

Austin Animal Center

Foster Program Manual



Revised 2/10/2023

Table of Contents

About Austin Animal Center	3	Troubleshooting	12
Is Fostering for AAC Right for Me?	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavior & Training Support• My foster pet bit someone!• My foster pet is lost!• I am going on vacation	
Contact Information	4		
Foster Program Policies & Procedures 5		Foster Agreement	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal Guardianship• Records & Retention• Housing & Care Requirements<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Puppies & Dogs○ Kittens & Cats• Additional Requirements• Supplies• Health & Temperament		Public Outings & Walks	15
How It Works	7	Required Reading for Puppy/Dog Fosters	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting Started• Selecting a Foster Pet• Picking Up a New Foster Pet• Foster-to-Foster Transfers• Returning Foster Pets to the Shelter		Additional Resources for Puppy/Dog Fosters	17
Medical Care	8	Required Reading for Kitten/Cat Fosters	17
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic Wellness• Sick or Injured Foster Pets• Fading Kitten Syndrome• Foster Puppies or Kittens with Fleas, Ticks, or Other Parasites• Prescription Diets• <u>In Case of an After-Hours Emergency</u>• Scheduling Spay/Neuter Surgery and Microchipping• Medical Records• Deceased Pets		Additional Resources for Kitten/Cat Fosters	17
Adoption Process	11	Want to Connect?	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can I help my foster pet find a forever home?• My foster has a potential adopter, now what?• Adoption Events• I want to adopt my foster			

About Austin Animal Center

Austin Animal Center (AAC) is the municipal shelter for the City of Austin and unincorporated Travis County, providing shelter to thousands of animals annually as well as providing animal protection and pet resource services. We accept stray and owned animals regardless of age, health, temperament, species, or breed.

Our goal is to place all adoptable animals in forever homes through adoption, foster care, or rescue partner groups.

Austin Animal Center is mandated by Austin City Council to provide live outcomes for at least 95% of pets that enter our care. Euthanasia is reserved for irremediable suffering and significant public safety risks.

Is Fostering for AAC Right for Me?

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 the internet and 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.

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 Clinic: www.ctvsh.com

Follow the instructions outlined on page 9

Foster Program Policies & 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.

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 & 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 & 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.
- If a foster pet bites and breaks someone's skin, an official report must be taken and the foster coordinator must be notified. For more details, see the "My foster pet bit someone! What should I do?" section of this manual.
- 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 of this manual.
- If you plan to travel outside of the Austin Area and wish to take your foster pet(s) with you or arrange for alternative care (pet sitting, boarding, etc.), you must seek and receive approval from a foster coordinator in advance. For more details, see the "I am going on vacation! What should I do?" section of this manual.
- 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. For more details, see the "Foster-to-Foster Transfers" section of this manual.

Supplies

AAC will provide foster care providers with certain supplies:

- Food for puppies and kittens under 3-months of age (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)

Foster care providers should be prepared to provide any supplies not provided by AAC. For example: non-prescription food for mature pets, bowls, bedding, toys, etc.

Health & 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.

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, GivePulse, which is how we communicate with our foster care providers. Prior to fostering any pets, you will be required to sign the [Foster Agreement](#) which will be kept on file at the shelter.

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.

Please note: We recommend creating a generic email address to be used exclusively for your foster program participation and communications, including inquiries from potential adopters interested in adopting your foster pet(s). For example: AdoptMyFosterPet@123xyz.com or AustinFosterKitties@123xyz.com. If/when you opt to create such an email address, please notify us, so that we can update your contact information in our database.

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 pickup date and time. If you are interested in fostering a medium-large adult dog, you can find many options on our [AAC Adult Dog Foster Needs Trello board](#).

Picking Up a New Foster Pet

Once a pickup date and time has been confirmed, you will be emailed step-by-step instructions.

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 and care if/when you are unable to continue fostering.

Prior to transferring a foster pet, you will need to complete a behavior profile for the pet(s) that you are transferring. Behavior profiles and instructions can be found [HERE](#).

Returning Foster Pets to the Shelter

If you need to return your foster pet to the shelter, please email animal.foster@austintexas.gov so that we can make arrangements for you to do so. Please use "FOSTER PET RETURN" and the pet's ID# as the subject line of your email.

Prior to returning a foster pet, you will need to complete a behavior profile for the pet(s) that you are returning. Behavior profiles and instructions can be found [HERE](#).

Medical Care

Basic Wellness Services (Vaccinations and Parasite Preventatives)

After picking up your foster pet, you will be sent a "Foster Pet Schedule" email outlining their medical needs and the dates that they are due for care.

