

Dog Foster Manual

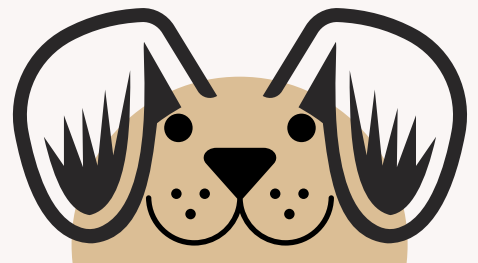
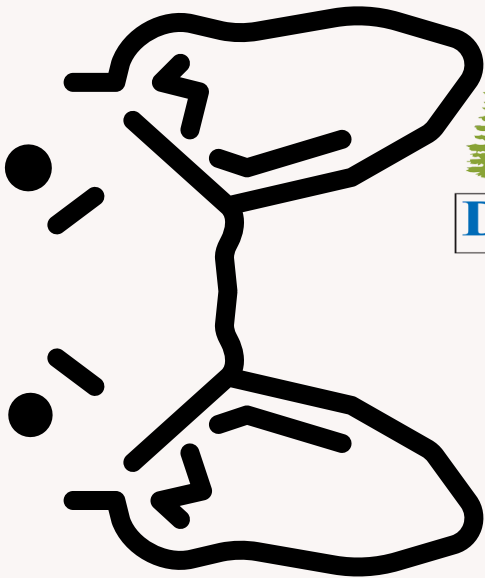


Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction

Frequently Asked Questions

Section 2: Preparing for your foster dog

Supplies

Dog proofing the home

Section 3: Bringing your foster dog home

Choosing a foster dog

Children and dogs

Section 4: Daily Care

Feeding

Daily routine

House training

Crate training

Grooming

Mental stimulation and exercise

Safety requirements

Section 5: Helping your foster dog get adopted

FAQ

Section 6: Medical and emergency protocols

Veterinary care

Common ailments in animals from shelters

Criteria for emergencies

Section 7: Behavior support

Section 1: Introduction

Thank you for your interest in fostering dogs for the Sheridan Dog and Cat Shelter. By opening up your home to foster dogs, you're not only helping to save lives, you're providing the individual attention and love these dogs desperately need.

Once you have completed your foster application, our Operations Manager will get in touch with you to sign you up for one of our scheduled orientation and training sessions. In the session, we'll go over this manual and answer any questions you have about the program.

Foster homes are asked to provide care for the dogs, as well as transportation to and from the Dog and Cat Shelter as needed for veterinary care and for the opportunity to meet prospective adopters. Care for foster dogs includes feeding according to size and needs, exercise according to energy levels, and lots of play time and positive socialization.

Although fostering is a lot of work, it is a very rewarding experience. By participating in this program, you are saving lives and helping many different types of dogs find the families they've been longing for.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Where do foster dogs come from?

The dogs who are in need of foster care come to us from a couple different situations:

- Strays: Dogs who are picked up by either our CSO (animal control officers) or people in the community and brought to the shelter and unclaimed by their owner.
- Surrenders: Dogs that are surrendered into our care by their owners for various reasons.
- Transfers: Dogs that are transferred to our shelter by other shelters or rescues.

What do foster families need to provide?

Foster families need to provide:

- A healthy and safe environment for their foster dogs
- Transportation to and from the shelter and all vet appointments as needed
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach dogs positive family and pet relationships
- Lots of exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great dogs

How much time do I need to spend with a foster dog?

As much time as you can. With that said, the amount of time will vary depending on the energy level and needs of the dog you are fostering. It is ideal to spend around two hours a day exercising and playing with your foster dog to ensure that he or she receives adequate socialization and stimulation.

Can I foster dogs even with a full-time job?

Yes. The foster application is designed as a survey to help the Operations Manager match you with the best animal for your needs and your current schedule. If you have a full-time job, the Operations Manager will match you with a dog who may be OK alone during the workday.

Can I foster a dog if I don't have a fenced yard?

Yes. Even if you do not have a fenced yard, we request that you supervise all outdoor activities with the foster dog. We also ask that you always keep him or her on a leash when you're on walks.

How long will the dog need to be in foster care?

Dogs will be in the foster home for one month or longer pending evaluation by the Dog Lead and Operations Manager.

What if I want to adopt my foster dog?

If you want to adopt a foster dog, you will need to complete an adoption application and follow the full adoption process. If you do decide to adopt your foster dog, please contact the Operations Manager right away, once the dog is available for adoption we cannot hold them for anyone.

Who will take care of my foster dog if I need to go out of town?

If you have travel plans while you are fostering you will need to contact the Operations Manager in advance to make sure we can make arrangements for the dog to be housed at the Dog and Cat Shelter until you return.

You cannot leave your foster dog with an unauthorized person or pet sitter. We have specific requirements for foster parents.

What if my foster dog bites me?

In the event that your foster dog bites you and breaks skin, causing you to bleed, you need to report the bite to the Operation Manager within 24 hours of when the bite occurred.

