

**TEXAS
HUMANE**
Heroes

***Pet
Adoption
Centers***

Foster Care Handbook



Foster Coordinator:

AJ Jones
Office: 512-260-3602 Ext: 122
Cell: 737-346-6910
Email: Ajones@TXHH.org

TXHH Hours:

Tues - Fri: 12 pm- 5pm
Saturday: 11am - 5pm
Sunday: 11pm - 5pm
Monday: Closed

The TXHH foster program operates exclusively out of our Leander facility.

10930 E. Crystal Falls Parkway
Leander, Texas 78641

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Texas Humane Heroes (TXHH) Foster Care Program! This program allows animals that are too young for adoption, are recovering from surgery or illness, are pregnant/nursing, or are in need of other special care to stay in private homes until they are ready for adoption.

Foster volunteers play a crucial role in saving lives at TXHH. These volunteers are highly committed people who dedicate days, weeks, or months of their time to homeless animals needing care.

Overall Responsibility of the Foster Home

- Providing a warm, safe place for foster animals.
- Teaching good behavior to the animals.
- Contacting TXHH for medical problems that may arise while the animals are in your care.
- Appearing for scheduled appointments

We ask that you stay in regular contact with the TXHH Foster Coordinator to let them know the status of your foster animal(s) even when everything is going smoothly.

TXHH is responsible for providing all medical and emergency care for the foster animal(s). Foster volunteers should understand that if they seek medical help outside of TXHH, they take financial responsibility in doing so and will not be reimbursed by TXHH.

Time Commitment

The time commitment for foster care can range from a few days to several months depending on the animal's need for foster care. This length of time is typically predetermined for each foster animal. In addition to time spent caring for and socializing your foster animal(s) in your home, you must consider the additional time for vet checks and/or emergency care and transporting to and from appointments.

Emotional Investment

Bonds will form between you and our foster animals. This is perfectly natural, but does not mean you should adopt the pet. The same considerations for any person adopting a pet should be maintained for the foster parent. The Foster volunteer should analyze whether the foster animal fits with their household long term or the urge to adopt is just an emotional response to caring for this young or sick animal. Please realize that foster homes are always in demand and when they "fill up", fewer animals can be helped.

Risk

There is always a risk of bringing disease or injury home to your own pets when taking in a foster animal(s). TXHH has done all we can to determine the health and behavior of the animal(s) before going into your home. If there are known risks, you will be advised at the time of foster placement and it is your choice to take on the responsibility. Please note TXHH cannot guarantee the health or behavior of the foster animal(s) and is not liable for any illness or injury to the foster's pets.

Health Considerations

Protecting your resident pets

When bringing a new foster animal(s) into your home, please keep in mind that they may be carrying an illness that could affect your pet's health. TXHH asks that you keep your pets separate from the foster animals for a **minimum** of 10 days. The only way to avoid possible exposure is to keep them separate from your pets for the entire foster period. We highly recommend that your pets remain current on ALL routine vaccinations and preventatives.

If you do choose to introduce your foster animal(s) to your resident pets, it is a good idea to prohibit sharing of food and water bowls, litter boxes, and toys. Any introduction should be made with great care and under constant supervision, especially if you are planning to introduce a protective mother to your resident pets.

After handling foster animals, it is always a good idea to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling your pets. This will further reduce the likelihood of exposing your pet to illness.

Standard Recommended Vaccines for Dogs:

- DAPP (Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus)
- Bordetella (Kennel Cough)
- Rabies
- Dewormer
- Heartworm prevention
- Flea prevention

Standard Recommended Vaccines for Cats:

- FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia)
- FeLV (Feline Leukemia)
- Rabies
- Dewormer
- Flea prevention

Please let your Veterinarian know that you intend to provide foster care for shelter animals, and follow their vaccine/medical recommendations.

Protecting our animals

Prior to being placed into foster care, all animals will be vaccinated, wormed, and given flea/tick treatment as necessary and appropriate for their age.

When you pick up your foster animal(s), you will receive a copy of the Foster Tracking Form which includes dates for follow up care and/or vaccinations. Foster volunteers will agree to transport the animal(s) to the TXHH facility for this care. You must confirm your appointment prior to coming to the shelter to insure the proper staff are available.

Please familiarize yourself with common illnesses in animals, and be aware of symptoms to look out for. On the next page you will find an outline of symptoms to be aware of and procedures to follow.

If a foster animal begins to show symptoms of illness while in your care, contact the Foster Coordinator as soon as possible.

Please don't wait until nighttime when staff is off duty and unavailable.

Foster Animal Illness Protocol

If you notice any of the following non-emergency symptoms, please immediately send an email or text message to notify us, and we will get back to you within 24 hours.

Symptoms to watch for (Non-emergencies):

- Loss of appetite in puppies or kittens
- Any lethargy
- Diarrhea (as an isolated symptom)
- Vomiting (as an isolated symptom)
- Coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge
- New or worsening hair loss
- Worms in stool

Prompt communication of ALL symptoms can help prevent after-hours emergencies.

Emergency Symptoms include:

- Continuous diarrhea, particularly if it is bloody
- Continuous vomiting or vomit that is primarily blood
- A combination of vomiting and diarrhea
- Active bleeding from the nose, mouth, or in the urine or stools
- Extreme difficulty breathing
- Significant lethargy: listless, limp, non-responsive
- Physical trauma

If you see an emergency symptom during staff hours, please call us.

If you are unable to reach us on the phone, please proceed to bring the animal to our facility.

If you find yourself in an after-hours emergency situation, please call the after hours EMERGENCY ONLY phone until someone picks up.

Foster volunteers should understand that if they seek medical help outside of TXHH, they take financial responsibility in doing so and will not be reimbursed by TXHH.

