

Foster Coach Program SOP - Dogs

Purpose

Use the experience and expertise of our volunteer and foster base to provide support to our foster program as a whole. Roles include foster coaches, foster coach admin, and lead foster coach. All positions report to Foster Coordinator.

Positions

- **Foster Coach Admin Volunteers** maintain the spreadsheet of active fosters, add notes to coach and Foster Coordinator spreadsheet from other sources (ie. emails), and maintain the Drive of foster and foster coach resources.
- **Lead Foster Coach** supports and guides foster coaches, assists foster coordinator in fielding foster applications and works closely with foster coordinator to determine best foster placement options.
- **Behavior Coaches** serve as extra support to fosters who have dogs with behavior issues. They will provide advice and support to other coaches and foster parents on behavioral issues only. Each foster with a Level 2 or 3 dog will be assigned a foster coach and a behavior coach.
- **Medical Coaches** serve as extra support to fosters who have dogs with medical issues. They will provide advice and support to other coaches and foster parents on medical issues only. Each foster with a moderate to severe medical dog will be assigned a foster coach and a medical coach.
- **Foster Coaches** serve as mentors to foster parents and act as an intermediary between foster parents and coordinators to limit inundation of non-critical or routine items to Foster Coordinator.

Foster Coach Admin

Tasks

- Foster Coach Admin works closely with the Foster Coordinator to maintain spreadsheet of active foster homes.
- Maintains Drive of foster parent and foster coach resources and forms.
- Assists Foster Coordinator and Lead Foster Coach in assigning foster coaches to new foster parents.
- Keeps foster coaches updated on changes to processes within the program.
- Complete Home Inspections 2 weeks into first foster period and every 6 months thereafter.
- Add Fosters to Volgistics

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Requirements

- Foster Coach Admin Volunteers must possess excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Knowledge of excel and google suite.
- Ability to aggregate information from various sources (ie. foster coaches, foster coordinator, foster parents via email, messages, social media posts.)

Lead Foster Coach

Tasks

- Lead Foster Coaches work closely with the Foster Coordinator to help assign foster pets to foster parents to make best placement decisions for foster pets.
- Works with Foster Coordinator and Admin to assign foster coaches to new foster parents.
- Provides support to foster coaches and can assist with triaging a problem to Foster Coordinator.
- Helps to keep In Foster Trello updated

Requirements

- Lead Foster Coaches must possess leadership skills and use good judgement in making foster placements.
- Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Represent LifeLine and LifeLine's policies in a professional manner.
- Advise fosters and foster coaches in accordance with the guidelines in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.
- Must be familiar with and able to explain the foster process from inquiry to adoption.

Behavior Coaches

Tasks

- Works closely with the Foster Coordinator and Behavior Team to come up with a behavior modification plan for the dog.
- Communicate the behavior plan to fosters and advise them on proper training techniques.
- Communicate any new behavior concerns to the Foster Coordinator/Behavior staff.

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- Help to tweak behavior modification plan as needed

Requirements

- Must be CPDT-KA certified or extensively educated in positive reinforcement behavior modification.
- Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Represent LifeLine and LifeLine's policies in a professional manner.
- Advise fosters and foster coaches in accordance with the guidelines in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.

Medical Coaches

Tasks

- Works closely with the Foster Coordinator and Vet Team to understand the medical plan for the dog.
- Communicate the medical plan to fosters and advise them on proper medical care techniques.
- Communicate any new medical concerns to the Foster Coordinator.

Requirements

- Must be a veterinary professional or have extensive veterinary knowledge.
- Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Represent LifeLine and LifeLine's policies in a professional manner.
- Advise fosters and foster coaches in accordance with the guidelines in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.

Foster Coaches

Tasks

- Foster Coaches will represent LifeLine and LifeLine's policies in a professional manner and will advise foster parents in accordance with the guidelines in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.
- Must be familiar with and able to explain the foster process from inquiry to adoption.
- Foster Coaches will reach out to assigned foster parents at designated check in contact schedule (see below).
- Provide access to marketing assistance.
- Provide coaching on meet and greet and adoption process.

