



Foster Care Manual

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the Foster Care Program at Bay Area Humane Society. Fostering is a wonderful way to contribute to the shelter and its mission by providing love and care to sick, injured, underage or under-socialized pets. By temporarily caring for these pets in your own home, you are giving these animals a second chance of becoming adoptable pets. Also, the individualized attention you provide your foster pets is priceless - you are making a lasting impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing.

This manual is a guide to provide you with important information about caring for your foster pets and will clarify many questions or concerns that you might have along the way. Feel free to call or email the shelter with additional questions or concerns. Our goal is to make your foster care experience enjoyable.

If you have a friend or family member who is interested in becoming a foster parent, have them submit a Foster Family application. Again, thank you for accepting this important responsibility. We truly appreciate your commitment. Good luck and happy fostering!

Contacts

Foster Questions or Concerns:

Call BAHS at 920-469-3110, then Tania, Animal Care & Facilities (& Foster) Coordinator – x104

Or Dial '0' and ask the front desk staff to page Tania

Staff is available to assist you:

-Monday-Friday: 8am-7pm

-Saturday: 8am-5pm.

-Sundays and Holidays: Closed

Please call to ensure a staff person is able to meet you if coming before we open at noon.

Back up Contacts:

Amber, Adoption Coordinator – x103

Kelly, Director of Animal Welfare – x109

After Hours Emergencies:

If you believe your foster pet requires immediate, after-hours emergency care, please contact a BAHS manager. The after hours contact information for the BAHS managers is included in the foster packet you will receive at your orientation.

Foster Process

Foster Parents must have submitted a completed foster family application. The foster coordinator will do a background check, interview the potential foster parent, and take the potential foster parent through orientation. Please do not be intimidated by this process – depending on time constraints, we may be able to conduct this procedure immediately upon your arrival at BAHS!

While in foster care, BAHS retains control over the animal's future. At any time, BAHS may make the decision to adopt out, transfer, or euthanize any foster pet based on the health and/or temperament of the pet. If you receive inquiries about adopting your foster pet, please ask them to contact an adoption counselor at BAHS. BAHS must re-evaluate a foster pet before it can be deemed adoptable. Counselors will be able to guide the potential adopter through the adoption process to provide the best experience to both the pet and the adopter.

Taking Your Foster Pet Home

Once you have completed the process to become a foster parent, the fostering can begin! The foster coordinator will match you with a pet in need that fits your availability.

After agreeing on which pet(s) you will foster, an appointment will be made so you can come and pick up your foster pet from BAHS. You will also be given a copy of the animal's medical history, so you know when to bring the animal back for routine vaccines, dewormer, or wellness checks. Also, a tentative date will be set for you to return your foster pet to BAHS to be placed up for adoption. This date is flexible based on your availability, shelter space, and the foster pet's progress. BAHS can provide a litter pan, some toys, some bedding, food dishes, leash & collar (dogs), a crate (cats, small/medium dogs, small animals), small animal cage, first bag of food, and any necessary medication. Because of financial limitations, BAHS requests that the foster parent provide additional food, litter, and additional supplies at his/her expense. Supplies you purchase for foster pets are considered tax-deductible donations! Speak with the foster coordinator for more information.

Remember, you should keep all foster pets separate from your own, or anyone else's pets. Even with our best efforts, incubating disease or potential behavior issues may not be apparent during the pet's stay at BAHS. Please treat your foster pet with the same love and care you show your own pets. Have fun!

Medical Guidelines

In order to control costs, BAHS requires that all foster pet medical issues be reviewed by BAHS medical staff. In many cases, staff will be able to diagnose the issue and offer proper treatment. In cases that require veterinary care, BAHS will arrange care to be provided by the part-time shelter vet, and/or the full-time vet tech. Also, BAHS will make arrangements for the foster pet to be spayed or neutered here at BAHS' clinic. After-hours emergency care must be approved by the foster coordinator at the time of incident or by other BAHS management if the foster coordinator is not available. Any unauthorized medical care will not be reimbursed to the foster parent.

Foster Care Principles

- Foster pets should be kept separate from your pets.
- Wash your hands after handling foster animals, every time.
- Clean foster pets' housing area and supplies thoroughly after the foster period (before you bring in your next foster pets). A mild bleach solution can be a very effective sanitizer (1/2 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water).
- Make sure your own pets are current on their vaccines before bringing home a foster pet. A Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine is recommended to be administered to your own dog(s) at least 10 days before bringing home a foster dog. We also request that your own cats have a negative FIV/FelV test before bringing home a foster cat.
- Most diseases are not transferable to humans; however, a foster animal may become ill at any time during the foster period.
- BAHS is not liable for any injury, illness or damage to persons or property, including owned animals, while an animal is in the foster home.

- Monitor your foster pets' appetite, water intake, and energy level. A change may be a sign of something more serious.
- It is not unusual for some pets to have a reduced appetite or be extra shy the first day or two after arriving in the foster home. The pet is coping with a new home, new people, and new diet. Allow some time for your foster pet to adjust to its new environment.
- Watch for discharge or change in the color of discharge from the eyes and/or nose. Upper Respiratory Infections, when mild, cause clear discharge. Colored discharge indicates a more severe infection or a secondary infection which may require a stronger treatment.
- Contact BAHS if you see:
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea that lasts more than one day
 - Blood in nasal discharge, urine, stool, or vomit can be a sign of something serious
 - Depression
 - Lack of appetite or thirst
 - Drinking water and/or urinating excessively
- Any change in diet can cause diarrhea. Switching brands, table scraps, and poor quality foods can cause diarrhea as well. When switching food brands, do so gradually. We recommend brands like Purina, Iams, Pedigree, Eukanuba, Science Diet, or better.
- Never give animals any human medications – many of these are toxic. Even Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Advil (ibuprofen) are poisonous to pets.
- Follow medication instructions. Only stop medication when the treatment period is complete or when directed by BAHS medical staff. It is important that foster pets get their complete course of antibiotics, even if they look well before the course is complete.
- For pregnant cats or kittens less than 4 weeks of age, do not use clumping litter. Mixed with a little water this litter becomes mud that can dry like cement. For kittens 4 weeks to 8 weeks of age, use clumping litter with caution.
- Crating foster pets when you are unable to supervise them is a great way to keep them safe and contained.
- Foster families do get first chance at adopting their foster pets. All adoption fees and benefits apply.

Reminder

Have fun! Thank you for giving a pet a second chance to find a loving home. Please feel free to keep track of the foster pet's likes, dislikes, and personality traits. We can then add that information to the pet's file to share with potential adopters. Even though we may not be able to save them all, and sometimes our hearts are broken by the ones that don't make it, don't give up. Every pet placed in foster care is getting a chance they never would have had otherwise. You **ARE** making a difference in their lives! Every successful foster is a celebration! Enjoy fostering!

