

# Foster Care Program Creation and Implementation

## Realistic Program Preview

Action Item	Approximate Time Required	Templates and Resources	Impact
<b>Pre-Implementation Planning</b>			
Collect and analyze your organization's data on pet outcomes	45 minutes or more		This will enable your organization to determine goals for foster, populations you need to prioritize and next steps.
Create a list of goals for your program based on the data, a timeline for achieving them and a way of tracking the data.	45 minutes or more	See <a href="#">this spreadsheet</a> for ideas	This will help give your organization a strategy for your program. It will also help you to break up tasks into meaningful goals that can be achieved easily.
Create your organizational management structure, including job descriptions for your foster coordinator, other staff and/or volunteers assisting with the foster program	45 minutes or more	Check out <a href="#">this document</a> on options for managing foster care. Here are <a href="#">several job descriptions</a> for foster assistants and teams.	This will help you build a strong foster management structure and will enable the foster coordinator and your organization to be clear on the responsibilities for each of these jobs.
If needed, create a proposal for the foster program and get approval, if required.	90 minutes or more	You might consider proposing a small <a href="#">pilot program</a> at first to help with administrative buy-in.	It is considered a national best practice for animal services to have a foster program. Foster programs are crucial for lifesaving.
Create a budget for the program	30 minutes or more		This will enable you to estimate the costs of implementing the program and help to make sure you have the funding you need.

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<p>If needed, figure out where funding for medical care for pets in foster will come from. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Grants</li> <li>-Request increase medical budget, if needed</li> <li>-Consider process for transferring pets with medical issues to rescue</li> </ul>	<p>2 hrs. or more</p>	<p>See document below, Grant Sources for Medical Funding</p>	<p>This will assist your organization in finding the funding to provide medical care for foster pets.</p>
<p>Determine the process for fosters whose pets need medical care and for spay and neuter of pets in foster care</p>	<p>30 minutes or more</p>		<p>Having a policy for medical care will make it easy and efficient for your foster caregivers to get veterinary care for their foster pet and will clarify the process for spay and neuter of foster pets.</p>
<p>If needed, make a chart of local emergency veterinarians; research them; decide on 3-4 in different areas to contract with; contract with them if needed</p>	<p>2 hrs. or more</p>	<p>See our <a href="#">spreadsheet template</a> for making veterinary clinic comparisons. Read <a href="#">this article</a> about relationships between animal welfare groups and veterinarians.</p>	<p>Many shelter- and rescue-operated clinics do not have the capacity to provide medical care after hours or in the event of an emergency. Contracting with one or several emergency veterinarians will enable your organization to provide emergency medical care on an as-needed basis.</p>
<p>Create a system to track medical appointments and vaccinations</p>	<p>Edit from template: 10-30 min.</p>	<p>This can be done via spreadsheet, shelter software, Maddie's Pet Assistant, <a href="#">Volgistics</a>, etc. Scheduling apps like <a href="#">Acuity</a> and <a href="#">Fullslate</a> (<a href="#">see their tutorial</a>) may be helpful.</p>	<p>This will help the foster coordinator to schedule medical appointments and keep up with vaccinations more efficiently.</p>

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Create foster application or edit from template	Edit from template: 15-30 min.	<a href="#">See template</a>	This is the first step in onboarding foster caregivers.
Draft foster agreement or edit from template; get approval if required	Edit from template: 15-30 min.	See <a href="#">example from Pima Animal Care Center</a>	This will provide a legal framework for the responsibilities and requirements of foster caregiver and your organization. You may want to have this document reviewed by a lawyer.
Draft foster manual or edit from template; get approval if required	Edit from template: 1 hour or more	You can use <a href="#">Austin Animal Center's manual</a> as a template	This will provide foster caregivers with an understanding of program basics, what to expect, their roles and their responsibilities.
Create a <a href="#">low-barrier</a> foster onboarding process, including foster training	45 minutes or more	Here is one <a href="#">template for tracking foster information</a> and completed steps in foster onboarding. Using <a href="#">Google Forms</a> to <a href="#">put orientation/training online</a> is the most efficient way to do this ( <a href="#">see example</a> ). Other ideas include doing orientations on-the-spot or scheduling in-person group orientations.	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. Having an efficient onboarding process will help foster caregivers to understand the program's requirements and rules. Set the expectation from the beginning that you need fosters' help with marketing and include some training and resources on this topic.
Start volunteer & foster social media group	10-30 minutes	(See page 17 of <a href="#">Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care</a> for sample group guidelines)	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

