



## **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 a pet's life, and each pet fostered in a home opens up a cage or kennel space for us to save another pet! Fostering can also provide the individual attention that some pets require. Foster commitments range from just a couple of days to several months, so you can choose a foster option that fits your lifestyle.

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

Foster care providers should be compassionate and patient. You will be informed of their foster pet's known history and any special needs before placement in your care. The foster coordinator will also be available to help answer questions and provide resources as needed.

#### **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 pets
- Spend time with foster pets and love them like your own
- Have up-to-date rabies vaccinations for all pets in the home

#### **What types of pets need foster care?**

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

#### **How long do pets need to be in foster care?**

Every situation is different! Foster needs range from a couple of day to several months or until the pet is adopted.

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

It depends on the situation. Foster pets need all of the same things that owned pets do, and may require even more attention if they are recovering from an illness/injury or need behavior modification.

#### **What are some of the potential risks of fostering a pet?**

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences that you can have, but there are some potential risks. While rare, risks include but are not limited to -

- Other pets in the home could catch a disease and/or a parasite from a foster pet
- Foster care providers, members of their household, or visitors could catch a disease and/or parasite from a foster pet
- Other pets in the home could be injured or killed by a foster pet.
- Foster care providers, members of the household, or visitors could be injured by a foster pet
- Foster pets could die in foster care or have to return to the shelter to be euthanized
- Foster pets may destroy personal items

#### **What happens if my foster pet needs medical care?**

Medical care is provided by the veterinary staff at AAC.

#### **Can foster care providers adopt their foster pets?**

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. Pets 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 pet, 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.



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 a pet in need. I've fostered happiness in someone's life. I've fostered joy in my own soul. – Kelley R.



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 a pet 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" pet 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.



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.

## Foster Program Policies and Procedures

### **Legal Guardianship**

All pets 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 pets 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 pet 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 a pet 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 pet.

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

### **Records and Retention**

Foster care providers are not authorized to alter records provided by the Austin Animal Center. This includes both digital and hard copies of a pet's medical and/or behavioral history.

Foster care providers are expected to retain communications regarding their Austin Animal Center foster pets, including those between themselves and potential adopters.

### **Housing and Care Requirements**

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster pets, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster pets 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 pets 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, pet 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 puppies/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 puppies/dogs are prohibited from being introduced to and socializing with other pets, except those living in the foster care provider's home. This includes pets owned by other foster care providers and/or potential adopters. Any interest in such introductions should be discussed with the foster coordinator so that proper arrangements can be made.
- Foster puppies/dogs are prohibited from going to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. They must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
- During walks, a minimum 10-feet should be maintained between foster puppies/dogs and other pets, 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.
- Foster kittens/cats are prohibited from being introduced to and socializing with other pets, except those living in the foster care provider's home. This includes pets owned by other foster care providers and/or potential adopters. Any interest in such introductions should be discussed with the foster coordinator so that proper arrangements can be made.

## **Additional Requirements**

- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster pets.
- Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster pet bites a person or pet and the bite breaks the skin.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between pets in your home and foster pets, Austin Animal Center will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster pet. 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 is lost, the foster care provider should contact the foster coordinator immediately. For more details, see the "My foster pet is lost! What should I do?" section.

## **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 pets seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any pet.

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

## **Foster Pet Adoptions**

- All foster pets 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 pet has a potential 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 web-based group, which is how we communicate with our foster care providers.

Prior to fostering any pets, 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 getting started, you will be required to attend a foster program orientation.

If at any time you have questions regarding the foster program, pets that we are pursuing foster placement for, etc., please contact the foster coordinator.

### Selecting a Foster Pet

After you have joined the foster program's web-based group, you will begin receiving placement pleas for pets in need. If you are interested in fostering any of these pets, please contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible. Once we receive your interest, we will verify that the pet is still available, answer any questions that you may have, and confirm a pick up date and time. If you are looking for adult or senior dogs to foster, you can find many of them on our **AAC Adult Dog Foster Needs Trello board**. You are also invited to visit the shelter and browse long stay dogs (those that have been at the shelter for 30+ days). These dogs can be identified by the "intake date" on their kennel cards and many of them are available for placement in a foster home.

