stress to your chosen dog.
- Crowded public areas should be avoided, including school grounds.
- You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
- You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other animals, except those in your home.
- Have a blast! Ride in the car, walk in the neighborhood, play, watch TV, whatever you want to do within the limits outlined above. Use structure, kindness, attention, training, and snuggling as needed. Some dogs will want to spend their time resting and some will want to do lots of fun things. Keep in mind the dog's safety and needs and yours, and have fun!

Share the experience:

- Complete a behavior profile for the dog documenting your experience. This can be done in person at the time of drop off, or preferably, via email beforehand. The Foster Dog Profile can be found in the documents section of GivePulse.
- Post fun pictures and details to the "Austin Animal Center Staff, Volunteers and Fosters" Facebook page.

Public Outings and Walks
Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog

Before the Outing/Walk

- Make sure that you have the appropriate supplies. These include: a cell phone, poop bags, a bottle of water, a collapsible bowl, and a list of emergency numbers.
- Make sure that the dog is properly fitted with a collar. If needed, a harness can be used in addition to the collar. If you aren't sure whether or not the dog is properly outfitted, ask staff to check.
- The dog should have a leash properly attached to their collar, or harness. Check to be sure that all equipment is fastened, and that no equipment is frayed, worn or has stitching coming out. Flexi / retractable leashes should not be used.
- Take time to introduce yourself to the dog that you'll be walking. The dog may be excitable. Be calm and assertive and try not to get the dog any more excited or playful than it already is. If you feel that you cannot control the dog, please return it and select a dog that you can safely handle.
- Do not wrap the leash around your hand. It would be terrible for a dog to get loose, but much worse if the dog drug you, the handler, into a dangerous traffic situation. If you feel that a dog is pulling you off your feet or that you are at risk of losing control of the dog, please return it and select a dog that you can safely handle.
- Walk your dog on a short leash – a long leash gives the dog more strength and leverage.

During the Outing/Walk

- Be aware of other dogs, bicyclists, runners and walkers that might cross your path and give them the right of way. Keep your distance from other animals and do not introduce shelter dogs to privately owned dogs.
- Be visible! Wear bright colors so that you can be easily seen by oncoming traffic.
- Cross safely. Look both ways when you cross traffic and remember that the prey drive of any dog can kick in at any time. Be aware of your surroundings and do not let the dog walk far in front of you or far behind you.
- Do not use headphones or talk on a cell phone while walking the dog. Use all of your senses to ensure that you, those around you, and the dog remain safe.
- Pay attention to the dog's respiration rate and overall appearance and attitude. Since many of the dogs have been relatively non-mobile for weeks or months, they may become fatigued quite quickly. Make sure to offer water regularly and take breaks periodically so the dog can catch his breath.
- If you notice the dog acting strangely or you find yourself in a dangerous situation, do not hesitate to contact 311 for animal protection's assistance. You can also contact the foster hotline at 512-978-0541.
- If there is an emergency, such as a person being bitten, call 911 for assistance.

Additional Tips

- Use distance or distraction to reduce aroused behavior
- Keep two hands on leash for best control
- Let faster traffic pass on left, keep slower traffic on your right.
- Reward & praise the dog for calm behavior, easy walking or jogging, and sitting for greetings.
- Have fun!

Required Reading and/or Viewing for Puppy/Dog Fosters

Seven Steps to Successfully Fostering a Dog (by Dogs Out Loud):

<http://www.dogsoutloud.org/training-handouts/7-steps-to-fostering-a-dog/>

Bringing Your Shy Foster Dog Home (by Dogs Out Loud):

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/bringing-your-shy-foster-dog-home.htm>

Decompression Tips for New Foster Dogs

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steffen-baldwin/chill-out-decompression-t_b_8331986.html

Safety and Behavior:

Review the “Public Outings and Walks - Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog” section on page 12

<https://youtu.be/0ri0wndPzCM>

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/aggression>

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care/dog-bite-prevention>

<http://drsophiayin.com/blog/entry/kids-and-dogs-how-kids-should-and-should-not-interact-with-dogs>

<https://positively.com/articles/dog-child-safetyguide/>

Training:

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/dog_training_positive_reinforcement.html

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/training_nothing_in_life_is_free.html

House and Crate Training for Puppies and Dogs:

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/housetraining_puppies.html

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/crate_training.html

Enrichment and Exercise:

<https://positively.com/dog-wellness/dog-enrichment/>

<https://positively.com/dog-wellness/exercise/>

How to Introduce Dogs to Each Other:

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/introducing-dogs-each-other>

How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat:

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/how-introduce-dog-cat> - **Option 1: Slow and steady desensitization**

Marketing Foster Animals for Adoption:

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/for-shelters-and-rescuers/animal-shelter-dogs-promoting-them-adoption>