What if my foster dog is not working out?

You are not required to continue to foster a dog if you feel it's not working out. However, we may not have an immediate space for the dog at the Dog and Cat Shelter. We will work on moving your foster dog out as soon as possible, but ask for your understanding and patience. Please call the Operations Manager during business hours if this situation arises.

Section 2: Preparing for your foster dog

Your foster dog may be overwhelmed at the sudden change, so it is important that you prepare properly to help ease him/her into their new environment. Sometimes it can be better to confine the foster dog to a small room or area at first. This area should be large enough for an appropriately sized crate for the dog and allow access to food, water and toys.

We request that all foster dogs be housed indoors. A garage, backyard or outdoor run is not a suitable accommodation for a foster dog.

If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to give your foster dog a space of his/her own to get used to all the new sounds and smells. Don't leave your foster dog unattended in your home with your personal pets until you are sure that all of the animals can interact safely.

Supplies you'll need

The Dog and Cat Shelter will provide you with any supplies you may need. However, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide in supplying items for your foster dog.

- Two bowls; one for food and one for water
- A supply of dog food
- A collar and a leash
- A soft place to sleep; blankets, towels or dog beds
- A crate
- Dog treats
- Dog toys
- Grooming supplies

Dog-proofing your home

Foster dogs come from a shelter environment, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by dogs, so please store them in a place that the dog cannot access.

Here are some additional tips for dog-proofing your home:

- Keep toilet lids closed
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops
- Move house plants out of reach or secure them
- Make sure aquariums or small animal cages are securely out of reach

Section 3: Bringing home your foster dog

Taking care of a foster dog requires a commitment from you to make sure the dog is happy and healthy.

Choosing a foster dog

The Operations Manager and Dog Lead will work with you to select a dog who meets your needs. When you, the Operations Manager and the Dog Lead have decided on a dog, an appointment will be scheduled for you and any other dogs in the household to meet the foster dog. Together, you, the Operations Manager and the Dog Lead will decide if the dog is the right fit. Be honest: If you aren't comfortable with anything about the dog, please tell the Operations Manager before you take the dog home.

Children and dogs

We don't always know a foster dog's history or tolerance for different types of people and activities, so **please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster dog**. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and the dog. Key things to remind your children:

- Always leave the dog alone when eating, chewing and sleeping
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the dog
- Do not tease the dog
- Do not chase or run quickly around the dog

Do not allow young children to walk the dog, they may not be strong enough or experienced enough to handle encounters with other dogs or cats who cross their path.

Section 4: Daily Care

Feeding

All foster dogs should be fed a diet of dry dog food, unless otherwise specified by the Dog Lead and Operations Manager. Feed your foster dog twice daily; the amount will be based on the age and weight of your foster dog. Make sure the dog always has access to fresh, clean water.

You can give your foster dog treats of any kind (unless he/she has known allergies, of course); giving treats helps you and your foster dog to bond with each other. Most dogs like to chew on things, so try rawhide chews, Greenies, antlers, Nylabones or Dentabones. Keep in mind, though, that not all dogs like to share, so only give these treats when your foster dog is confined to his/her own area.

Daily Routine

When you first take your foster dog home, take care not to overwhelm them with too many new experiences all at once. Sometimes, too much stimulation can cause a dog to behave unexpectedly toward a person or animal, which is why it's a good idea to keep introductions and new places to a minimum during the first week after you bring your foster dog home. It is important to have a stable routine for feeding, play time and potty breaks. Dogs take comfort in having a routine they can count on.

Also, on a daily basis, be aware of your foster dog's appetite and energy level. If they are not eating well or seems listless, something may be wrong medically. You might want to record your observations to make it easier to notice any health issues.

House-training

It's unlikely that your foster dog will be perfectly house-trained when you take them home. At the very least, be prepared for an adjustment period until your foster dog gets used to your schedule.

Because a dog has a better chance of being adopted if they are house-trained, please help your foster dog to perfect this skill. Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (3-6 times daily, depending on age). Most dogs will give cues - such as standing near the door or sniffing the ground and walking in small circles - to indicate that they need to go out. Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise them indoors.

If your foster dog has an accident inside the house, don't discipline or punish them. It will only teach them to fear and mistrust you. Clean up all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner. Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two products containing natural enzymes that tackle tough stains and odors and remove them permanently.

Crate Training

Crate training, done in a positive way, can be an effective component of house-training. A crate can be a safe place for your foster dog to have "down time" and can also limit their access to the entire house until they know the rules.

Set your foster dog up for success. They should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging them to go in. Feed them their meal in the crate with the door open, so that they can walk in and out at will. Always take them to potty before and after crating, and keep the period of time they are crated short to begin with.

Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging.

Grooming

A clean and well-groomed dog has a better chance of getting adopted, so bathe your foster dog as needed and brush them regularly if they have longer hair or requires more frequent grooming. Contact the Operations Manager if you feel that they need to see a professional groomer. If you are comfortable with it, you can trim their nails.

