

# Fostering with Austin Animal Center

Thank you for your interest in the Austin Animal Center Foster Program! Our foster program enables us to save hundreds of animals each year that might not otherwise be given a second, or even a first, chance at adoption.

We cannot tell you it will always be a warm and fuzzy experience. There will be messes.... Very young kittens may not fully grasp the concept of the litter box at first; puppies have no understanding of the term "holding it" yet; some adult dogs may never have been housetrained. They will all require lots of patience, praise, and assistance before they'll get it right. Foster animals can be fragile... Puppies, kittens, and even adult animals may get sick, sometimes quite seriously, and some animals just fail to thrive despite our best efforts. Illness can be contagious.... AAC cannot guarantee that foster animals are free of disease that may affect you, your family, or your pets. There can be disappointment.... Sometimes it is discovered that a foster animal has such severe behavior issues that they cannot be safely and responsibly re-homed in our community.

However, most of these are rare occurrences, and for many people the benefits of fostering far outweigh the risks. Please consider joining us.

Together we can help end animal homelessness in Central Texas!



**Austin Animal Center**  
**7201 Levander Loop**  
**Austin, TX 78702**  
**Open 11am to 7pm everyday**  
**[www.austinanimalcenter.org](http://www.austinanimalcenter.org)**  
**512-978-0500**

**[animalcustomerservice@austintexas.gov](mailto:animalcustomerservice@austintexas.gov)**

### **How does it work?**

Once AAC has approved your Foster Application, we will invite you to join the Yahoo Group “Project Starfish”, which is where Foster requests for pets are posted. Sometimes days go by and there will be no messages regarding fostering, but then other days there will be half a dozen or more pleas for foster homes; it can go either way. We are as descriptive as possible in the postings: type of pet(s) needing Foster, for how long, and if there are any special behavior or medical issues. We like to get foster pets out of the shelter quickly, 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 with the confirmation and solidify the pickup time.

### **Picking Up New Foster Pets**

When picking up a new foster pet, please go to the Main Lobby and step into the CASHIER Office. Let the Customer Service staff member know that you are an AAC Foster and picking up - you will need to have the animal's ID number from the e-mail posting. Let the staff member know if you need food or a pet carrier. You may also use your own carrier if you prefer. An Animal Care staff member will be paged to bring your foster animal to you in the Cashier's Office.

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

### **Dropping off Foster Pets for a Vet Check (returning to your home afterwards)**

When dropping off sick animals or animals needing a checkup that need to be seen by our vet staff – go to the INTAKE Office. Even if only one of your foster pets is showing symptoms, you should bring ALL of your fosters in together for an exam. You will need to 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 the Intake Office. Let the Customer Service staff member know that you are dropping off foster pets for a vet check.

Please be aware, our Vet Services team members have A LOT of responsibilities, and are often not available to see an animal IMMEDIATELY. The Customer Service staff will determine the immediacy in which an animal needs to be seen. It may take up to 24 hours for the animal to be ready for pick up.

**Hours for drop off are 7 days a week from 11:00am to 7pm. On Saturday & Sunday the doors lock at 5pm, so 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 3 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 at the INTAKE Office 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; please do NOT plan on leaving them in the shelter. Due to the huge numbers of animals in the foster program, it is up to the FOSTER home to keep track of your fosters' booster shot schedules. 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 & Sunday the doors lock at 5pm, so 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 pets from Foster that are ready for adoption. Be sure to have the pets' ID numbers and/or kennel cards. The staff member will take it from there!

**Hours for drop off are 7 days a week from 11:00am to 7pm. On Saturday & Sunday**

### **Additional Notes**

You can pick up wet or dry food anytime the shelter is open. Go to the CASHIER Office and a Customer Service staff member will be able to assist you. If we are out of food, this information will be posted to the Yahoo group.



### **Ready for Adoption!**

When your foster pets are about 8 weeks old, 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 that enter the shelter leave alive. We accomplish this amazing feat by doing everything we can to promote our adoptable animals. During the peak of “kitten season” we hold a huge adoption fair at the shelter called “Kitty Palooza” which has proven to be a huge success the last couple of years for cat and kitten adoptions. We also have strong relationships with other shelters and rescue groups across Central Texas that may select adoptable pets from AAC for their own adoption programs. However, the majority of pets from the Foster Program are adopted from AAC by families who come to the shelter looking for that special new family member.



### **How can you help this happen faster?**

Pictures! Just as soon as you snap an adorable picture of your foster pet e-mail it to us at [animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov](mailto:animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov). *The picture must be cropped horizontally and be titled with the animal's ID number.* Pictures are 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. Social 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, think about creating and posting flyers at your favorite coffee shop, book store or gym. Let your friends, neighbors, family members, and co-workers know you have foster pets 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 can inquire about your pet by contacting the AAC Customer Service team. Staff members will give your name (first names only, no last names), and e-mail address to approved potential adopters, who may then contact you for more information.

Expect a few e-mail or telephone conversations to discuss the pet's personality, behavior quirks, energy level, and experiences (raised with young children, dogs, or cats, etc.). Potential adopters may even inquire about visiting the animal in your home. If you are 100% OK with this, feel free to proceed with the visit. If you are not comfortable with this, AAC will fully support your decision. Feel free to make arrangements to meet the potential adopter at a pre-appointed time here at the shelter. It is also understandable if you are simply not willing to meet with people at all, and again, AAC will support 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 available. 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: Under no circumstances may a foster pet leave its foster home for its adoptive home before it has been microchipped and spayed or neutered!***

### Important Numbers:

**AAC Foster Program: 512-978-0541; [animal.foster@austintexas.gov](mailto:animal.foster@austintexas.gov)**

**AAC Customer Service: 512-978-0500; [animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov](mailto:animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov)**

**[www.AustinAnimalCenter.org](http://www.AustinAnimalCenter.org)**