

# 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
<b>Planning Tasks</b>			
Collect and analyze your organization's foster data and data on pet outcomes	45 minutes or more	See <a href="#">this overview of foster data</a>	This will enable your organization to determine goals and next steps.
Create a list of goals for your program's expansion based on the data; create a timeline for achieving them	45 minutes or more	You can use <a href="#">this spreadsheet</a> template	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 your foster organizational 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.
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.
If needed, increase funding for medical care for pets in foster -Grants	1 hour or more	See document below, Grant Sources for Medical Funding	This will give your organization the funding to provide better medical care for foster pets.

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<p>-Possibly increase medical budget -Possibly update process for transferring pets with medical needs to rescue</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 this <a href="#">application</a>, <a href="#">manual</a> and <a href="#">agreement</a> 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 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>Learn more about pilot programs</p>	<p>This will enable your organization to begin serving a new population of pets in foster care on a trial basis.</p>
<p>Update process for potential fosters to see pets in need of foster.</p>	<p>15 minutes or more, as often as every day</p>	<p>Some shelter software can be automated to send email requests out; we</p>	<p>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</p>

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		recommend including pet photos with every request.	caregivers lists of pets who need fosters or contacting them individually.
Update process for scheduling and tracking medical vaccines and appointments	15 minutes or more, daily or weekly	Scheduling apps like <a href="#">Acuity</a> and <a href="#">Fullslate</a> ( <a href="#">see their tutorial</a> ) may be helpful.	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.
Start volunteer & foster Facebook or 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 can 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.
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 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	<a href="#">Google Voice</a> is an option for this.	This will enable your foster coordinator(s) to respond to any foster-related emergencies in a timely manner.
Review and update foster onboarding process, including	45 minutes or more	Here is one <a href="#">template for tracking foster information</a>	Using the shortest amount of time from foster application to onboarding will help ensure that you

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foster training; remove as many barriers to fostering as you can		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. Here is one <a href="#">template for tracking foster information</a> and completed steps in foster onboarding.	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.
Create or update, and implement 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.
Recruit and train volunteers assisting with foster management	1 hour 30 minutes or more	Here are <a href="#">several job descriptions</a> for foster assistants and teams	Foster mentors and 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 for a Foster on Deck spreadsheet</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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<p>Create or update the process for getting marketing material from fosters and marketing pets from their foster homes</p>	<p>1 hour or more</p>	<p>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></p>	<p>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.</p>
<h3>Ongoing Tasks</h3>			
<p>Post calls for foster photos and stories on the internal group page</p>	<p>10 minutes every 1-2 weeks, or as needed</p>	<p>Make sure your foster caregivers have a copy of <a href="#">The Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide</a></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Check and monitor staff, volunteer &amp; foster Facebook group</p>	<p>5 minutes or more per day</p>	<p>See sample group rules on page 24 of <a href="#">Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care</a></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Update and monitor the data on your program</p>	<p>20 minutes or more per week</p>	<p>You can use <a href="#">this template</a> from Austin Pets Alive!</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Create and host 'foster' adoption events</p>	<p>1 hour or more per event</p>		<p>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</p>

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			shelter. Offsite events can also help to expand a shelter's adoption capacity.
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.
<b>Field Trip Foster Program</b>			
Create SOPs for field trip foster program	15 minutes or more	See manual, <a href="#">Short Term Foster Care</a> and our <a href="#">pilot program document template</a> Download a toolkit from <a href="#">Mutual Rescue</a>	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 <a href="#">job descriptions</a>	Foster volunteers can do much of the work on the program, saving the foster coordinator's time.
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.
<b>Weekend Foster Program</b>			

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Create SOPs for overnight/weekend foster program	15 minutes or more	See manual, <a href="#">Short Term Foster Care</a> , and <a href="#">our pilot program template</a>	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 <a href="#">foster program job descriptions</a>	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.
<h3>Miscellaneous</h3>			
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for an emergency foster program.	30 minutes or more	See Austin Animal Center's <a href="#">emergency foster care logistics</a> 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, natural disaster or other type of emergency.
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for a 'found foster' program.	30 minutes or more	See this document for more information	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.

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Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for a hospice (hospice foster) program.	15 minutes or more		This will enable your organization to give more humane, higher-quality care to the terminally ill pets it serves.
Create Standard Operating Procedures and other needed documents for a foster-to-adopt program.	30 minutes or more	See <a href="#">Pima Animal Care Center's Foster-to-Adopt manual here</a>	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: <a href="http://www.laanimalservices.com/volunteer/new-hope/">http://www.laanimalservices.com/volunteer/new-hope/</a>	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	<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>
<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.	<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>