

Dog and Puppy Foster Manual

Sioux Falls Area Humane Society



Thank you for your interest in the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society's foster program! Fostering can be very rewarding and it helps to save the lives of many puppies and dogs! The major objective with a foster home is to ensure a nurturing environment in the comfort of your home where the dog or puppies can grow and become socialized pets. Thank you for taking time to help our precious animals!

FAQ's of fostering dogs and/or puppies for the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society

1. What types of dogs/puppies would I be fostering? Can I pick and choose?

Yes you can choose what you would like to foster. Animals seeking a foster home will vary on a day to day basis. There may not always be a dog or puppies to fit your situation. We do not want you to feel

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overwhelmed by taking on more than you are prepared for. We will make sure that your foster animals are a good fit for you and your home and family.

2. How long will I need to foster? How much time does it take on a daily basis?

Length of having fosters will depend on their age and circumstances. It can take as much as 2-5 hours a day depending on the animals circumstance (how much socializing they need, if they are ill, or if it is a whelping situation).

3. What supplies are needed for fostering? How much will it cost?

The Sioux Falls Area Humane Society will provide all the supplies you need. They can include dry food, toys, a wading pool for whelping, blankets, dishes, a collar and leash, and a carrier. Some foster parents like to provide their own supplies and that is fine as well.

4. Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or experience?

No. If you have questions, you can call the humane society at any time to get answers to any questions you have. We want this to be a fun and rewarding experience for you!

5. What if my foster becomes sick?

Please contact the medical staff at the shelter if you feel that your foster(s) have any signs of sickness. Included, but not limited to, upper respiratory infection, diarrhea, vomiting, not eating, or any other concerns that you have. We will then discuss with you the best plan of action, whether it be medicine or diagnostics. Do not take your foster(s) to a vet. The medical staff at the shelter will decide what needs to be done and proceed accordingly.

6. Can I foster if I have animals of my own?

You certainly can!! We do strongly recommend that you do not let your foster(s) and your own animals interact. We get a lot of cats and kittens in as strays and we do not always know if they are carrying a disease that could be given to your pet.

7. Can my foster go outdoors?

Yes. It is recommended that dogs/puppies be taken outdoors to "go potty" so that appropriate bathroom habits can be established as soon as possible. Also, if you have a fenced in yard, it always does dogs/puppies of any age a lot of good to play/exercise. If you do not have a fenced in yard, walks are beneficial to help with excess energy/training. Sometimes, however, there are circumstances that warrant the dog to be taken on restrictive walks. If this is the case, the medical staff here at the SFAHS will let you know.

8. Can I adopt my foster dog/puppy?

Of course!! As foster parents, you have the first chance at adopting any dog or puppy you foster. You just have to go through the standard adoption paperwork.

9. Can I return my foster dog/puppies if I am no longer able to foster?

Most certainly! We understand situations arise that are unforeseeable. Just keep in mind that moving dogs and puppies to your home and back to the shelter before they are ready for adoption is stressful on them. Try to foster when you are fairly certain that you can commit to the entire time that is needed to care for them.

10. Are foster dogs/puppies ever euthanized?

We understand how much love, time and energy goes into your foster animals. But there are times when the dog or puppy may become very ill and cannot be treated.

11. What is the next step after filling out my foster care application?

Your application will be reviewed and you will receive a call when there are dogs, puppies, or pregnant dogs needing foster care that fit with your home and family. You can always call the shelter as well.

Some tips on being a successful foster parent

1. Give your foster animal lots of attention and affection.

The animal you are fostering likely has special needs that require time and energy. The animal may have lived a difficult life before coming to your home.

Your love and attention will help to heal the animal's physical and emotional wounds.

2. Learn as much as you can about pet care.

Before you bring your foster animal home, learn as much as you can about caring for that animal. Read about feeding, grooming, and training. Study the warning signs that may indicate the animal needs veterinary attention.

3. Make your home pet friendly.

Before you bring your foster animal home, make sure that you "pet proof" your home. For example, remove poisonous plants and protect furnishings. Keep the animal's room warm and comfortable. Also, take steps to prevent the animal from escaping.

4. Keep foster animals away from your own pets.

A foster pet may come into your home harboring contagious diseases. Even though your pets are vaccinated against many diseases, it's a good idea to keep the foster animal away from your pets as an added precaution.

5. Recognize your limits.

Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy, both emotional and physical. Don't overextend yourself by fostering animals too frequently or you risk burning yourself out.