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/for-shelters-and-rescuers/pet-profiles-how-write-animal-bios-get-your-adoptables-homes>

<http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Marketing-Best-Practices>

Effective Adoption Counseling Tips:

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/content/adopters-welcome-guide-update%2003-02-17.pdf>

<http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Adoption-Counseling>

Additional Resources for Puppy/Dog Fosters

Nursing Dog and Puppy Care:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Nursing_Mother_Dogs_and_Their_Puppies.pdf

Basic Puppy Care and Socialization:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/PUPPIES.pdf

http://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/16_12/features/properly-socializing-your-puppy_20878-1.html

Heartworm Disease:

<https://www.heartwormsociety.org/pet-owner-resources/heartworm-basics>

Ringworm:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Ringworm.pdf

Demodectic (Demodex) Mange:

<http://www.vcahospitals.com/main/pet-health-information/article/animal-health/mange-demodectic-in-dogs/741>

Sarcoptic Mange:

<http://www.vcahospitals.com/main/pet-health-information/article/animal-health/mange-sarcoptic-in-dogs/839>

Required Reading and/or Viewing for Kitten/Cat Fosters

Safety and Behavior:

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/cat-care/common-cat-behavior-issues/aggression-cats>

Foster Kitten FAQ

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7Ts6ypyTOv-Q0pnb29YVjVuOVk/view?usp=sharing>

Fading Kitten Protocol:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UGU51hRal0G30iYxi4w006McMp01W_fRwU46CXSm93A/edit?usp=sharing

How to Make Gruel for Syringe Feeding Kittens/Cats:

<https://youtu.be/6feWmWAu-48>

How to Syringe Feed Gruel to Kittens/Cats:

<https://youtu.be/-4d3-Ge7TyA>

How to Introduce Cats to Each Other:

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips/introducing_new_cat.html

How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat:

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/how-introduce-dog-cat> - **Option 1: Slow and steady desensitization**

Marketing Foster Animals for Adoption:

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/for-shelters-and-rescuers/animal-shelter-dogs-promoting-them-adoption>

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/for-shelters-and-rescuers/pet-profiles-how-write-animal-bios-get-your-adoptables-homes>

<http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Marketing-Best-Practices>

Effective Adoption Counseling Tips:

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/content/adopters-welcome-guide-update%2003-02-17.pdf>

<http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Adoption-Counseling>

Additional Resources for Kitten/Cat Fosters

Nursing Cat and Kitten Care:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/NURSING_MOTHER_CATS_AND_KITTENS.pdf

Bottle Baby Kitten Care

https://www.dropbox.com/s/z7pwoipf7nxsblD/KittenLady_OrphanKittens.pdf?dl=0

<http://www.kittenlady.org/savekittens>

Basic Kitten Care and Socialization:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/KITTENS.pdf

Unsocial/Feral Kitten Handling and Socialization:

https://4fi8v2446i0sw2rpq2a3fg51-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Socializing-Kittens_update.pdf

Litterbox Problems:

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/cat-care/common-cat-behavior-issues/litter-box-problems>

Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI):

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Feline_Upper_Respiratory_Infection.pdf

Ringworm:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Ringworm.pdf

Contact Information

Foster Program Hotline: 512-978-0541

Foster Program Email: animal.foster@austintexas.gov

Mailing Address:

Austin Animal Center – Foster Program

7201 Levander Loop, Bldg A

Austin, TX 78702

After Hours Emergency Vet Clinics: <http://www.eahnwa.com/>

Follow the instructions outlined on page 8

Want to connect with other fosters, volunteers and staff?

Join the Austin Animal Center Staff, Volunteers and Fosters Facebook Group!

This group is open to current, active volunteers, fosters and staff members.

What is the purpose of the page?

There are several ways this page can be used:

- Fosters and volunteers are urged to take candid, cute photos and videos of shelter pets. We use these, along with your stories and observations, to construct posts for the shelter's external Facebook page. This helps find homes for more difficult-to-adopt animals. Always include the Animal ID of the pet you are photographing at the end of your post so they can be easily identified at the shelter.
- Have non-urgent medical or behavioral questions about a foster pet? Ask it to the group and you're likely to get immediate responses.
- Want to share a happy story or informative article with the group? Go ahead. We all love to learn and there are so many great resources out there! Consider following ASPCAPro and Animal Sheltering to find out the latest in animal welfare.
- Can't make your volunteer shift? Alert other volunteers – we often have people step in when they hear there is a need.

The Facebook group is a wonderful tool and is a key part of our Volunteer and Foster program. There are certain things we ask you not to post on the Facebook group page, as they are better addressed with the coordinators. Two of these are:

- Concerns or complaints about a staff member, another volunteer or an issue at the shelter.
- Complaints, suggestions or concerns about shelter policies and procedures.

