

Introduction to Fostering with Austin Animal Center

Thank you for looking into the Austin Animal Center Foster Program! AAC could not save all the homeless pets we do without foster homes. We cannot tell you it will be all warm and fuzzy all the time.

There will be messes . . . sometimes kittens do not fully grasp the concept of the litter box, sometimes their immaturity prevents them from getting to the box in time. Puppies really have no concept of “holding it” yet. Get a good carpet cleaner. Sometimes they pee on the couch because, well, when you got to go, you got to go. Adult dogs chew on things they shouldn’t, put away your shoes and lock up the trash!

AAC cannot guarantee that you or your pets at home will not catch something from the foster animals you bring home. We’ve all had ringworm at my house and my cats and dog have had to see our vet for a couple of illnesses transmitted by a foster pet.

Sometimes animals get sick, really sick. I personally have had a kitten expire over night in his starter room and I have had a few that had to be euthanized due to their failure to thrive. We have had animals leave the shelter and go into foster care only to realize they are aggressive to the point they can not be safely and responsibly re-homed in our community. But these are all very rare occurrences and overall, the benefits far out weigh the risks. I believe it is all worth it. If it isn’t worth it to you, don’t foster.

I am available to my foster homes anytime. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail if you ever have any questions. When I am not here, the Customer Service Team is at the ready to assist you!

Thanks for looking into helping end animal homelessness in Central Texas!

Sincerely,

Sarah Hammond

Austin Animal Center Foster Coordinator

Tuesday thru Saturday

Phone: 978-0541

E-mail: Sarah.Hammond@austintexas.gov



Austin Animal Center
7201 Levander Loop
Austin, TX 78702
Open 11am to 7pm everyday
www.austinanimalcenter.org
512-978-0500
animalcustomerservice@austintexas.gov

How does it work?

Once AAC has approved a Foster Application, we invite you to join the Yahoo Group “Project Starfish” which is how AAC communicates with foster homes. Sometimes days go by and there will be no messages regarding fostering and some days there will be half a dozen or more pleas for foster homes. We are descriptive as possible in the postings – what kind of pets need to be fostered, for how long and any special behavior or medical issues foster homes should be aware of. We like to get animals out of the shelter as soon as possible – so if you are interested in fostering a particular litter or critter, reply to the Yahoo Posting as soon as possible. We will e-mail you back the confirmation and solidify the pick up time.

Picking Up New Fosters

When picking up pets to take home to foster, please go to the Main Lobby and step into the Cashier’s Office. Let the Customer Service Staff Member know you are an AAC Foster and picking up - you will need to have the animal’s ID numbers from the e-mail posting. If you need food, let them know and they will get it for you. Let them know if you need a carrier or if you brought your own. Animal Care Staff will be paged to bring you your foster animal(s).

Hours for pick up are 7 days a week from 11:00 am to 7pm.

Dropping off Fosters for a Vet Check (and then returning to your home)

When dropping off sick animals (or animals that are coming in for a check up) that need to be looked at by our vet staff – INTAKE Office. Even if only one foster pet is showing symptoms, **ALL FOSTERS SHOULD COME IN**. Please fill out a **FOSTER SICK CHECK FORM** for EACH animal you are bringing in. If you do not have a printer available, forms will be available to you in INTAKE. Let the Customer Service Staff Member know you are dropping the pets off for a vet check.

Hours for drop off are 7 days a week from 11:00am to 7pm. On Saturday and Sunday between 5 and 7 you may need to knock.

Booster Shots

All foster pets under 6 months of age should get booster shots, de-worming and a weigh in every 2 weeks. Start counting from the day you pick them up. We will be happy to do this anytime the shelter is open and there is no need to make an appointment - just drop in to INTAKE with the pets and their ID numbers and we'll be happy to get them up to date on their vaccinations! This is a quick in and out process, do NOT plan on leaving them in the shelter, plan on waiting until they are finished. Due to the huge numbers of animals in the foster program, it is up to the FOSTER home to keep track of their foster’s booster shot schedule. They should get at least 3 sets of shots and de-wormings.