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- Ensure monthly prevention reminders are sent and will communicate to the Foster Coordinator when monthly preventatives have been provided to foster pet.
- Communicate with the assigned behavior or medical coach as appropriate.
- Anytime the foster coach feels uncomfortable addressing a particular situation with a foster parent, the foster coach should reach out to the Foster Coordinator.

Requirements

- Foster Coaches must possess excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Foster Coaches must be familiar with and abide by the policies set forth in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.
- Able to use good judgement in escalating concerns to the behavior or medical coach or Foster Coordinator.

Escalation Procedures for Foster Coaches

Sometimes a foster parent will raise a concern to the foster coach that requires the immediate notification of the Foster Coordinator. Examples would include:

- Foster dog bites someone
- Foster is no longer with foster parent (missing or gave to someone else)
- Foster dog is expressing concerning behavior for which the foster coach does not feel equipped to provide mentorship
- In need of scheduling medical procedures
 - Our clinic is open for walk-ins from 11-4 M-F and 11-3 S-S for routine check-ups.
 - Surgical procedures should be scheduled via email with the Foster Coordinator.

Use of Foster Coach Google Email and Drive

Login:

User Name: FCASFosterCoach

Password Michelle1!

Foster Coaches are permitted to use their personal email accounts to contact their foster parents, however there is an account set up to field general questions and requests for advice from current foster parents. ALWAYS sign the emails you send from the foaster coach account with your name.

The account has two types of labels. The first is to label by type of issue to give coaches who give good advice for certain behavior problems an easy way to identify those emails. The second type of label is each foster coach's name. You can add your name to emails that come in from one of your foster parents, or emails that you are responding to. After a correspondence is complete, always add the label “_complete.”

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Foster Coach Check-In Schedule and Talking Points

Check-In Schedule	Time Frame
Introduction and first check in	~48 hours after take home
Check in #2: Behavior	1 week
Check in #3: Marketing	2 weeks
Routine check ins	Monthly until adopted
Post foster check in	After foster is adopted

First Check-In Talking Points

- Introduce yourself: “Hi, I’m ___ and I’m assigned to be your foster coach. I’m here to answer questions, provide support, and help you have a good experience and get your foster adopted.”
- Let them know someone will be scheduling a home visit as required by the Department of Agriculture.
- Ask open ended question: “How are things going so far?”
- Follow up questions to the topics they bring up should be clarifying circumstances of any issues or concerns, and remain non judgemental. (I.e. in response to “my foster keeps fighting with my dog” ask for specifics of the situations when they are fighting (over food, toys, attention), if anyone has gotten hurt, and say that it’s important to remember that coming home is a big event for the foster and for your dog, and then reinforce decompression and slow, controlled intros with resident pets.
- If they don’t come up from the open ended questions, make sure to review the following topics
 - Do you understand any medications or medical concerns the foster pet was sent home with?
 - Do you understand giving monthly prevention and know when it is due?
 - Are you planning to adopt your foster?
 - Are you running into any concerns with behavior?
- Wrap up with how to reach you (foster coach email) and tell them you’ll be checking in regularly, and the next check in will be all about how to market and get your foster adopted so start taking pictures.

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Second Check-In Talking Points

- Start with the same open ended “how are things going” to address any issues or concerns they may have
- Ask about any behavior changes they have noticed. Escalate any concerning behaviors to coordinator.
- If having problems, have they reached out to a coordinator?

Third Check-In Talking Points

- Talk about marketing “now that so and so has been home with you about a week, you may be seeing more personality traits start to come out”:
 - Info for bio
 - Update Trello card
 - Do they need some coaching on taking quality pictures?
 - Making a flyer from the template
 - Sharing to content@lifelineanimal.org
 - Posting on social media, including #fosterfriday in Atlanta Pit Bull Parents group
- Review the process for adoptions from foster so they feel empowered talking to potential adopters about their fosters

Routine Check-In Talking Points

- How are things going?
- Medical concerns?
- Behavioral concerns?
- Monthly prevention given and on what date?
- Are you planning to adopt your foster?
- Training resources and goals for a more adoptable pet
- Updates to marketing materials?

