

Foster Care Program Expansion

Realistic Program Preview

This is a preview of some of the things that may be recommended during a consultation; if we are consulting on-site, we will create a plan specifically for your organization during our visit.

Action Item	Approximate Time Required	Templates and Resources	Impact
Planning Tasks			
Collect and discuss your organization's data on outcomes for different types of pets and those served by your current foster program	45 minutes or more	See page 5 of this document	This will enable your organization to determine which populations of pets still need foster care the most (neonatal kittens, big dogs, etc.) so that you can expand your program to target those in most need.
Create a list of goals for your program's expansion based on the data; create a timeline for achieving them	45 minutes or more	See page 8 of Alley Cat Allies' toolkit	This will help give your organization a strategy for expanding and improving your program. It will also help you to break up tasks into meaningful goals that can be achieved easily.
Update or create job descriptions for your foster coordinator, other staff and/or volunteers assisting with the foster program	45 minutes or more	Here are several job descriptions for foster assistants and teams	This will enable the foster coordinator and your organization to be clear on the responsibilities for these jobs.
Update Standard Operating Procedures for the foster program	20 minutes or more		This will enable your shelter or rescue organization to run the foster program safely and efficiently.

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<p>If needed, increase funding for medical care for pets in foster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Grants-Possibly increase medical budget-Possibly update process for transferring pets with medical needs to rescue	<p>1 hour or more</p>	<p>See document below, Grant Sources for Medical Funding</p>	<p>This will give your organization the funding to provide better medical care for foster pets.</p>
<p>Update foster application, manual and/or agreement; get approval on updated documents if needed</p>	<p>30 minutes or more</p>	<p>You can use Austin Animal Center's application, manual and agreement as templates</p>	<p>The application and agreement will provide information on potential foster applicants and a legal framework for the responsibilities and requirements of foster caregiver and your organization. The manual will provide foster caregivers with an understanding of program basics, what to expect, their roles and their responsibilities.</p>
<p>Make all of your volunteers and staff fosters automatically (at least for the types of pets they are already trained to handle at the shelter).</p>	<p>No time to several hours</p>		<p>This will remove a barrier (extra training) for the people who already know and love your organization's pets to taking them home, and will enable your foster program to grow more quickly. You may need to alter volunteer orientations, send out the foster manual or post foster information and manual in your internal group.</p>
<p>Create goals and parameters for pilot program for a new population of foster pets (species, goal number of pets, expected length of time in foster, etc.)</p>	<p>45 minutes or more</p>		<p>This will enable your organization to begin serving a new population of pets in foster care on a trial basis.</p>

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<p>Update process for sending current caregivers lists of pets who need fosters or contact caregivers individually about specific pets who need foster care</p>	<p>15 minutes or more, as often as every day</p>	<p>Some shelter software can be automated to send these requests out; we recommend sending pet photos with every request.</p>	<p>Part of your foster coordinator's ongoing duties will be sending out requests for current fosters to take home the pets who need foster care. This can be via email, phone or in person and can include lists of pets needing foster or asking a caregiver personally to take home a particular pet.</p>
<p>Update process for scheduling and tracking medical vaccines and appointments</p>	<p>15 minutes or more, daily or weekly</p>	<p>Scheduling apps like Acuity and Fullslate (see their tutorial) may be helpful.</p>	<p>This ensures that all of the pets in your organization are vaccinated on time. The time this will take depends on your process for medical scheduling and appointments, the number of current fosters and how much of the medical process (giving vaccines, attending appointments, etc.) is the responsibility of the foster coordinator.</p>
<p>Edit foster profile form that fosters can use to send in behavioral information on their dogs, the process for sending the forms out to fosters and for recording the information they report in your files.</p>	<p>30 minutes or more</p>	<p>You can use this dog foster profile template or create one in Google Forms. *if you are using Maddie's Pet Assistant, it can send a form out to your fosters and collect the information for you</p>	<p>This will enable foster caregivers to report the information that you need on foster pets' behavior in the home. Collecting information on a timely basis will help to ensure that your organization has accurate behavioral and medical records on every pet.</p>
<p>Start volunteer & foster Facebook group</p>	<p>10-30 minutes</p>	<p>(See page 17 of Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care for sample group guidelines)</p>	<p>This will enable your shelter or rescue to learn more about the animals in your care. It will make posting on social easier much less time-intensive, as photos, videos stories and bios can often be copied, edited and posted to your organization's main page.</p>