Contact Information For Fosters

Foster Coordinator: AJ Jones

Office: 512-260-3602 Ext: 122

Cell: 737-346-6910

Email: Ajones@TXHH.org

TXHH Staff Hours:

Tues - Fri: 9:00 am- 6:00 pm

Sat-Sun: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Monday: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Please note: **These are not our public business hours. These are the hours that staff is present to care for animals, and can be available to assist foster volunteers if necessary.**

Medical Contact Information During Daytime Hours:

AJ Jones (Foster Coordinator)

Office: 512-260-3602 Ext 122

Cell: 737-346-6910

Victoria Hale (Vet Tech)

Cell: 512-710-9863

After Hours EMERGENCY ONLY Contact Number: 512-765-2516

Word of caution

It is a sad fact that puppies and kittens, through no fault of your own, sometimes die. The mother dog or cat may reject them or even kill them. Your own pet may fatally injure or kill one of them, or one might simply die for an unknown reason.

If an animal in your care should happen to die, please be sure to contact TXHH staff as soon as possible. It is imperative that we have an opportunity to examine the animal to determine a cause of death. Some conditions may be contagious, and we want to protect any other foster animal in your care, as well as your own pets. We will handle the disposal of the remains for you.

Foster volunteers are people with big hearts, and these situations can cause distress. Please know that even when we fail to save every single animal, your participation is vital to our mission and helps us save the lives of many animals every year.

TXHH Foster Policies

Foster volunteers must provide adequate food, water, shelter, safe containment, and humane treatment for the animal(s) at all times.

- Foster animals should be kept indoors unless accompanied by the foster volunteer.
- House the foster animal(s) in an area separate from your household pets.
- Cat/kitten Foster volunteers should consider noise/activity levels in the area when fostering felines as they are less stressed in a quiet environment.
- The foster animal(s) environment should be frequently cleaned and disinfected. Flooring is a major consideration in your ability to properly disinfect the area where you foster an animal. Good flooring options are: Cement, Sealed wood, Linoleum, or Tile.

Foster animals are to be housed **indoors**.

- Foster cats/kittens are always strictly indoor cats.
- Dogs under four (4) months are not permitted to go on walks.
- Dogs over four (4) months of age can go on walks, but must remain on leash at all times.
- Foster dogs may only be off leash if they are inside the secure fenced yard of the foster home.
- Foster animals are not permitted to interact with animals outside the home.
- Foster dogs are not permitted to go to dog parks or other public places.

Foster volunteers are expected to notify the Foster Coordinator immediately of any issues/concerns or changes in the foster animal(s) health or animal being lost.

All external veterinary appointments for foster animals must be set up by TXHH. Charges incurred for external veterinary services and care without TXHH management staff approval will not be reimbursed.

The foster volunteer is responsible for maintaining control of the foster animal(s) at all times. TXHH cannot in any way guarantee the temperament or behavior of any animals.

It is the responsibility of the foster volunteer to protect their own pets from illness or injury.

In the unfortunate instance of a foster animal's death, the body should be returned to TXHH.

The foster volunteer is expected to check in with the Foster Coordinator for updates on the foster pet as well as come in on designated days for medical check ups. (Appointments will be scheduled out)

The Foster Process

In order to become a foster volunteer, you must complete a [foster application](#), and submit a \$25 registration fee donation. The Foster Coordinator will contact you within one week in regards to your application.

Once approved, you will be added to our Foster Roster. When we are in need of a foster volunteer, the Foster Coordinator sends out a mass email to all of our approved fosters. The email will include as much information as we have about the animals with an approximate length of time each animal will need to stay in the home. Animals are placed with the first foster volunteer who expresses interest and availability.

All foster animal pickups, drop offs, and medical checkups occur at the Leander Adoption Center.

Animals that are eligible for foster care

Puppies & Kittens - Baby animals are the most vulnerable to the illnesses that are common in shelter environments. For this reason, we try to place all animals under 8 weeks old in foster care. Some of these babies come to us so small that they must be bottle fed by the foster volunteer! Once they are 8 weeks old and at least 2lbs, the animals can return to us for spay/neuter surgery, then adoption.

Pregnant or Nursing Animals - When a dog or cat is either pregnant or nursing, we place her in foster care to birth and raise her babies. The mother animal must remain in foster until her babies are weaned. The babies then must remain in foster until they are 8 weeks old and at least 2 lbs.

Adult Dogs & Cats - Animals often come to us from unfortunate circumstances. They may be suffering from emaciation, physical injuries, infection, or illness, recovering from a surgery, need socialization, or otherwise need some extra TLC. These animals are placed in foster care so they can heal in a comfortable environment away from the stress of the shelter. *Healthy, adoptable, adult animals are typically ineligible for foster, as we would like them to remain available to meet potential adopters.*

Animals with Upper Respiratory Infections - URI is a very common condition that is spread between animals that spend time in close proximity, just like the common cold in humans. The treatment for a URI typically includes a course of oral antibiotics, nebulization (steam/mist treatment), and rest in a comfortable environment.

Animals with Ringworm - Ringworm is a fungus that grows on skin (cat, dog, human, etc.), and is transmitted by contact with an infected animal or surface. This makes it difficult to contain and treat in the shelter environment. When these animals are placed in foster care, they typically recover more quickly, and with proper precautions, avoid spreading the fungus!

Animals that are eligible for Foster to Adopt

Heartworm Positive Dogs - HW+ dogs are typically only eligible for Foster to Adopt. This means that we would like them to be placed with a foster that intends to adopt them after they have finished HW treatment. If you are interested in Fostering to Adopt, you do not need to register as a Foster Volunteer. Simply visit the adoption center during our business hours to complete the paperwork and process for the specific dog, then take your FTA pup home that day!