### Picking Up a New Foster Pet

When picking up a new foster pet, 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 pet. You will need to have the pet's ID number (found in the placement plea or on the pet's kennel card) with you. You should request a printed copy of their paperwork to take home with you. After picking up your foster pet 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 one week of 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.*

### My foster pet is lost! What should I do?

1. Notify the foster coordinator immediately at [animal.foster@austintexas.gov](mailto:animal.foster@austintexas.gov) and 512-978-0541.
2. Start searching!
3. Visit and join the **Austin Lost and Found Pets Facebook Page** to post photos and information about the missing foster pet.
4. Post and search for the lost foster pet on **Nextdoor.com** and **Craigslist.org** (in the Community section under Lost & Found and Pets).
5. Create and distribute flyers and post signs in high traffic areas (vet clinics, pet stores, groomers, pet boarding facilities and other local businesses). Please ensure that your flyers and signs do not violate City of Austin sign regulations, click **HERE** for information. For display and design tips, click **HERE**. If you need assistance with this, please notify the foster coordinator.
6. Call 311 to make a "Lost Property" report. Afterwards, forward the report # to foster coordinator.

Please note: Additional guidelines, instructions and support will be provided by the foster coordinator on a situational, case-by-case basis.

### Medical Care

#### **Basic Wellness Services (Vaccinations and Parasite Preventatives)**

All foster pets under four months of age should have their weight checked and be given booster shots every 2-4 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 pets over four months of age when they go into foster care may need to return to the shelter for a booster shot 2-4 weeks after their initial shot.

All foster pets over eight weeks of age should be given flea/tick and heartworm preventatives monthly. Since these medications are based on the weight of the pet, if your foster pet is still growing, they will need to visit the shelter to receive the appropriate medications. If you are fostering an adult pet whose weight has not changed, they do not need to visit the shelter, you may simply contact the foster coordinator to arrange to pick up the appropriate medications.

Please note: Due to the large number of pets in the foster program, it is up to the foster care provider to keep track of their foster pet's booster shot and preventative schedule.

**To schedule an appointment for basic wellness services, please click [HERE](#). Each week's schedule will be posted on or before Wednesday of the preceding week.**

*The Austin Animal Center is currently utilizing the Pet Resource Center for basic wellness appointments for foster pets.*

*When you arrive for your appointment, please pull around to the back side of the shelter and park in the Pet Resource Center parking area. You will then check in with staff at the Pet Resource Center. At the time of your appointment, we may not yet be open to the public, but someone will be there to get you checked in.*

*Foster care providers should plan to arrive 5-10 minutes before their scheduled appointment.*

*If you are unable make an appointment and would like to discuss alternatives, please contact the foster coordinator. Please do not bring your foster pet to the shelter for medical care without an appointment and expect them to be seen while you wait.*

### **Sick or Injured Foster Pets**

If you notice that your foster pet has previously undocumented hair loss, cold-like symptoms (sneezing and/or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), occasional diarrhea and/or vomiting, but is otherwise alert, active, eating and drinking well, please notify the foster coordinator so that it can be determined how best to proceed.

If your foster pet has more severe symptoms, such as yellow/green ocular or nasal discharge, extreme lethargy, frequent diarrhea and/or vomiting, etc., you will need to schedule an appointment for them to be examined our veterinary staff.

Please note: If you are fostering a litter of kittens or puppies, even if only one pet is showing symptoms, the entire litter should be brought in.