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<p>Purchase or request supplies, if needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Martingale collars- Harnesses- Leashes- Crates- Etc.	20 minutes or more	Consider creating an Amazon wish list, or asking for donations of specific items. 'Adopt me' vests and supply bags can even be made by members of your community!	Having foster supplies available to foster caregivers can help to increase safety and make it easier for people to foster.
Create foster emergency phone line and decide how it will be staffed	30 minutes	Google Voice is an option for this.	This will enable your foster coordinator(s) to respond to any foster-related emergencies in a timely manner.
Update foster onboarding process; remove as many barriers to fostering as you can	45 minutes or more	Here is one template for tracking foster information and completed steps in foster onboarding. Using Google Forms to put orientation/training online is the most efficient way to do this (see example, Best Friends Animal Society-LA's online training). Other ideas include doing orientations on-the-spot or scheduling in-person group orientations. Here is one template for tracking foster information and completed steps in foster onboarding.	This will help foster caregivers to understand the program's requirements and rules. Onboarding of new foster caregivers can be done on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Using the shortest amount of time from foster application to onboarding will help ensure that you don't lose any potential foster caregivers due to the length of the wait. Making it easy to foster will help more people to participate

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Set up Maddie's Pet Assistant	20 minutes or more	Maddie's Pet Assistant	This app will help you better communicate with foster caregivers and keep abreast of medical needs and fosters who need support.
Create or update foster program marketing plan	20 minutes or more	See a template below and on page 72 of this document	This will ensure that your organization has consistent messaging about foster and is following a plan that will help expand the foster program.
Give your foster caregivers The Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide	10 minutes or more	The Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide	Fosters will have a step-by-step guide to writing pet biographies, taking photos, and marketing their foster pets for adoption.
Recruit and train foster assistant(s)	1 hour 30 minutes or more	Here are several job descriptions for foster assistants and teams	Foster mentors/volunteers will help the foster program run more efficiently, saving the foster coordinator's time and allowing more pets to be placed into foster.
Create and train fosters on how to use a Foster on Deck system	1 hour or more	Read this article describing the system and use Humane Rescue Alliance's template for a Foster on Deck spreadsheet	This will allow you to know at a glance which foster caregivers are ready for which fosters and can help save time.
Train foster caregivers in marketing foster pets	1 hour or more	Create an online training via Google Forms and a video presentation or hold in-person trainings at specified intervals	This will help your fosters to create and post marketing material to help get their fosters adopted without taking up room on the shelter's adoption floor.
Ongoing Tasks			

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Work foster care into a minimum of ___% of your organization’s main page social media posts	20 min. or more per week	See examples of this in Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care	This will help to normalize foster care in your community and bring about a foster-centric culture.
Begin putting out calls ___ times per month for short-term foster caregivers for long-stay pets (1 week for dogs, 3-4 weeks for cats)	20 min. or more per week		This will increase your organization’s opportunities to get great marketing material its pets and will give the pets a break from the stress of sheltering. Recruiting fosters enable you to save more pets by freeing up more kennel space, providing specialized care, and reducing stress on staff and pets. Due to normal foster turnover and the rate of ‘foster failure,’ recruitment for new foster caregivers should be ongoing in order to keep the program strong.
Increase active foster base by ___%	30 minutes or more per week	Use marketing techniques outlined in Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care	Having more active foster caregivers will help your program to grow and more pets to find foster placement.
Increase foster care placement to a minimum of ___% of all dogs, ___% of underage puppies, ___% of kittens and ___% of cats	Dependent on process and percentage		This will enable your organization to learn more about the pets in your care and save more of their lives.
Post calls for foster photos and stories on the internal group page	10 minutes every 1-2 weeks, or as needed	Make sure your foster caregivers have a copy of The Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide	This will remind your fosters that you need their help with marketing their foster pets. Getting marketing material from foster caregivers will help your organization save time on social media.

