

From Foster to Forever

Austin Animal Center is typically ALWAYS full. While we will always take a foster pet back into the shelter to await adoption, having the foster home be an advocate for the foster pet while in foster care will only make finding their forever home happen more quickly and easily. After caring for an animal in your home, believe me, you will want to do everything that you can to find it a forever home!

The BEST way to get your foster pet some attention is to take at least one good picture of your foster pets and send them to animal.foster@austintexas.gov. Staff will download the pictures into the shelter database so they can be viewed on www.getapetnow.com and www.petfinder.com

Because of the high volume of pictures we get, pictures MUST be formatted in a particular way to make it very easy to download them into our database.

*****VERY IMPORTANT*****

PHOTOS MUST BE:

- ❖ Landscape (do not crop) 4x6
- ❖ Name and the Animal ID#
- ❖ In JPG Format

These are all good examples of pictures to load onto the website:



Since foster pets are not here at the shelter to meet adopters, we have to “get the word out” about them in other ways. So what else can you do to get your foster pet(s) the attention they deserve?

1) www.getapetnow.com

The Austin Animal Center’s webpage gets thousands of hits every day, so upgrading their “online presence” is a great way to get your foster pet noticed. On our website you can add a youtube video, a link to a blog or Facebook Page, and include a “write up” about how awesome your foster pet is! Just email us a bio of your foster pet!

2) www.craigslist.com

*Many foster homes have had success creating an “ad” for their foster pets on Craigslist. See “**The Power of Craig**” for tips and ideas.*

3) www.facebook.com

Even if you don’t use Facebook, your foster pets can! Many of our foster homes have been successful setting up pages for their foster pets.

4) Flyers

For the graphically gifted, think about making a flyer to advertise your foster pets. Post the flyers in coffee shops, the gym, your work place, etc... See “Tips for successful flyers” for ideas.

5) Blog about it!

Blogs are easy and free to create. You can add pictures, videos, and stories about your foster pets. A link to their blog can be added to our website.

6) Adoption Events

Each week we have Offsite Adoption Events where you will be invited to bring your foster pet to show off.

7) Networking

Chat up your friends, neighbors, family and co-workers. You never know when someone you know is looking for that special pet.

8) Pet of the Week

Contact us to discuss having your foster pet featured in one of our “Pet of the Week” spots on TV. Your foster pet could be a star!

Be your OWN Adoption Counselor!

Do not be shy about asking questions and having real conversations about any concerns you may have. Your foster pet's life, wellbeing, safety and future happiness can all be positively influenced by the discussion you have with a potential adopter.

- 🐾 **Carefully consider all the elements of the potential new home:** While going over the application with potential adopters, does the pet care agreement seem reasonable to them? Are pets allowed where they live? Do they have a realistic expectation how the new pet will fit into their home and lifestyle? Are they planning on declawing a cat or letting a cat live mostly outdoors? Are they away from home more than would be ideal for a puppy? Do they have a safe indoor environment for a puppy? Puppies and kittens under 6 months of age should live exclusively indoors. These issues are covered in the pet care agreement, but it does not hurt to touch base with folks about these issues. Does the family have a veterinarian already? Having a vet lined up is not mandatory but discussing vet care is an excellent way to discuss with potential adopters about the costs of maintaining a pet throughout its life. Regular check ups, vaccinations, flea and tick preventative and heartworm protection are all costs that need to be expected when taking in a new pet. Having an emergency fund in place or considering Pet Insurance are also good options for a responsible pet owner.
- 🐾 **Always be mindful of your own safety when you interview potential adopters or if you allow a prospective adopter to enter your home.** Inviting potential adopters (that you do not know or do not come highly recommended by a trusted friend) is not recommended. If possible, meet the person in a public place. The shelter will be happy to make arrangements for potential adopters to meet your foster pets at AAC.
- 🐾 Use the paper application as a “tool” to learn more about the adoptive family. Talking about past pets, current pets and the management plan for caring for their new pet will open up lines of communication between the Foster Parent and the Adoptive Parent to determine if this is going to be a good match.
- 🐾 AAC no longer does home ownership/land lord verifications or "vet checks" for potential adopters. If the Foster Parent would like to call vets for references and verify home ownership or permission with a landlord, that can be done at the Foster Parent’s discretion.
- 🐾 The BOND is the thing. If the bond is there, nothing will stand in the way of the Adopter keeping the pet forever and caring for it responsibly. So instead of putting up roadblocks to people adopting - we are starting conversations and creating relationships with them that will insure if they do have problems, concerns or issues in the future, they feel like they can reach out to the shelter or the foster home for help.
- 🐾 You have lived with your foster pet and know him quite well. We trust you would not let him leave with someone you are not OK with. In the event you are NOT OK with the potential adopter, you can always use the application process as a tool to delay the process. Simply let the potential adopter know you need to process their application and will get back to them, then call the Foster Coordinator to discuss.