**To schedule an appointment for your foster pet(s) to be examined by our veterinary staff, please click [HERE](#). Each week's schedule will be posted on or before Wednesday of the preceding week.**

*When you arrive for your appointment, please pull around to the back side of the shelter and park in the Pet Resource Center parking area. You will then check in with staff in the Pet Resource Center to let them know that you are here.*

- *Foster puppies and dogs should be left briefly in your vehicle while you are checking in.*
- *Kittens and cats that are secured in a carrier can be taken to the Pet Resource Center with you while you check in.*

*We will do our best to see foster pets at the time of their appointment, but please plan for a 15-30 minute delay, just in case!*

*If you are unable make an appointment and would like to discuss alternatives, please contact the foster coordinator. Please do not bring your foster pet to the shelter for medical care without an appointment and expect them to be seen while you wait.*

### **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 [HERE](#) or in the documents section of the web-based group.

### **Foster Puppies or Kittens with Fleas, Ticks or Other Parasites**

If you notice that your foster puppies or 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 pet 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**

The shelter does not have a veterinarian on site after 6 p.m. Monday-Friday or after 5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. If your foster pet is having an urgent, life threatening medical issue before the shelter opens at 11 a.m. or after our veterinarians have left for the day, you can take them to North or South Austin Emergency Vet Clinics:

<p><b>North Austin</b> 12034 Research Blvd #8 Austin, Texas 78759 512-331-6121 <b>Open 24-Hours</b></p>	<p><b>South Austin</b> 4434 Frontier Trail Austin, Texas 78745 512-899-0955 <b>Open nights, weekends and holidays</b></p>
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When you present your foster pet to the emergency clinic, you **must** inform the staff there that it is an Austin Animal Center foster pet and provide them with the pet's ID number. 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 pet's AAC ID number, the pet 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 pets taken to the emergency vet clinic for treatment will be kept overnight at the clinic and an Animal Protection Officer will pick up in the morning to transfer the pet back to the shelter for further treatment/care.

Urgent, life threatening medical issues may include:

- Total unresponsiveness
- Frequent and/or long lasting seizures which have not been previously documented or diagnosed
- Ingestion of a toxic substance
- Profuse bleeding that cannot be stopped when pressure is applied
- Severe, unrelenting pain that has not been previously documented or diagnosed

If your foster pet 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 two clinics for your convenience:

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 pet's ID number
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 pet 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.

**East Austin**

7201 Levander Loop, Bldgs I & K  
Austin TX 78702

**Pflugerville**

15803 Windermere Drive #205A  
Pflugerville TX 78660

**Complications After Having Surgery at Emancipet**

If you have an urgent medical question or your foster pet 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.

**Medical Records**

Medical records are available to foster care providers upon request. To request a copy of your foster pet's medical records, please contact the foster coordinator.

Please note: Foster care providers are not authorized to alter records provided by the Austin Animal Center. This includes both digital and hard copies of a pet's medical and/or behavioral history.

**Deceased Pets**

In some cases, sick or weak pets may die in foster care. If your foster pet 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 pets in your care may be at risk. You will be asked to bring the body back to AAC and a necropsy may be performed.

**How can I help my foster pet find a forever home?**

When fostering a pet for AAC, you can be their number one advocate! By acting as an adoption ambassador, you aren't just a foster care provider, you're a photographer, biographer, marketing specialist, and adoption counselor!

- Take one clear, landscape oriented (horizontal), photo of the foster pet and email it to the foster coordinator so that it can be added to our website.
- Promote the foster pet on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor).
- Create and post an ad for the foster pet on [www.Craigslist.org](http://www.Craigslist.org).
- Create and put up flyers for the foster pet in appropriate locations.

For additional tips and tricks for marketing foster pets, check out the information found **HERE**.

Please keep in mind that pets in our foster program are not available on a first come, first served basis. The foster care provider may speak and/or meet with several potential adopters before deciding which home would be the best fit for a particular pet. However, foster care providers should check their email inbox and spam folder daily for inquiries from potential adopters and respond to all inquiries within 48 hours.

For tips on providing potential adopters with a positive, engaging and supportive experience, check out the information found **HERE**.