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Check and monitor staff, volunteer & foster Facebook group	5 minutes or more per day	See sample group rules on page 24 of Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care	This will enable you to give support as soon as it is needed, post relevant marketing material to social media and target any issues as soon as possible.
Update and monitor the data on your program	20 minutes or more per week	You can use this template from Austin Pets Alive!	This will enable you to see if your program is working efficiently enough to meet your needs and will help you to define areas that need improvement.
Create and host 'foster' adoption events	1 hour or more per event		Scheduling offsite adoption events at places throughout the community (pet stores, etc.) can help prevent pets in foster care from ever having to come back to the shelter. Offsite events can also help to expand a shelter's adoption capacity.
<h3>Field Trip Foster Program</h3>			
Create SOPs for field trip foster program	15 minutes or more	See manual, Short Term Foster Care and our pilot program document template Download a toolkit from Mutual Rescue	This will enable your organization to run the program efficiently and safely.
Recruit field trip foster caregivers	30 minutes or more; ongoing		This will enable your organization to begin the pilot program.
Recruit and train field trip foster volunteers	1 hour or more	See foster program job descriptions	Foster volunteers can do much of the work on the program, saving the foster coordinator's time.

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Pilot field trip foster program	2 hours or more		This will enable your organization to grow its foster program, enrich its dogs, get more great marketing material and increase engagement with the community.
Weekend Foster Program			
Create SOPs for overnight/weekend foster program	15 minutes or more	See manual, Short Term Foster Care , and our pilot program template	This will enable your organization to run the program efficiently and safely.
Recruit overnight/weekend foster caregivers	30 minutes or more; ongoing		This will enable your organization to begin the pilot program.
Recruit and train overnight/weekend foster volunteers	1 hour or more	See foster program job descriptions	Foster volunteers can do much of the work on the program, saving the foster coordinator's time.
Pilot overnight/weekend foster program	2 hours or more		This will enable your organization to grow its foster program, enrich its dogs, get more great marketing material and increase engagement with the community.
Miscellaneous			
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for an emergency foster	30 minutes or more	See Austin Animal Center's emergency foster care logistics here.	This will enable your organization to place pets into temporary foster care and open up new kennels quickly when there is a population surge, population crisis,

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program.			natural disaster or other type of emergency.
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for a 'found foster' program.	30 minutes or more		This will enable your organization to increase foster capacity because those who find pets (such as underage kittens) can be onboarded as their fosters until the pets are ready for adoption.
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for a fospice (hospice foster) program.	15 minutes or more		This will enable your organization to give more humane, higher-quality care to the teminally ill pets it serves.
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for a foster-to-adopt program.	30 minutes or more	See Pima Animal Care Center's Foster-to-Adopt manual here	This may help potential adopters become more comfortable with taking home medium and large dogs.
Create a list of pets urgently needing placement for your organization's website	unknown	Chameleon software allows organizations to list the pets most at risk on Petharbor so that fosters and rescues can help. Example: http://www.laanimalservices.com/volunteer/new-hope/	This will enable your organization to put the animals who are at highest risk for euthanasia in one place so that fosters, rescues and adopters know who needs help the most.

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Foster Retention

- Assign volunteers to tasks that match their skills
 - Consider start new foster caregivers off with “easier” foster pets; if they are already experienced in a certain area (e.g., dog trainers or experienced neonatal kitten fosters), give them the opportunity to work with that population if they would like
 - Ensure that fosters have the support needed to foster the animal they take home
 - Give experienced, trustworthy foster caregivers the opportunity to become foster mentors or help with the program in other ways
- Provide opportunities to share experiences with other volunteers
 - Create a volunteer & foster social media group where they can share stories and get support
 - Consider hosting ‘happy hours’ or other social events
- Support new volunteers
 - Ensure that fosters have adequate support to provide care for the pets they take home
 - Consider training foster mentors that new fosters can call on for advice and support
- Inform volunteers through regular communication
- Welcome and respect volunteers
- Recognize volunteers
 - Host a volunteer and foster appreciation event once a year and give out awards
 - Post shout-outs on your internal social media page to fosters and volunteers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty
 - Thank them in person often

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Foster Program Plan

Goals

- Create a foster-centric culture with a high number of active foster caregivers per capita (add estimated goal)
- Create awareness in (your community) about (your organization)'s need for foster caregivers and the pets who need foster care

Objectives/Desired Outcomes

- Increase our live release rate
- Increase our number of foster caregivers
- Increase the amount and quality of marketing material that our foster caregivers supply us with
- Increase page likes and engagement on social media by using new, exciting content that highlights pets in foster care