Post Foster Check-In Talking Points

- Thank them for saving a life
- Normalize sadness or grief over giving up foster to adoptive home
- Waiting period between fosters (take a couple of weeks to make sure it sticks)
- Cleaning between foster pets protocols
- Returning items loaned for foster pet
- Getting a new foster!

***If you do not hear back from a foster after emailing them twice and calling them once, please alert the foster coordinator.**

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Behavior Coach Check-In Schedule and Talking Points (Being Developed)

Check-In Schedule	Time Frame
Introduction and first check in	48 hours via email
Check in #2:	1 week, via email. If we do not hear back after 24 hours, call.
Check in #3:	Based on behavior progress.
Routine check ins	Weekly initially, then may give more time if everything is going well.
Post foster check in	After foster is adopted

Check-In Talking Points

- Introduce yourself: “Hi, I’m ___ and I’m assigned to be your behavior coach. I’m here to answer questions, provide support, and help you have a good experience and get your foster adopted.”

Routine Check-In Talking Points

- How are things going?

Post Foster Check-In Talking Points

- Thank them for saving a life
- Normalize sadness or grief over giving up foster to adoptive home
- Waiting period between fosters (take a couple of weeks to make sure it sticks)
- Have they gotten an update from the adopter?
- Getting a new foster!

***If you do not hear back from a foster after emailing them twice and calling them once, please alert the foster coordinator.**

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Medical Coach Check-In Schedule and Talking Points

Check-In Schedule	Time Frame
Introduction and first check in	~24 hours after take home
Check in #2:	based on stability of health
Check in #3:	based on stability of health
Routine check ins	weekly until medical is resolved
Post foster check in	After foster is adopted

Check-In Talking Points

- Introduce yourself: “Hi, I’m ___ and I’m assigned to be your Medical Coach. I’m here to answer questions and provide support.”

Routine Check-In Talking Points

- How are things going?
- How are you on medical supplies?
- When is next f/u appt?
- Any questions or concerns with current treatment plan?

Post Foster Check-In Talking Points

- Thank them for providing care and comfort to a sick or injured animal.
- Normalize sadness or grief over giving up foster to adoptive home
- Waiting period between fosters (take a couple of weeks to make sure it sticks)
- Special cleaning protocols between fosters.
- Getting a new foster!

***If you do not hear back from a foster after emailing them twice and calling them once, please alert the foster coordinator.**

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Home Inspection Check In Protocol

All foster homes are required to undergo a home inspection twice a year per the Department of Agriculture Animal Protection Act rule 40-13-13-02 (6). In order to keep complete this requirement, foster coaches must complete a virtual home inspection within 14 days of a new foster being assigned. Existing foster homes will be subject to a home inspection every six months.

Please familiarize yourself with the home inspection requirements and paperwork:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vgZVEC58nbd4R6q3UZWSJidnCrFYrzrj/view?usp=sharing>

1. Receive an email from the Foster department containing the home inspection paperwork
2. Contact the foster to arrange a time to do a video chat home inspection on the platform of your choice.
3. After video home inspection is complete, fill out the applicable sections of the dept of ag home inspection form and submit. This will send the forms to the foster parent for them to fill out their portion. Once they submit, the paperwork will automatically come back to the Foster Dept for filing.
4. If you have any concerns regarding the inspection, please contact your coordinator.
5. For existing foster parents, they are required to fill out an updated foster agreement form along with the department of agriculture home inspection form. Once they submit, the completed will be sent to the foster office.
6. Please go to the Main Foster Spreadsheet Copy and enter the date of the home inspection in the Home Inspection column.