6. Return the animal to the shelter on time.

The shelter depends on you to make this program work. Be sure to return the animal to the shelter at the scheduled time. If you decide to adopt an animal you foster, go through the shelter's normal adoption process. If a friend or relative wants to adopt the animal you are fostering, that person must go through the shelter's adoption process, not yours.

7. Understand that some foster animals will not survive.

Many animals that arrive at the shelter come from unknown backgrounds. Despite your best efforts, the animal you foster may develop a severe illness that cannot be treated. Do the best you can to help the animal, but know that you cannot save them all. Especially with newborn puppies, sometimes mother-nature has a different plan than we do - no matter how hard we try.

8. Enjoy being a foster parent.

Although fostering takes a great deal of time and commitment, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You are temporarily providing a needy animal with a loving home environment and helping that animal become more suitable for adoption into a responsible, lifelong home.

Health and Medical Issues

It is important that you keep a close eye on your foster dogs/puppies and monitor them for any signs of health problems. Things to watch out for include, but not limited to:

- Sneezing and or coughing
- Green mucus from the nose or eyes
- Squinting or crusting over of eyes
- Gagging /wheezing
- Tiring easily
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Lethargic or depressed
- Breathing heavily

Common Illnesses/Medical Conditions Seen in Foster Animals

Kennel cough- This is a highly contagious respiratory infection in dogs. It spreads easily from dog to dog. Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, watery nasal discharge, lethargy, loss of appetite, and retching.

Diarrhea- Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool to the shelter so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run.

Worms- If you suspect or see that your foster(s) has worms in their feces, contact the shelter to make arrangements for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti. All dogs are dewormed with Pyrantel upon entering the shelter. But Pyrantel does not treat tapeworms.

If you feel that your foster pet(s) has a medical issue, please contact the shelter to talk to one of the veterinary technicians. If it is during shelter hours, you can call (605)338-4441. If it is an after hours emergency, you can call our on call phone at (605)254-4058 and they will be able to help you. Please feel free to call with any questions or concerns you have.

Some Tips on Potty Training

- Establish a routine

Housetraining a puppy/dog requires time and commitment from you. The more consistent you are, the quicker the puppy/dog will learn acceptable behavior. Puppies/dogs do best on a regular schedule. If possible, put your foster on a regular feeding schedule. Feeding your puppy/dog at consistent times each day will make it more likely that it will need to relieve itself at consistent time periods as well. This makes housetraining much easier.

- Reward good behavior

Take your foster outside frequently at first, at least every two hours if possible. Your puppy/dog should be taken outside 15-20 minutes after it eats, after naps, and after play. Establish one phrase and use it EVERY time, such as "Got to go potty?" or "Go outside?" Consistency is your best asset. Go out with your puppy/dog, but don't give any attention except to repeat your bathroom phrase. When he/she urinates or defecates, praise your foster enthusiastically, or give a reward. The importance of rewarding good behavior rather than punishing unacceptable behavior cannot be over-emphasized.

- Supervise your puppy

A new puppy must be supervised constantly. Puppies who are allowed to wander off into rooms by themselves or who are left alone free in the house will most likely get into trouble. Encourage her to stay in the same room with you or another family member. When a puppy must be left alone for relatively long time periods, it should be confined in a small area or crate. Because young puppies cannot always control their bladder and bowels for long time periods, it is not fair to confine a puppy for an entire work day with no place to go potty. A puppy can be crated at night (preferably in the same room as a family member) if you are willing to get up and go outside with her when necessary.

- Never punish after the fact

Virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house. Expect this. It's part of owning a puppy. If – AND ONLY IF – you catch your puppy in the act of soiling, do something that startles him and IMMEDIATELY take her outside to finish. Follow up with praise if she goes outside. **DO NOT RUB THE PUPPY'S NOSE IN THE MESS OR HIT HIM!!!!** This will teach her to be afraid of you and afraid to go potty in your presence, and you do want her to go to the bathroom in the yard when you are there. If you find a soiled area, but do not catch your puppy soiling, do nothing but clean it up. Animals do not understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds. Punishment should punish the behavior, not the animal. This cannot happen unless the puppy is caught in the act.

What Supplies Will I Need?

The Sioux Falls Area Humane Society will provide you with everything you need. Depending on what size dog you foster, we will provide you with:

- Blankets and towels
- Food
- Dishes
- Collar/Leash
- Treats/Toys
- A crate
- Anything else you think you may want/need to make your foster experience successful

Any blankets or towels that become soiled can be brought back to the shelter in a large garbage bag for us to wash. We will then send you with clean ones. You can do this as often as needed. Our priority is to make this a rewarding experience for you and the animal! 😊