All group members are expected to conduct themselves with respect and compassion towards everyone else on the page. The shelter reserves the right to moderate comments and posts. Posts may be removed from the page at any time. The author of the removed post will always receive an e-mail or message from the moderator, explaining why their post or comment was removed.

If you have a Facebook account and would like to be in the group, request to join here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AACvolunteersandstaff>

Austin Animal Center Foster Agreement

I, _____, make the following statements and voluntarily enter into this Foster Care Agreement (hereinafter "Agreement") to provide temporary care as a foster caregiver for the Austin Animal Center ((hereinafter "AAC").

1. _____ I have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment. I agree to notify AAC if I am convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment in the future.
2. _____ I agree to comply with all other federal, state and local laws that pertain to companion animals and pet ownership in the jurisdiction where I reside.
3. _____ I understand that AAC reserves the right to check on the welfare of my foster animal, which may include a visit to my foster home. I further understand that if AAC finds a direct and immediate threat to my foster animal, AAC may remove the animal from my care.
4. _____ I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the AAC Foster Care Manual ("Manual"), and that I have read the Manual. I agree to fully comply with the policies, guidance and requirements set forth in the Manual as applicable to my foster animal.
5. _____ I agree to not take my foster dog(s) or my foster cat(s) to dog parks, off-leash areas, daycare facilities, crowded public areas, or any similar locations, unless given prior approval by the AAC Foster Coordinator. I understand that I will be solely responsible for any injury or damage caused by my foster animal if I do not comply with this provision.
6. _____ I understand that AAC recommends that my foster animal(s) is to be kept separate from any other animals currently living in my home. I agree that if I choose to introduce my foster animal(s) to any other animal living in my home, I will be solely responsible for any illness or injury to other animals.
7. _____ I agree that the animal(s) that I foster will reside in my home, will be kept as household pets, and will not be used for breeding.
8. _____ I agree to notify the AAC Foster Coordinator immediately by phone and in writing at 512-978-0541 and Animal.Foster@AustinTexas.gov immediately if my foster animal(s) becomes lost or separated from me.
9. _____ I agree to notify the AAC Foster Coordinator immediately by phone and in writing at 512-978-0541 and Animal.Foster@AustinTexas.gov if my foster animal demonstrates any aggressive behavior, including, but not limited to, biting a person or another animal.
10. _____ I agree to seek immediate medical attention if I am bitten by my foster animal, or if I receive any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal. I further agree to seek immediate medical attention for any member of my household who is bitten or suffers any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal.
11. _____ I agree to return my foster animal(s) at any time upon the request of the AAC Foster Coordinator or any AAC staff member.
12. _____ I agree to receive and respond to calls and emails concerning my foster animal(s), from AAC shelter staff, veterinary staff, and potential adopters.
13. _____ I agree to transport the animal to AAC or an approved veterinary clinic to receive medical treatment as requested by the AAC Foster Coordinator or AAC staff. If my foster animal experiences a medical emergency, I agree to follow the instructions outlined under "In Case of an After Hours Emergency" in manual.

14. _____ I understand that AAC will not reimburse me for any routine or non-emergency care for my foster animal that is not pre-approved in writing by the AAC Foster Coordinator.

15. _____ I agree to contact the AAC Foster Coordinator at 512-978-0541 or Animal.Foster@AustinTexas.gov for other any other emergency or non-emergency matters.

16. _____ I agree to assume the risks implicit in working with animals who may have been abandoned, neglected, mistreated, or who may suffer from an illness or disease. My participation in the AAC Foster Program is entirely voluntary and without the promise or expectation of compensation. I have no known physical or mental condition that would impair my ability to participate in the AAC Foster Program. I understand that while AAC staff carefully monitors all animals, AAC may have limited knowledge of their behavioral and medical backgrounds. Therefore, I understand that AAC makes no warranties or representations regarding my foster animal's health, behavior, temperament, age, or breed. I further understand that environmental changes may affect and change the temperament of my foster animal(s).

17. _____ I understand and agree that the City of Austin/Travis County, its members, officers, directors, agents and elected officials have no liability or responsibility of any nature for injuries or damage to any person, animal, or property which may be caused by my foster animal(s) or my participation in the AAC Foster Program. I, for myself and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Austin/Travis County, its members, officers, directors, agents, elected officials, and their heirs, administrators, executors, successors, and representatives from all liability for and all risk of damage or bodily injury or death that may occur to me (including any injury based on negligence) now or hereafter in connection with my foster animal(s) and my participation in the AAC Foster Program. I expressly agree that this release, waiver and indemnity is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the State of Texas and that if any portion is held invalid, the remainder shall continue in full force and effect.

By my signature below and, and by my initials beside each numbered paragraph above, I affirm that all statements and stated agreements contained in this document are truthful, I affirm that I have read and understand this Agreement in its entirety, and I agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____