Target Audiences

- Current foster caregivers
- Supporters, staff and volunteers
- Residents of (your community)
- Supporters of shelters, rescues and animal welfare organizations locally and within (state)

Key Messages

- Foster care saves pets' lives
- Becoming a foster caregiver is easy
- In order to save more pets' lives, we need more foster caregivers for all types of pets
- Our community values pets' lives
- Our community believes in foster care and is supportive of the needs of homeless pets

Strategies

- Electronic communication
- Print communication
- News reports

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Tools/Opportunities

- Ask our foster families and volunteers for help:
 - Marketing foster pets for adoption
 - Recruiting new foster caregivers
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) to communicate key messages and to market animals and events
 - Work foster care into our communications at least once per day
 - Tell foster pets' stories often
- Our website
- Flyers, e-flyers, events and promotions
- Local, state and national conferences

Measurement

- Increases in live outcomes due to foster placement
- Increase in number of active fosters
- Increases in number of pets who have been in some form of foster care
- Decrease in the total length of stay for pets who have been in foster care

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Grant Sources for Medical Funding

Grant Source	Information	Link
ASPCA Anti-Cruelty Grant	These expenses include veterinary care, housing, transport, spay/neuter, and placement*. Requests for such funds are limited to organizations with law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the case or whose involvement was requested by same	https://www.aspcapro.org/grant/2017/07/20/aspcapro-anti-cruelty-grants
Bissell Pet Foundation	Veterinary Care Funding grants are awarded for vaccinations, heartworm treatment, FeLV/FIV testing, deworming, blood work, dental, and emergency medical needs up to \$200 per dog and \$100 per cat.	https://www.bissellpetfoundation.org/grant-guidelines
Doris Day Animal Foundation	Currently, many of their grants are focused on assisting senior companion animals, whether it be assisting with their food, care, veterinary costs, or need for adoption.	https://www.dorisdayanimalfoundation.org/grants-guidelines-and-faq
Grey Muzzle Organization	Funds medical care and other programs that increase the potential for senior dogs to be adopted and medical expenses for hospice care dogs.	http://www.greymuzzle.org/grants/about-grey-muzzle-grants

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Healthy Paws Pet Insurance Medical Grants	Go to the bottom of the page, where it says “Apply for a Homeless Pet Medical Grant.” There will be a link where you can contact them to inquire.	https://www.healthypawspetinsurance.com/how-we-help
Ian Somerhalder Foundation	Award decisions are able to be made within one week.	https://www.isfoundation.com/ISFEmergencyMedicalGrant
Pedigree Foundation	Has funded medical supplies and improvements to Isolation rooms in the past	https://www.pedigreefoundation.org/grant-program/
Petfinder Foundation Emergency Medical Grant	Grants of up to \$1,000.00 for one pet’s emergency medical funding	http://www.petfinderfoundation.com/shelters/apply-for-a-grant/
Second Chance Grants from the American Humane Association	Financial assistance to help offset the costs of rescuing animals who are homeless or the victims of human cruelty. To qualify, your rescue group must be a member of American Humane Association.	http://www.americanhumane.org/initiative/second-chance-grants/
<h3>In-Kind Donations</h3>		
1-800-PetMeds-Cares	1-800-PetMeds Cares™ organizes product donations to shelters and rescues located within the contiguous U.S. and Washington D.C. area. Product donations are comprised of returned items and manufacturers samples, meaning many items may be open or have damaged packaging.	https://www.petmeds.org/request-petmeds-donations/

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Chewy.com	The Chewy.com Rescue and Shelter Network is open to all registered non-profit organizations that specialize in assisting pets in need. By joining our free Rescue Network, your non-profit organization will have access to programs providing donations and fundraising opportunities. Email rescue@chewy.com to join the rescue program.	https://www.chewy.com/app/content/about-us
<h3>Other Possibilities</h3>		
Trupanion Rescue Grants	The Rescue Grant is designed to provide high impact assistance to your shelter or rescue organization in times of need.	https://trupanion.com/shelter/rescue-grant
Amazon	They do not solicit unrequested grant proposals, but if you would like to introduce your organization you can email donationrequests@amazon.com	https://www.amazon.com/p/feature/evmc8u96fp595js