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			stories and bios can often be copied, edited and posted to your organization's main page.
Create and implement process for potential fosters to see pets in need of foster.	15 minutes or more, as often as every day	Some shelter software can be automated to send these requests out; we recommend including pet photos with every request.	This can include having a webpage or <a href="#">Trello board</a> where pets in need of foster are listed, posting to a social media group or page, or sending current caregivers lists of pets who need fosters or contacting them individually.
Purchase or request supplies, if needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Martingale collars</li> <li>- Harnesses</li> <li>- Leashes</li> <li>- Crates</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>	20 minutes or more	Consider creating an <a href="#">Amazon</a> wish list.	Having foster supplies available to foster caregivers will 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	<a href="#">Google Voice</a>	This will enable the foster coordinator(s) to respond to any foster-related emergencies in a timely manner.
Recruit and train foster volunteers assisting with foster management	2 hours or more	Here are <a href="#">several job descriptions</a> for foster assistants and teams	Creating a specific job description will make the qualifications for responsibilities associated with the foster mentor/volunteer job clear. 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 <a href="#">this article describing the system</a> and use <a href="#">Humane Rescue Alliance's template</a>	This will allow you to know at a glance which foster caregivers are ready for which fosters and can help save time.

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		<a href="#">for a Foster on Deck spreadsheet</a>	
Create or update your comprehensive foster recruitment plan	20 minutes or more	See <a href="#">this document</a>	This will ensure that your organization is recruiting fosters year-round, via multiple channels.
Create a process for getting marketing material from fosters and marketing pets from their foster homes	1 hour or more	You can use this <a href="#">dog foster profile template</a> , create one in <a href="#">Google Forms</a> , or use <a href="#">this template</a> . Make sure they have access to resources such as <a href="#">The Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide</a>	This will help set the expectation that fosters help with marketing and assist your fosters in creating and post marketing material to get their fosters adopted from their homes. See <a href="#">this video</a> for more information. 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.
<h3>Ongoing Tasks</h3>			
Touch base with fosters who email and call with questions or concerns	30 minutes or more per day	<a href="#">Maddie's Pet Assistant</a> and foster mentors can be helpful with this.	This will go a long way toward making your foster caregivers feel supported.
Onboard new foster caregivers	2 hours per month or more, depending on your process	Here is one <a href="#">template for tracking foster information</a> and completed steps in foster onboarding. Using <a href="#">Google Forms</a> to <a href="#">put</a>	Using the shortest amount of time from foster application to onboarding will help ensure that you don't lose any due to the length of the wait.

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		<p><a href="#">orientation/training online</a> is the most efficient way to do this (see example, <a href="#">Best Friends Animal Society-LA's online training</a>). Other ideas include doing orientations on-the-spot or scheduling in-person group orientations. If in-person group orientations are chosen, make sure they are scheduled often and at times convenient for your foster caregivers.</p>	
Check pets in and out of foster homes	1 hour or more per week	This process includes getting paperwork signed, supplies gathered, signing pets out to foster caregivers and updating computer software to reflect a pet's entry into foster care. Consider training adoptions/customer service staff or foster volunteers to assist with all or part of this task.	This ensures that your organization always has an accurate record of where its pets are located. It includes collecting extra supplies and logging a pet back into your shelter software when the pet returns from foster.
Record behavioral and medical information from pets in foster care in the shelter's software	30 minutes or more	<a href="#">Maddie's Pet Assistant</a> can be helpful, as it can send	This ensures that your organization has accurate behavioral and medical records on every pet.