## My foster pet has a potential adopter, now what?

1. Potential adopters can complete the adoption packet (available **HERE** and sent as an attachment with your “Foster Pet Schedule” email) and return it to you for review and approval. That’s right, **YOU** can process and approve of the adoption! Please be aware that some potential adopters may inform you that they have already completed a “visitor profile” on our website or in person with shelter staff. In such cases, they may provide you with a person ID number (P \_\_\_\_\_ ) and you may request the information that we have collected by emailing the foster coordinator. However, due to the limited information gathered in this profile, you are still encouraged to have them complete the adoption packet with you, which can help to start the adoption conversation. In addition, here are some other things that you may do to ensure that your foster pet is a good match for a potential adopter -
  - Taking into consideration your foster pet’s specific needs, in a respectful manner ask the potential adopter any questions that you feel are imperative to ensuring your foster pet’s future wellbeing. This can be done via phone, email or in person.
  - Taking into consideration your foster pet’s specific needs, in a respectful manner answer any questions that the potential adopter may have and discuss their expectations for the pet that they intend to adopt. This can be done via phone, email or in person.
  - Meet with the potential adopter to introduce the pet. This can be done at your home, their home, or at a neutral location.
  - If at any time you have questions or concerns about a potential adopter, please email the foster coordinator.
2. Once you have confirmed with someone that they will be adopting your foster pet, contact the foster coordinator right away to let us know. This will allow us to mark the pet as already being spoken for so that you will not continue to receive additional inquiries.
3. Once a foster pet is spayed/neutered and microchipped, it may be transferred to its adopter. Upon transferring the pet, you should collect the appropriate adoption fee from the adopter. See fee schedule below.

Puppies/Dogs (under one year of age):	\$75
Dogs (between one and six years of age):	\$35
Dogs (seven years of age and older):	No Fee
Dogs with a medical issue (heartworm positive, ongoing skin condition, etc.):	No Fee
Kittens/Cats (under seven years of age):	\$35
Bonded Pair of Kittens/Cats (under seven years of age):	\$40
Cats (seven years of age and older):	No Fee
Cats with a medical issue (FIV positive, ongoing skin condition, etc.):	No Fee

4. You must then submit the adopter’s name and other identifying information or the completed adoption packet and the adoption fee to the foster coordinator within 3 days of transferring the pet to the adopter.
5. After the adopter’s information, etc. have been received by the foster coordinator, all of the pet’s paperwork and microchip information will be emailed to the adopter.

### Please note:

- If you were required to speak to our behavior team before taking home your foster pet, an adopter will need to do the same before they take the pet home. Please contact the foster coordinator to make arrangements.
- All pets must be spayed/neutered and microchipped prior to being transferred to an adopter.
- The adoption fees listed above should be collected regardless of current fees / promotions at the shelter.
- The foster pet’s ID number (A\_\_\_\_\_ ) must be written on the adoption packet.

## Adoption Events

Another option for foster care providers seeking forever homes for the pets 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 the web-based group as they become available.

## Foster to Foster Transfers

If you wish to transfer your foster pet into the care of another foster care provider, you must seek and receive approval from a foster coordinator in advance. Transfer requests will be considered on a case by case basis and may require additional input from our veterinary and/or behavior team staff prior to approval. In some cases, we may not approve of a foster to foster transfer and may ask that you return the pet to the shelter for further evaluation if/when you are unable to continue fostering.

## Returning Foster Pets 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 pet and their ID number and let staff know you are returning a foster pet. You must complete a behavior profile for the pet(s) that you are returning. The Foster Cat Profile and the Foster Dog Profile can both be found in the documents section of the web-based group. Simply copy and paste the questions into an email, fill in your responses and send to the foster coordinator.

*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 one hour before closing. 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.*

## Short Term Fostering (Dogs) 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 gather 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 (sign up via the web-based group).
- 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 certain 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 in-person 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 – make sure to read ALL the dog's notes before confirming.
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 – make sure to read ALL the dog's notes before leaving.
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 pet 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. You can borrow supplies as long as you return them!

- 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 on an overnight or outing.
- Check Out any supplies you need. There are Go-Kits and other useful outing supplies like "Adopt Me" vests, portable water bowls, etc. that you can check out in the Cashier's office drawers. Log any supplies you borrow in the binder and then mark down when you return them to the drawer.
- 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 pets), 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 pets, 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 the web-based group.
- 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 pets 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 pet 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 and reactivity
- 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.
- Take pictures and videos when it is safe to so, and share your experiences with volunteers, staff, and other fosters! Or invite a friend along to be a photographer and document the outing or overnight.
- Have fun!