The Dreaded PAPERWORK!

- A) Visit the “FILES” section on the Project Starfish Yahoo Group and open the folder labeled “Adoption Paperwork”
- B) Print all applicable forms and give or e-mail them to the prospective adopter
 - All adopters must fill out “Application Adopter”
 - Cat adopters should also get “Application Cat” and “Cat Care Agreement”
 - Dog adopters should also get “Application Dog” and “Dog Care Agreement”
 - There should be a total of 4 pages

The Nuts and Bolts (or ovaries as the case may be)

Foster Pets are NOT to go to their homes until the animal is CHIPPED, FIXED and the Adoption Fee has been paid! The foster home MUST retain physical possession of the animal until it is fixed, chipped and the adoption fee has been paid.

OPTION 1 – Emancipet Make Ready

- ❖ AAS has contracted with Emancipet to provide these services for our foster pets
- ❖ Plan ahead – sometimes appointments are backed up a few weeks
 - Go to <http://www.emancipet.org/spay-neuter/appointment-request-form> to make the appointment.
 - In the "Promotional Code" at the bottom, put "AAS Foster"
 - In the “Pet Name Field” list the animals AAS AID#
 - If your foster pet is not yet 3 pounds/months, you may get a message that says they will not do a pet under 3 months. They make the exception for us and if they give you any trouble, e-mail carrie.voss@emancipet.org and she will clear it for you.
 - Your drop time off will be between 8-8:30am. Your pick up time is between 5-5:30pm.
 - <http://www.emancipet.org/contact-us/map-directions/>
- ❖ Your foster pet can go directly to their new home after their Emancipet appointment, the adopter can even pick up the animal at Emancipet or you can meet them the following day or at a pre determined time that works for both of you.
 - Make sure the foster coordinator gets the:
 - Adoption Application Paperwork
 - The Adoption Fee
 - Once Adoption Paperwork and Adoption Fee is turned in to the shelter, the medical records will be e-mailed to the adopter. You can drop them off in person or mail them to:

Austin Animal Services

Attn: Foster Program

PO BOX 1088

Austin TX, 78767

OPTION 2 – Shelter Make Ready

If using Emancipet is simply not an option, e-mail animal.customerservice@austintexas.gov with a preferred day for services. They will do their best to accommodate your request. The schedule is as follows.

➤ **Day 1**

- Drop off foster pet in INTAKE OFFICE
- Drop off Adoption Application paperwork with Customer Service Staff
- Arrive as close to closing time (7pm) as possible to reduce the amount of time your foster(s) need to stay here

➤ **Day 2**

- Animal gets wellness, surgery and microchip and can be picked up by adopter AT THE SHELTER
- Post surgery pick ups are between 4:30 and 6:30 pm everyday
- Adopters should report to the Main Lobby and “sign in” by using their phone and calling 512-687-1472. The voice prompts will direct them which rep is ready for them
- Adopters will get all medical records, post surgery home care instructions and any counseling needed on taking home a new pet. They will also have access to the wealth of informational flyers in the Main Lobby and access to our Adoption Counselors who are very knowledgeable and helpful.
- Adopters will then be sent to the Cashiers Office, to pay for their new pet and their pet and will be delivered to them!

If after your best efforts, you are unable to find a home for your foster pet(s), they can be returned to the shelter. E-mail the foster coordinator to schedule a time to bring them in. Once returned to the shelter, they can be adopted or transferred to another rescue group. We ONLY transfer to NO-KILL groups such as Austin Pets Alive and the Austin Humane Society.

