

CARE Program Information

Fostering animals through CARE

Following information is the guidelines set by Animal Care Svc.

Thank you for considering opening your heart and home to one of our shelter's orphaned animals. Your generosity will provide young and old, injured and sick, abused and under socialized animals a chance to grow or heal before finding their forever homes.

Reasons to be a Foster Family

Being a Foster Family is a wonderful experience for you and your family- you can feel good knowing you have helped save an animal's life. Even better, you've created space in the shelter to accommodate other homeless animals. Animals in the foster Program provide companionship and purpose- your act of kindness is repaid in rewards that are beyond words.

Animals needing foster homes

- Animals that require more socialization than available at the shelter
- Neglected or abused animals that need tender loving care
- Any healthy, non aggressive animal that is brought into Animal Care Services

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long do animals remain in the Foster Program?

It completely depends on the animal and the situation. The average stay is about a month. However, some animals may stay only a few weeks; others recovering from an injury may stay much longer.

2. Can I adopt the animal I have taken care of?

Yes, as long as the necessary paperwork and fee are met.

3. I live in a condo, townhome, or apartment; can I be a Foster Family?

Yes, you can still be a Foster Family living in a small environment. Many of our animals need one-on-one socialization, so a small space can be beneficial. However it's important that you select an appropriate animal for your lifestyle and are willing to commit to providing your new visitor with the needed physical and mental stimulation. And of course, you still need landlord approval and must abide by any weight or breed restrictions.

4. What if I have children?

Bringing an orphaned animal into your home is a wonderful family experience. It's important to select an animal that is "age" appropriate with your children. You must also be diligent about providing guidance, instructions, and rules to your children about caring for an orphaned animal.

5. *I don't have a yard, or it's not fenced, can I be a Foster Family?*

A yard is a nice-to-have for those early morning, or late night potty breaks and for a game of ball. Unfortunately, many of the dogs we see at the shelter were "yard dogs" and developed behavior issues like fence running, barking, or digging because they were left alone in a backyard. Dogs need focused physical activity, mental stimulation and socialization and the best way to do this is by walking or running your foster dog on leash.

6. *If I have my own animals, can I still be a Foster?*

Yes, The health risk is minimal if your animals are current on their vaccinations, maintains a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young.

7. *What supplies are needed to be a Foster Family?*

Fosters provide space or kennel, basic training, exercise and love for the animal. CARE will provide you with all the other supplies (food, collar and leash) and equipment needed throughout your experience.

8. *Do I have to crate-train my Foster dog?*

No, but we recommend it and will help you learn how. Some dogs do not like crates, and most dogs need to be transitioned or "trained" to use a crate, so it's up to the Foster to decide whether to crate or not. Putting the dog in a crate while you are gone will give you peace of mind knowing that they are in a safe place, away from harm, and not doing any damage to your belongings or themselves. For many dogs, a crate can also represent a safe and comfortable place to call their own and provides them with a sense of security. Dogs actually like having a "den" to cuddle up in. Crating should never be used as punishment.

9. *Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or expertise?*

No, most Foster Animals are healthy and should you chose a special needs animal you may be asked to dispense medicine to your foster animal so you will have to be comfortable following veterinarian's instructions if foster a sick or injured animal.

10. *What if my foster animal becomes sick?*

All veterinarian services are provided through CARE and ACS. If your new friend becomes sick, call Peggy Brink at (210) 313-3600 so that arrangements with the Shelter Vet can be made. ***You may use your own veterinarian at your own expense.***

11. How much time each day is needed to foster?

Commitment and responsibilities depend in the individual animal and situation. It's essential that the Foster Family understands that shelter animals may be stressed and moving the animal from the shelter to the Foster home is also very stressful. Foster Parents must be willing to be patient and commit to the animal because our goal is to keep them in a stable and consistent environment so that they become adoptable.

12. How can I help my new visitor become more adoptable?

Our orphaned animals benefit greatly from the exercise, basic training, special love and attention you give them. Providing them basic training and manners will increase their adoptability. Shy animals will benefit from your patience, routine and slowly exposing them to new people to build their confidence. Rambunctious adolescents who learn good manners will help show off their trainability and long term potential. And while puppies/kittens are adorable, they need a lot of love, attention, and hand-holding from humans to develop properly and feel secure.

13. Are animals in the Foster program ever euthanized?

As a rule no. But there could be exceptions if the animal becomes ill. Much energy, love, time and vet care is devoted to these animals, and CARE and ACS are committed to finding homes for ALL the adoptable animals within their care.

Important Rules and Reminders Regarding Your Visitor

In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the CARE Foster agreement, and throughout this manual, Fosters MUST abide by the following rules:

- Dogs must be on leash at all times when outdoors unless in your own secured fenced yard.
- Cats are not to be let outside for any reason.
- Any aggressive behavior must be immediately communicated to the CARE.
- All vet visits must be through the CARE .
- Fosters must respond within 24 hours to communications from CARE.
- Fosters must be willing to have the animal in their care attend adoption events if they are not adopting the animal.
- All fosters must have proof of their animals vaccinations.