Hours for Boosters are 7 days a week from 11:00am to 7pm. On Saturday and Sunday between 5 and 7 you may need to knock.

Dropping off Fosters Ready for Adoption (not returning to your home)

When dropping off animals to return to the Adoption Program - go to the INTAKE Office. Let the Customer Service Staff member know you are returning the pets from foster care, and they are ready to stay for adoption and give them the ID numbers and or kennel cards. They will take it from there.

Hours for drop off are 7 days a week from 11:00am to 7pm. On Saturday and Sunday between 5 and 7 you may need to knock.

Additional Notes

Our Vet Services Team is shouldering A LOT of responsibility and they are not available to see any animal IMMEDIATELY. The Customer Service Team Member will determine the immediacy in which the animal needs to be seen. It may take up to 24 hours for the animal to be ready for pick up. Typically, if an animal is dropped off before 12 noon it will be ready to return to foster care the same day.

You can pick up wet or dry food anytime the shelter is open. Go to the CASHIER Office and a Customer Service Team Member will be able to help you. If we are OUT of food, I will post to the yahoo group to let you know.



Ready for Adoption!

When your foster pets are about 8 weeks old and at a good solid weight for their age (at least 2 pounds for kittens) and free of any symptoms of illness, they are ready for adoption! The Shelter currently maintains a 90% live outcome rate which means that 9 out of 10 animals who enter the shelter leave alive. We do this a variety of ways. For kittens during the peak of “kitten season” we hold a huge adoption fair at the shelter called “Kitty Palooza” which has proven extremely successful the last couple of years. We also have relationships with other shelters and rescue groups across Central Texas that may pull adoptable pets from AAC for their own adoption programs. The majority of pets from the foster program are adopted at the shelter by families looking for a new member of the family!

How can you help this happen faster?

Pictures! As soon as you snap a good picture of your foster pet, e-mail it to animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov. *It must be cropped horizontally and be titled the animal's ID number.* These will be loaded onto the AAC Adoption website and potential adopters can place an interest on these pets even before they return to the shelter!

Promote! Don't hesitate to promote your foster pets through your own networks. Viral media like Facebook and Twitter are terrific ways to promote your foster animals. Many fosters have even had luck posting their foster pets on Craigslist. For the graphically gifted – put up flyers at your favorite coffee shop, book store or gym. Let your friends, neighbors, family members, and co-workers know you have available for Adoption!



When Potential Adopters Inquire About Your Foster Pets with AAC Staff

Since your foster pets are listed on the AAC website, potential adopters may inquire about your pet with our AAC Customer Service Team. AAC Customer Service Staff will give out the foster home's first name and e-mail address to potential approved adopters who inquire about your foster pet.

Expect a few e-mails or phone calls back and forth to discuss the pet's personality, what they are like around your own pets and in your home. Potential adopters may even inquire about visiting the animals in your home. If you are 100% OK with this, feel free to proceed. If not, AAC FULLY supports your decision. Feel free to meet the potential adopter at a pre appointed time here at the shelter if the two of you can agree on a day and time. It is also understandable that you are simply not willing to meet these people and AAC supports your decision. Just let potential adopters know that AAC Customer Service Staff will contact them directly when the pet is back at the shelter and they can visit then. You may also arrange to meet the potential adopter at an offsite adoption event where you will have the support of AAC staff and volunteers.



Please keep in mind the shelter is almost always completely full. While we will take back a foster animal at any time, consider the fact that bringing your foster(s) back to the shelter to await adoption may mean euthanizing a less adoptable animal to make room for your foster pet. If at all possible, please make every attempt to find a forever home for your foster pet(s).

VERY IMPORTANT: Foster Pets can under no circumstances leave their foster home and go to the adoptive home until they have been spayed or neutered and micro chipped! Ask the Foster Coordinator when they are about ready to get this done!

Important Numbers:

**Sarah Hammond 512-978-0541 sarah.hammond@austintexas.gov
AAC Customer Service 512-978-0500 animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov
www.AustinAnimalCenter.org**