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		foster profiles out to foster caregivers automatically.	
Schedule medical vaccines and appointments	15 minutes or more, daily or weekly	<a href="#">Maddie's Pet Assistant</a> can be helpful with scheduling and reminders. For online scheduling, check out <a href="#">Acuity</a> and <a href="#">Fullslate</a> .	This ensures that all of the pets in your organization are vaccinated on time and as healthy as possible. 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.
Check pets back into the shelter from foster homes	30 minutes or more per week	Consider training adoptions/customer service staff or foster volunteers to assist with this task.	This ensures that you always have an accurate record of where its pets are located. It includes collecting extra supplies and logging a pet back into your shelter software when the pet returns from foster.
Check and monitor staff, volunteer & foster Facebook group	10 minutes or more per day		This will enable you to give support as soon as it is needed and find marketing material created by foster caregivers easily.
Track the data for your foster program	10 minutes a day or more	Get more information on data tracking in this document: <a href="https://www.alleycat.org/resources/saving-cats-and-kittens-with-a-foster-care-program/">https://www.alleycat.org/resources/saving-cats-and-kittens-with-a-foster-care-program/</a>	Tracking data will help you get a better understanding of information about your foster program and how successful it is (which pets are being fostered, for how long, by whom, etc.)
Optional/Miscellaneous			

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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.
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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 Marketing Plan Template

### 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	<a href="https://www.aspcapro.org/grant/2017/07/20/aspcapro-anti-cruelty-grants">https://www.aspcapro.org/grant/2017/07/20/aspcapro-anti-cruelty-grants</a>
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.	<a href="https://www.bissellpetfoundation.org/grant-guidelines">https://www.bissellpetfoundation.org/grant-guidelines</a>
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.	<a href="https://www.dorisdayanimalfoundation.org/grants-guidelines-and-faq">https://www.dorisdayanimalfoundation.org/grants-guidelines-and-faq</a>
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.	<a href="http://www.greymuzzle.org/grants/about-grey-muzzle-grants">http://www.greymuzzle.org/grants/about-grey-muzzle-grants</a>

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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.	<a href="https://www.healthypawspetinsurance.com/how-we-help">https://www.healthypawspetinsurance.com/how-we-help</a>
Ian Somerhalder Foundation	Award decisions are able to be made within one week.	<a href="https://www.isfoundation.com/ISFEmergencyMedicalGrant">https://www.isfoundation.com/ISFEmergencyMedicalGrant</a>
Pedigree Foundation	Has funded medical supplies and improvements to Isolation rooms in the past	<a href="https://www.pedigreefoundation.org/grant-program/">https://www.pedigreefoundation.org/grant-program/</a>
Petfinder Foundation Emergency Medical Grant	Grants of up to \$1,000.00 for one pet’s emergency medical funding	<a href="http://www.petfinderfoundation.com/for-shelters/apply-for-a-grant/">http://www.petfinderfoundation.com/for-shelters/apply-for-a-grant/</a>
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.	<a href="http://www.americanhumane.org/initiative/second-chance-grants/">http://www.americanhumane.org/initiative/second-chance-grants/</a>
<b>In-Kind Donations</b>		
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.	<a href="https://www.petmeds.org/request-petmeds-donations/">https://www.petmeds.org/request-petmeds-donations/</a>

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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 <a href="mailto:rescue@chewy.com">rescue@chewy.com</a> to join the rescue program.	<a href="https://www.chewy.com/app/content/about-us">https://www.chewy.com/app/content/about-us</a>
<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.	<a href="https://trupanion.com/shelter/rescue-grant">https://trupanion.com/shelter/rescue-grant</a>
Amazon	They do not solicit unrequested grant proposals, but if you would like to introduce your organization you can email <a href="mailto:donationrequests@amazon.com">donationrequests@amazon.com</a>	<a href="https://www.amazon.com/p/feature/evmc8u96fp595js">https://www.amazon.com/p/feature/evmc8u96fp595js</a>