Mental Stimulation and Exercise

Depending on your foster dog's age and energy level, they should get at least four 30-minute play sessions or walks per day. Remember to discourage the dog from playing with your hands, since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters.

You can also offer them a food-dispensing toy for mental stimulation. Kongs and similar brands work well. If you need more ideas on enrichment talk to the Operations Manager.

Safety Requirements

Foster dogs must live indoors. Please do not leave your foster dog outside unsupervised, even if you have a fenced yard. We ask that you supervise your foster dog when they are outside at all times to ensure that they do not escape or have any negative interactions with other people or animals. Your foster dog is only allowed to be off-leash in a backyard that is completely fenced in.

Foster dogs are not allowed to go to off-leash dog parks or other off-leash dog areas. We do not know how the dog will act in these situations, or how other dogs will react, and we need to ensure that all animals are safe at all times. In addition, we don't know if the other dogs they encounter are vaccinated appropriately or carry diseases, so it is best if your foster dog does not meet any unknown dogs.

When you're transporting foster dogs, please keep them inside the vehicle.

Section 5: Helping your foster dog get adopted

Frequently asked questions:

Will I need to take my foster dog to adoption events?

We request that if we have an adoption event while you are fostering that you attempt to attend with your foster dog, or bring them to the Dog and Cat Shelter for the day so staff can bring them to the event.

How can I help my foster dog find a great home?

As you get to know your foster dog, we ask that you stay in constant contact with the Operations Manager so that they can update the foster dog's biography online to reflect accurate information about the dog's preferences and quirks. We also welcome any quality photos you take of your foster dog; we can upload the photos to our Petfinder to accompany their biography. Please send the info about your foster dog and photos to dogcatshelter@gmail.com.

What if I know someone who's interested in adopting my foster dog?

If someone you know is interested in adopting your foster dog, please contact the Operations Manager and give them the details. Also, tell the prospective adopter to start the adoption process (filling out an adoption application in person or online) as soon as possible. Once the dog is up for adoption, we cannot hold them for anyone.

Section 6: Medical and emergency protocols

You will be made aware of any medical conditions before taking your foster dog home. The Operations Manager will keep track of vaccination dates and inform you of the times available to bring your foster dog in to receive them.

If you are fostering a dog who is on medications, please make sure that they get all prescribed doses. Do not end medication early for any reason. If the dog has not responded to prescribed medications after five days (or in the time instructed by the veterinarian), please contact the Operations Manager.

Veterinary Care:

The Dog and Cat Shelter has a veterinarian on staff 3 days a week, who provides all medical care for our animals. Because we are responsible for your foster dog's well-being, our veterinarian must approve any and all treatment for your foster dog.

If your foster dog needs to see the veterinarian, please notify the Operations Manager by email or phone. The Operations Manager will schedule the appointment.

For non-emergency situations, please understand that our veterinarian is only here 3 days a week and may not be available for same-day appointments. We ask that you schedule basic non-emergency appointments at least 24 hours in advance.

Foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster dog to a veterinarian without authorization from the Operations Manager.

Common ailments in dogs from shelters:

Shelter dogs may suffer from kennel cough, giardia or intestinal parasites. Symptoms of kennel cough include a dry hacking cough, often with phlegm, discharge from the nose and/or eyes, decrease in appetite, dehydration and slight lethargy. Symptoms of giardia or intestinal parasites include vomiting, diarrhea, and/or dehydration.

All dogs will be determined healthy and vaccinated before going into foster homes, but in some cases symptoms may not appear right away. If your foster dog is displaying one or more of these signs, please contact the Operations Manager.

Criteria for emergencies:

What constitutes a medical emergency in a dog? Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Labored breathing or not breathing
- Signs of extreme dehydration: dry gums, weakness, vomiting, tenting of the skin
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up
- Cold to the touch
- Fever over 103 degrees
- Broken bones
- Any trauma: hit by car, dropped, etc.
- Large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 48 hours

If your foster dog displays any of these symptoms or is in need of emergency care please contact a veterinary clinic immediately and contact the Operations Manager.

Section 7: Behavior support

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster dog for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster dog to develop good habits and skills.

When interacting with your foster dog, refrain from wrestling or engaging in play that encourages the dog to be mouthy and "play bite" on your body.

Some foster dogs will have behavioral issues, which we are aware of. Some of these behavior challenges are separation anxiety, destruction of property, fear aggression or aggression towards other animals. We will only place dogs with behavioral issues with a person who feels comfortable working with the dog on their particular issues. We will provide that person with all the necessary information so that proper care and training can be given to the foster dog. We have a trainer on staff that can provide useful information and help with training.

If you feel unable to manage any behavior that your foster dog is exhibiting, please contact the Operations Manager during business hours to discuss the issue. We will guide you and help in every way that we can. If the behavior is extreme enough to warrant use of a trainer, we have one on staff that can provide training.