

Emergency Fostering Cheat Sheet

Courtesy of Austin Animal Center's Foster Program

Step 1 Define the goal of the emergency foster plea

- Is your goal to empty kennels, recruit fosters, etc.?

Step 2 Define & refine the request to the public

- Ensure that your request and messaging is simple. The process for new fosters should be easy to follow. Determine the timeframe that the plea starts and ends.

Step 3 Organize & Prepare

- Coordinate with other departments (Customer Service, Vets, Behavior, etc.)
- Determine what info you need from people to give them an animal (what's the application/onboard process, how can it be expedited?)
- Make a checklist of materials to get ready before the public arrives (applications & agreements, take-home paperwork and training resources, animal supplies, etc.) A checklist will help you in the future to stay organized if you run multiple pleas.
- Make a list of easy animals for the public to browse and to help you make recommendations

Step 4 Spread the Word

- Blast the message on all social media and local news
- Ask volunteers and fosters to share on their social media
- Try non-internet methods of communication

Step 5 Send Them Out

- Assemble a team of many or one who will be the POC on the day of. Direct visitors to an Emergency Foster Counselor who will make sure paperwork is signed, behavior is discussed, foster is matched with an animal, animal is ready to go, all questions are discussed, and then send them home

Step 6 Follow Up & Check In

- Send an email or call the fosters the next day to check in. Provide digital paperwork and counsel on issues to prevent early returns
- Provide platforms to marketing the foster animals to adopters (online, events, etc.)

Step 7 Make it VERY easy to adopt or become a long-term foster

- Waive adoption fees and remove other barriers to adopting or signing up
- to become an official foster

For questions, contact lorian.epstein@austintexas.gov



EMERGENCY FOSTERING – ‘HOW TO’ FOR STAFF

You may be contacted by citizens interested in acting as an emergency foster. When this happens, the following needs to take place –

1. Have them provide photo ID and create/update their PID. **Be sure to include their phone number and email address(es)!**
2. Have them sign a copy of the Foster Agreement and write their PID at the top of it.
3. They may choose a ***type of animal in need*** that is available (not on stray hold, no serious medical issues, etc.). If they are interested in an intact animal, please verify that they do not currently have other intact animals in their home!
4. Provide them with the animal’s behavior notes
 - In Chameleon go to Reports
 - Select Run a Report
 - Select Behavior Information
 - Enter the Animal’s ID# and click okay
 - Print the information and give it to the interested party
 - If an animal is noted to require a behavior consult, please follow up with the behavior team before moving forward.
5. Once all information has been reviewed, if the person has not yet interacted with the animal, have them do so.
6. Confirm that they would like to take the animal and explain that we are asking that they hold on to the animal for ***period of time needed*** (if they decide that they would like to foster longer, they can follow up with the foster coordinator). Let them know that we will follow up with them via email, so they need to keep an eye on their inbox and spam.
7. Make sure that they receive a copy of the Emergency Foster Information Sheet.
8. Update animal’s kennel in Chameleon to reflect that it is “in foster” with the correct PID in the “outcome information” person section.

Emergency Foster Caregiver Email Template

Thank you for opening your home to a homeless animal!

You will need to schedule a date and time to return the animal to the shelter. To do so, please complete the form found here: **(link to survey)**. We would also love for you to provide us with some feedback about your time with the animal. You can do this by completing the dog or cat questionnaire at the bottom of this email and sending it back to us before you return the animal.

If you would like to continue fostering the animal until a forever home can be found for it, please contact us at **animal.foster@austintexas.gov** for additional instructions.

If you've completely fallen in love and would like to adopt the animal please contact us at **animal.foster@austintexas.gov** so that arrangements can be made for you to do so. It's an easy process, and we will even waive your adoption fee!!

If you have any questions regarding the foster program, please review the attached document and/or the manual found **[HERE](#)**.

Thank you,

(name)

Foster Coordinator

Austin Animal Center

512-978-0541

Animal.Foster@austintexas.gov

<http://www.austintexas.gov/fosterpets>

Foster Cat Profile

Cat's Name:

Animal ID#:

Foster's Name:

Foster start and end date:

1. What type of food (canned, dry, both) did the cat prefer and what was their eating style? (grazer, inhaled it, etc.).
2. Was the cat around kids? If so, what ages were the kids, and what was the cat's reaction?
3. Was the cat around dogs? If so, what was the cat's reaction?
4. Was the cat around other cats? If so, what was the cat's reaction?
5. Describe the cat's litterbox manners (perfect, so-so, needs work).
6. Was the cat vocal, quiet, or in between?
7. Did the cat seem independent or very social and people oriented (snuggly lap kitty)?