Foster puppies and kittens under 4-months of age must have their weight checked and be given booster shots every 2-4 weeks. Foster pets over four months of age when they go into foster care may need to return to the shelter for a single booster shot 2-4 weeks after their initial shots. To schedule an appointment for basic wellness services, please click [HERE](#) (select the date/time that you would like, then complete the form to secure the appointment).

All foster pets over eight weeks of age must be given flea/tick and heartworm preventative each month. If their monthly due date for this medication does not coincide with any other care needs, it is not necessary to bring them to the shelter for an appointment. Instead, as their monthly due date approaches, please email us at animal.foster@austintexas.gov using the subject line "Telemedicine" to request their medication. We will then follow up with you to schedule a date/time for pick up.

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.

Sick or Injured Foster Pets

If your foster pet becomes ill, injured or is due for a re-check of a specific issue, you may schedule an appointment for them to be seen by our veterinary staff [HERE](#). Please note, many medical issues do not require a visit with our veterinary staff. Please only schedule an appointment for the following:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea for 2 or more days
- Not eating for more than 2 days
- Trauma or injury
- Animals needing follow-up x rays
- Animals needing bandage changes
- Animals that are due for a re-check for mange or ringworm
- Other situations for which you have been directed by shelter staff to schedule an appointment

If you are not sure whether or not the medical issue that your foster pet is experiencing warrants an appointment with our veterinary staff, you may call (do not text) 512-745-0357 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. to speak with a veterinary technician.

For any other medical issues, please email us at animal.foster@austintexas.gov using the subject line "Telemedicine". In your email, please list any symptoms that the pet is exhibiting, as well as any other concerns, and we will follow up with you to discuss further.

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 Medical Emergency

Please DO NOT attempt to take your foster pet to the emergency veterinary hospital or contact them for anything other than an urgent, life-threatening medical issue. 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 you are not sure whether or not the issue is life-threatening, you may call (do not text) 512-745-0357 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. to speak with a veterinary technician.

If you ultimately feel that you must take your foster pet to the emergency veterinary hospital after-hours, you will need to utilize the clinic listed below:

Central Texas Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Hospital – South Austin
4434 Frontier Trail
Austin, TX 78745
512-899-0955

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.

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

Foster pet spay/neuter surgeries are provided at the shelter and are currently being scheduled 1-3 weeks out. To get your foster pet scheduled for surgery, please email animal.foster@austintexas.gov.

Please note, foster pet surgeries can typically be scheduled Tuesday-Friday, with drop off at 7 a.m. and pick up between 4:00-5:30 p.m.

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.

Adoption Process

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

When fostering a pet for AAC, you can be their number one advocate! You aren't just a foster care provider, you're a photographer, biographer, marketing specialist, and adoption counselor! To help your foster pet find their forever home...

- Take at least one clear photo of your foster pet and email it to us at animal.foster@austintexas.gov so that it can be added to our website.
- Write a short and upbeat bio for your foster pet and email it to us at animal.foster@austintexas.gov so that it can be added to our website.
- Promote your foster pet on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, and Nextdoor).
- Create and post an ad for your foster pet on Craigslist.
- Create and put up flyers for your foster pet in appropriate locations.

For additional tips and tricks for marketing foster pets, check out the information found [HERE](#). You can also find a simply marketing checklist [HERE](#). 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?

While pets in our foster program are not available on a first come, first served basis, potential adopters **must** be considered in the order in which they made contact with the foster care provider.

Detailed instructions for handling the adoption of your foster pet can be found [HERE](#). Please review this information and contact the foster coordinator if you have any questions.

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.
- If your foster pet's veterinary care is being sponsored by Classic Canines, it is crucial that you remain in communication with them and include them when working with potential adopters, as it is vital that the pet's medical history and needs are fully discussed with potential adopters to ensure that their needs can be met post adoption. Failure to include Classic Canines in this process could detrimentally impact the pet's health and ongoing wellbeing.
- All pets **must** be spayed/neutered and microchipped prior to being transferred to an adopter.

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.

I want to adopt my foster pet!

That's great! Simply email animal.foster@austintexas.gov as soon as possible.

Troubleshooting

Behavior & Training Support

If your foster pet exhibits behaviors that you would like help addressing or you would just like to get ahead of things with some basic training, please email the foster coordinator at animal.foster@austintexas.gov as you may be eligible for free behavior and training support via [Friends of Austin Animal Center \(FOAAC\)](#) and their Behavior Assistance Program!

My foster pet bit someone! What should I do?

If a foster pet bites a person and breaks the skin, please call 311 as soon as possible to make a report. The information gathered by 311 will allow us to determine the appropriate next steps and help to ensure that such situations are followed up on in a timely manner.