## **Required Reading and/or Viewing for Puppy/Dog Fosters**

### ***Safety, Behavior and Training Information –***

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

#### **Decompression Tips for New Foster Dogs**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steffen-baldwin/chill-out-decompression-t\\_b\\_8331986.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steffen-baldwin/chill-out-decompression-t_b_8331986.html)

#### **Dog Body Language: Understand What Dogs Are Saying**

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

#### **Common Dog Behavior Issues: Leash Reactivity**

<http://careforreactivedogs.com/start-here/>

#### **Common Dog Behavior Issues: Separation Anxiety**

[https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/11\\_7/features/Canine-Separation-Anxiety\\_16044-1.html](https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/11_7/features/Canine-Separation-Anxiety_16044-1.html)

#### **Common Dog Behavior Issues: Aggression**

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

#### **Dog Bite Prevention**

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

#### **Kids and Dogs: How Kids Should and Should Not Interact with Dogs**

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

#### **The Safety Guide to Children and Dogs**

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

#### **House Training**

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/housetraining\\_puppies.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/housetraining_puppies.html)

#### **Crate Training**

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/crate\\_training.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/crate_training.html)

#### **Training: Nothing in Life is Free**

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/training\\_nothing\\_in\\_life\\_is\\_free.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/training_nothing_in_life_is_free.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*

## **Additional Resources for Puppy/Dog Fosters**

#### **Nursing Dog and Puppy Care**

[http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/Nursing\\_Mother\\_Dogs\\_and\\_Their\\_Puppies.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Nursing_Mother_Dogs_and_Their_Puppies.pdf)

#### **Basic Puppy Care and Socialization**

[http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/PUPPIES.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/PUPPIES.pdf)

[http://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/16\\_12/features/properly-socializing-your-puppy\\_20878-1.html](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/Pet\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/Ringworm.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Ringworm.pdf)

**Demodectic (Demodex) Mange**

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

**Sarcoptic Mange**

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

**Required Reading and/or Viewing for Kitten/Cat Fosters*****Safety, Behavior and Training Information –*****The Dos and Don'ts of Introducing Cats**

<https://www.jacksongalaxy.com/blog/the-dos-and-donts-of-introducing-cats/>

**How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat:**

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

**Common Cat Behavior Issues: Aggression**

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

**Common Cat Behavior Issues: Litterbox Problems**

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

***Very Important Foster Kitten Information –*****Foster Kitten FAQ**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eT6FrLKFQja2J-Q7-Am8nZw7x8d-VrT/view?usp=sharing>

**Fading Kitten Protocol**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UGU51hRal0G30iYxi4w006McMp01W\\_fRwU46CXSm93A/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UGU51hRal0G30iYxi4w006McMp01W_fRwU46CXSm93A/edit?usp=sharing)

**Additional Resources for Kitten/Cat Fosters****Nursing Cat and Kitten Care**

[http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/NURSING\\_MOTHER\\_CATS\\_AND\\_KITTENS.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet_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](https://www.dropbox.com/s/z7pwoipf7nxsblD/KittenLady_OrphanKittens.pdf?dl=0)

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

**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>

**Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)**

[http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/Feline\\_Upper\\_Respiratory\\_Infection.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Feline_Upper_Respiratory_Infection.pdf)

**Ringworm**

[http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/Ringworm.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pet_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Ringworm.pdf)



## 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, including:

- 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 pets. Always include the Pet ID of the pet you are photographing at the end of your post so they can be easily identified at the shelter.
- 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 ASPCA Pro and Pet Sheltering to find out the latest in pet welfare.

The Facebook group is a wonderful tool, but 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>

## **Contact Information**

Foster Program Hotline: 512-978-0541  
Foster Program Email: [animal.foster@austintexas.gov](mailto: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