Tell us anything that you feel may be important that hasn't been covered by our previous questions:

Foster Dog Profile

Dog's Name:

Animal ID#:

Foster's Name:

Foster start and end date:

1. What type of food (canned, dry, both) did the dog prefer and what was their eating style? (grazer, inhaled it, etc.).
2. Was the dog around kids? If so, what ages were the kids, and what was the dog's reaction?
3. Was the dog around cats? If so, what was the dog's reaction?
4. Was the dog around other dogs? If so, what types of dogs (size/sex/age), and what was the dog's reaction?
5. Describe the dog's house training level (perfect, so-so, needs work).
6. How often did you take the dog outside, for potty breaks and for longer walks?

7. Describe the dog's behavior on a leash.

8. If you crated the dog, describe the dog's behavior to and in the crate.

9. Was the dog vocal, quiet, or in between?

Tell us anything that you feel may be important that hasn't been covered by our previous questions:

Information for Emergency Dog Fosters

Legal Guardianship

All animals in foster care are the property of the Austin Animal Center and are subject to all applicable Austin Animal Center policies, rules and restrictions.

Health and Temperament

AAC will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

Guidelines for Care and Handling

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate controlled homes with the temperature kept between 60 and 80° F.
- Dogs can go outside for supervised play time/exercise. When 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.
- 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 taking foster dogs to public locations such as restaurants, pet stores, hike and bike trails, etc.
- You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other dogs, except those in your home.
- If your foster dog gets loose, contact the foster coordinator immediately.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between your animals and foster animals, Austin Animal Center will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal.
- The Austin Animal Center reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.
- If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal for any reason upon request by Austin Animal Center staff, or has improperly transferred an animal 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 animal.
- Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by Austin Animal Center's veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.
- Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.

- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.

Sick or Injured Fosters

If you notice that your foster animal has mild, cold-like symptoms (sneezing or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), diarrhea or have vomited, but are alert, active, eating and drinking well, please notify the foster coordinator so that it can be determined how best to proceed.

If your foster animal has more severe symptoms, such as frequent vomiting, lethargy, yellow/green ocular or nasal discharge, previously undocumented hair loss, straining to urinate or defecate, etc., please notify the foster coordinator, and bring the animal to the INTAKE office to be seen by a veterinarian during our clinic hours. If you are fostering a litter of kittens or puppies, even if only one animal is showing symptoms, the entire litter should be brought in.

During clinic hours, as you enter the intake office you will see a sign posted on the counter along with a sign in sheet. Please sign in and begin to fill out one of the "Foster Sick Check" forms (located next to the sign in sheet). It is our intention to have veterinary staff available to provide care for sick foster animals while you wait, and most animals coming in during these hours will be seen and discharged within one hour. However, please be aware that there are times that the veterinary staff assigned to clinic hours will be needed to handle more urgent/emergency situations, so wait times may be longer, or you may be asked to drop off and pick up later.

The Intake Office is open for clinic hours daily from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Outside of clinic hours, you may still bring sick animals to the Intake Office, but you will have to drop them off, and we will call you once they have been seen by a veterinarian and are available for pickup.

The Intake Office is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. After 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday you may need to knock. Please try to arrive no later than 6:30 p.m. 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.

In Case of an After Hours Emergency

If you have a true emergency before the shelter opens, please try calling the foster program hotline at 512-978-0541; we are frequently able to assist foster care providers outside of business hours. If it goes to voicemail, you can take your foster animal to the North or South Austin Emergency Vet Clinics found here: <http://www.eahnwa.com/>.

When you present your foster animal to the emergency clinic, you must inform the staff there that it is an Austin Animal Center foster animal and provide them with the animal's AAC ID#. 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 animal's AAC ID#, the animal 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 animals taken to the emergency vet clinic for treatment will be kept overnight at the clinic and an Animal Protection officer will be contacted in the morning to transfer the animal back to the shelter for further treatment/care.

Contact Information

Foster Program Hotline: 512-978-0541
Foster Program Email: animal.foster@austintexas.gov

Customer Service Phone: 512-978-0500
Customer Service Email: animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov

To view the Foster Program Manual, please visit AustinAnimalCenter.org and click the “Foster” button.

Information for Emergency Cat Fosters

Legal Guardianship

All animals in foster care are the property of the Austin Animal Center and are subject to all applicable Austin Animal Center policies, rules and restrictions.

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

If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal upon request by Austin Animal Center staff, or has improperly transferred an animal 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 animal.

Health and Temperament

AAC will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

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

Guidelines for Care and Handling

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals 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 animals with medications and supplements prescribed by Austin Animal Center's veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.
- Kittens and cats in foster care should be kept indoors only. When being transported, cats and kittens must be kept in secure carriers.
- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.
- Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between animals in your home and foster animals, Austin Animal Center will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster

animal. 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 gets loose, the foster care provider should contact the foster coordinator immediately.

Sick or Injured Fosters

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