In addition to calling 311, you will need to notify the foster coordinator of the situation. This can be done via phone or email (512-978-0541; animal.foster@austintexas.gov).

My foster pet is lost! What should I do?

1. Notify the foster coordinator immediately at 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.

I am going on vacation! What should I do?

If you plan to travel outside of the Austin Area and wish to take your foster pet(s) with you or arrange for alternative care (pet sitting, boarding, etc.), you must seek and receive approval from a foster coordinator in advance. These types of 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 foster pets traveling with their foster care provider or of alternative care arrangements. In such situations, we will ask that you return the pet to the shelter for further evaluation and care for the duration of your plans.

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.

Public Outings & 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 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 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 for Puppy/Dog Fosters

[Decompression Tips for New Foster Dogs](#)

[Dog Body Language: Understand What Dogs Are Saying \(Video\)](#)

Common Dog Behavior Issues:

- [Leash Reactivity](#)
- [Separation Anxiety](#)
- [Aggression](#)
- [Pulling](#)
- [Resource Guarding](#)

[Dog Bite Prevention](#)

[Kids and Dogs: How Kids Should and Should Not Interact with Dogs](#)

[The Safety Guide to Children and Dogs](#)

Training:

- [Nothing in Life is Free](#)
- [Housetraining](#)
- [Crate Training](#)

Enrichment and Exercise

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

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

[How to Introduce Dogs to Each Other](#)

[How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat](#)

Additional Resources for Puppy/Dog Fosterers

[Nursing Dog and Puppy Care](#)

[Basic Puppy Care and Socialization](#)

[Properly Socializing Your Puppy](#)

Medical Issues:

- [Heartworm Disease](#)
- [Ringworm](#)
- [Demodectic \(Demodex\) Mange](#)
- [Sarcoptic Mange](#)

Required Reading for Kitten/Cat Fosterers

[The Dos and Don'ts of Introducing Cats](#)

[How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat](#)

Common Cat Behavior Issues:

- [Aggression](#)
- [Litterbox Issues](#)

Very Important Foster Kitten Information:

- [Foster Kitten FAQ](#)
- [Fading Kitten Protocol](#)

Additional Resources for Kitten/Cat Fosterers

[Nursing Cat and Kitten Care](#)

[Bottle Baby Kitten Care](#)

[Kitten Lady](#)

[How to Make Gruel for Syringe Feeding Kittens/Cats \(Video\)](#)

[How to Syringe Feed Gruel to Kittens/Cats \(Video\)](#)

[Feline Upper Respiratory Infection \(URI\)](#)

[Ringworm](#)

Want to Connect?

Join us on Facebook:

- [Austin Animal Center Staff, Volunteers and Fosters](#)
- [AAC Cat, Exotics, Small Animal Volunteers and Fosters](#)

GROUP PURPOSE

- To share candid, cute photos and videos to help market shelter pets and get them adopted. We use these, along with your stories and observations, to construct posts for the shelter's external Facebook page. This is really important for helping find homes for animals. Photos posted here may be used for any purpose including but not limited to public posting on social media, in news stories, blogs, educational or advertising campaigns, and press releases. By posting a photo, you are agreeing that AAC may use it with no restrictions.
- To share information about an animal that may help another handler interact safely and positively.
- To share information about current needs in the shelter.

MEMBERSHIP

In order to be a member of this group, you must be:

- A current staff member
- An active volunteer with recorded hours in the last 3 months
- A foster who has fostered a pet within the last 12 months and is a member of the GivePulse group

GUIDANCE

The Facebook group is a wonderful tool and is a key part of our volunteer and foster program. Email is still the primary method of communication regarding AAC updates and important information. Updates may be posted in the group by specific staff members after an email has been sent out.

Examples of types of posts encouraged:

- Photos and information about individual animals
- Help needed in a specific area (kennel run, laundry, etc)
- Foster takeover requests
- Adoption posts
- Request for group experiences regarding participation in an AAC program (ex: "I've never fostered a _____ before. Any experienced fosters have suggestions about how to _____?")

Examples of types of posts not allowed in the group:

- Concerns or complaints about a staff member, another volunteer, or an issue at the shelter
- Questions, complaints, suggestions, or concerns about shelter policies and procedures
- Community lost and found or rehoming posts
- Reports of pet medical issues, facility repairs needed, or other concerns that need to go through appropriate channels

In addition, all group members are expected to conduct themselves with respect and compassion towards everyone else on the page. Inflammatory or aggressive comments can lead to misunderstandings, misinformation, and hurt feelings, and may be deleted.

The shelter reserves the right to moderate comments and posts. Posts and comments may be removed from the page at any time. People may be removed from the page temporarily or permanently at the discretion of the staff members who act as page moderators or administrators.