



Animal Welfare League  
of Frederick County

## FOSTER FAQs

### **How long am I expected to foster?**

We prefer that you commit to fostering your animal until an adoptive home can be found. Unfortunately, we cannot predict how long this will take. It depends on the animal's breed, age, temperament, and the time of year, as well as how proactive you are about marketing your foster animal and attending adoption events. If you can only foster for a specific period of time, please be certain to indicate this up front to the foster care coordinator.

### **What if my foster pet has to go to the vet?**

As outlined in the Foster Care Agreement, vet care for foster animals must be provided by an approved AWL vet. All vetting is paid for by AWL, but only if you take the animal to one of our vet partners. If you take your foster animal to a vet other than an AWL vet partner but have not received approval to do this, you will be responsible for paying the bill. With very limited funds, AWL must utilize the partnerships we have whenever possible. This is very important, and non-negotiable. The procedure: First, contact the foster care coordinator to determine whether vetting is necessary. There are many ailments for which AWL keeps treatment supplies on hand in our office (worms, kennel cough, coccidia, etc.). If a visit is deemed necessary, and it is a non-emergency issue, the foster coordinator will authorize the visit and you may contact an AWL vet partner to make an appointment. You are then responsible for taking the animal to the vet. If your schedule does not permit, you will need to find another AWL volunteer to take the animal.



### **What if my foster pet has a vetting emergency?**

We always want to make sure all of our animals get the very best medical care – especially in the case of an emergency. If your animal has an obvious and clear emergency (hit by car, serious fight with an animal, ingestion of dangerous object) then contact the foster coordinator and inform her that you will be taking the animal to your nearest emergency vet. AWL does not usually receive discounts from emergency vets, so you will likely just go to your nearest emergency vet.

Again, as much as possible, any emergency vet visit needs to be approved by the foster coordinator.

### **What if I don't like a prospective adopter?**

AWL feels that foster volunteers should, as much as possible, make the decision regarding the home in which their foster animal gets permanently placed. We recognize that you have probably developed a close bond with your foster animal and want to



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make sure he/she gets only the best home. The foster coordinator and experienced foster parents are always available to help you determine adopter suitability for your foster animal.

### **What if my foster animal isn't working out?**



AWL will make every effort to ensure a good and safe foster match. However, there are times when this will fail. In this case, contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible. If the issues are minor, AWL will work with you to address them. Many times, problems can be solved by trying a few new things and/or by giving the animal time to adjust to your home. For example, we can switch crates, switch foods, or offer simple behavioral solutions to try. We may also have a trainer work with you. Other times, an animal may simply not be a good fit for your home or lifestyle. AWL will always take the foster animal back if an issue cannot be resolved. However, we ask that you give us at least 24 hours to make a plan. If that is not possible, we will make emergency arrangements. AWL never wants to put the safety of the foster person, their own animals, or the foster animal in jeopardy.

### **Can I adopt my foster animal?**

Yes, so long as we all feel it makes sense. But keep in mind that adopting your foster animal may mean that you can no longer foster. Think through the decision carefully so that you are not deciding to keep the animal solely because it is too difficult to let him/her go. The first few foster experiences can be difficult, as you'll get attached and may have trouble letting go. But remember, your role as a foster person is invaluable! As an adopter you may only be able to save one animal's life, but as a foster parent you have the potential to help dozens of animals.

### **What if I have to leave town?**

Please notify us ahead of time so that we can make arrangements for your foster animal to go elsewhere while you are gone. Some foster people (who have other pets) have pet sitters who will also watch their foster animals. We are open to ideas, but generally cannot afford to cover the costs of pet sitters or boarding facilities. If you wish to pay for these options once they are approved by AWL, that is great (and can be considered a donation)! If you cannot, AWL will allow you to make arrangements with another foster parent. Be sure to give us enough warning so that we can help you make these arrangements. Keep in mind that holidays can be difficult to find space and are expensive. The more advance time we have, the better!

### **What if I have an emergency and have to leave town suddenly?**

Contact the foster coordinator right away. We will work with you to find a suitable option or have you bring the animal to our adoption center.



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### **Do I have to use the crate for my foster dog?**

We highly recommend it! We cannot guarantee that a dog is housebroken, won't chew your items, and won't hurt him/herself when unattended. The safest way to protect your home and the dog is to use the crate. AWL cannot be responsible for damage done by a dog left unattended and uncrated. We also cannot guarantee that we will pay the vet bill if you choose to leave the dog uncrated and the dog or your own pet is injured. We have lots of experience in this area! In time, you may find your foster dog doesn't need the crate. But make that decision only after you "test run" the dog a few times and really get to know the dog and his/her behavior.

### **What if my pet gets sick from my foster pet?**

We strongly suggest that you quarantine your foster pets for a minimum of 10 days. Many of our foster animals come from shelters or situations where they may have been exposed to communicable diseases. Although we test cats for feline leukemia and FIV before taking them into rescue, other ailments may not be detectable immediately or the animal may not exhibit signs until it's already in foster care. This is very typical for cats who are harboring upper respiratory infections and the stress of moving homes causes them to break with it after they get settled.



We encourage you to research vaccination protocols for your own pets and discuss it with us. Pets that are current on their vaccines usually will have no problems with foster pets or the problems that do arise are small and very easily addressed.

### **Can I rename my foster animal?**

In most cases, yes! Animals that were turned into a shelter, however, may have had their names for years. In that case, we recommend against giving them a new name or suggest you find a name similar to their existing one. If you have any question about this, contact your primary AWL representative.

### **Am I expected to buy supplies for my foster?**

AWL strongly recommends feeding a natural holistic diet, as research and experience have shown that cats and dogs fed high-quality, natural foods have less health problems. This is especially important for foster animals whose immune systems may be weakened from their previous situation. We will gladly provide you with appropriate foods. Purchases that you make for foster care are considered donations to AWL and are tax-deductible. Keep your receipts. We will be happy to issue you a tax donation letter. If you want to be reimbursed for a purchase, you must get prior approval from your AWL rep.

*Some material excerpted courtesy of Homeward Trails Animal Rescue*