

What if my foster pet has behavioral/training issues?

Bear in mind that a rescue followed by an environment change can be very stressful and traumatic for many animals. In your home, they will have a chance to feel safe and secure, to be loved and nurtured, exercised and socialized. But they may be lacking in some “manners” — they may jump, pull on the leash, bark or chew. We encourage you to discuss the problem with a RHS Foster Coordinator so you can work with the dog. A well trained dog is much more likely to make a successful transition to a permanent home than a dog with no training. The gift of training helps to give the ultimate gift — a permanent home, to your foster friend.

How do I socialize my foster pet?

Spending a little extra time each day playing with your foster pet will go a long way in helping make your foster pet more appealing to a potential adopter. The more you socialize the animal, the more comfortable it will be when it encounters other people, children, other animals, strange sounds and unfamiliar areas. Of course, not all animals like children or other animals, and some animals are terrified of specific things like thunder or fireworks. We can help you with any questions you may have about socialization.

What if my foster pet needs medical attention?

If the situation is an emergency and you are in the Billings area, contact Shiloh Vet Clinic (656-1910) immediately and identify yourself as a foster parent for Rimrock Humane Society. Follow the instructions they provide. If it is a non-emergency, contact a RHS Foster Coordinator for instruction. If you are unable to reach a RHS Foster Coordinator after a reasonable time, it is after hours and the animal’s situation is worsening, please call Moore Lane Veterinary Clinic (252-4159) for instruction.

RHS Contact Information

Foster Coordinator & Adoption Counselor

Sandy Church 323-3254 (home) or 320-1689 (cell)

Veterinarian(s)

Shiloh Vet (Billings) 656-1901 (office)

AK Vet (Roundup) 323-2287 (office) or 323-3761 (home)

Moore Lane Vet 252-4159 (after hours emergency)

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM ORIENTATION

So you think you want to become a foster parent to a homeless dog or cat?

*Just thinking about it proves what a kind, compassionate person you are!
This handout has been designed to help you make this very important decision.*



The Rimrock Humane Society likes to think outside the box and offers a revolutionary “virtual” shelter foster program.

This Foster Care Program fulfills the need for owner relinquished animals or homeless animals until a permanent, loving home may be found.

Our foster parents are a critical piece of the rescue process and we are deeply indebted to them for their willingness to welcome new members into their lives.

If you agree to provide a foster home, we will provide guidance, supplies and health management. You provide the most important part; the tender loving care.

Dogs and cats that are generally indentified as needing foster care are those that are:

- too young to be adopted
- given up by their owner because the owner can no longer care for their companion animal.
- diagnosed with a medical need that can be better treated in a foster home until they are well enough to be adopted.
- temporarily in need of shelter due to a vehicle or other accident hospitalizing its owner.

A stray animal will be accepted into the foster care program after a 14 day quarantine and veterinary assessment.



What is a Foster Parent?



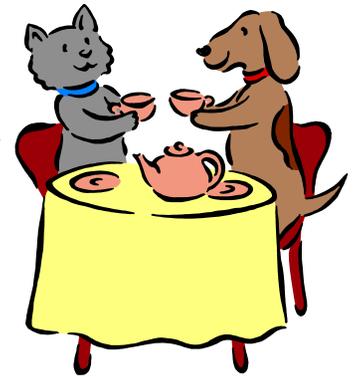
A foster parent provides a temporary home for an animal for anywhere from one week to several months. Being a foster parent is like being a grandparent—all the enjoyment of caring for an animal without the lifetime responsibility. However, a foster parent must be the type of person who can take home a needy animal, care for it, and then be able to let it go to another family.

How do I introduce my foster animal into my home?

The transition period when animals are introduced to new surroundings (whether these surroundings include other animals or not) has a lasting impact on the animal. Its important to plan carefully.

Initially, limit the foster animal to one room (or a crate/kennel within a separate room) instead of allowing access to the entire house (which is often overwhelming). Then, put everything the animal needs (food and water dishes, bed, toys, litter box etc.) in this area. If there are other animals in your home, keep them separate. Make sure the foster animal has enough quiet time to explore and feel safe.

Once the foster animal seems comfortable in the original spaces and trusting of you, expand its access a little at a time by making other rooms available. If you already have pets, there are many methods of introduction. We will work together to pick the one most appropriate to your circumstances and to make the transition a smooth one.



Introduce the foster animal to permanent human and animal residents under close supervision (not while you're using the phone, watching TV, or reading etc.) for short periods of time. You might want to use a leash at first to ensure safety.

Be aware that your natural tendency will be to lavish attention on the newcomer. If you have other animals, try not to make a fuss while your permanent residents are watching. Remember that they are likely to feel jealous of the newcomer, so plan on spending some extra special quality time with them. Tell them how proud you are of them for helping you create a comfortable place for the new animal to stay.

As with any change, the first few days can be a bit bumpy as everyone (people and pets) adjust to the new, temporary family member. As your foster dog or cat learns your routines, everything will settle down. If you have any questions or problems, remember . . . we are here to support you.

Can I adopt an animal that I foster?

It happens. You may fall in love with the wonderful dog or cat for which you have been a lifeline. Not to worry; you are in good company. As the foster family, you will usually have first option to permanently adopt your new family member to be part of your lives, forever. All we ask is that you consider your valuable role as a Foster Parent and decide if the adoption will hamper your work as a foster family.

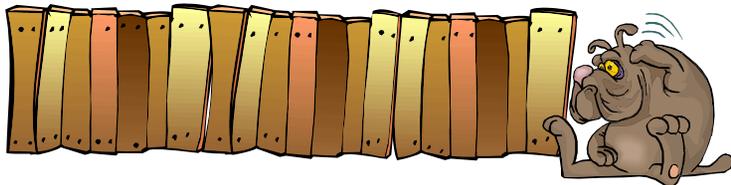


Can I adopt a fostered animal to someone else?

Who knows this animal better than you! Your input will be invaluable and we strongly encourage your participation in the adoption process. This includes providing us with the names of families you feel would make a great permanent home and participating in the interviewing of all other potential families. Final adoption decisions will be made by the RHS Adoption Counselor.

Is a fenced area required to foster dogs?

We prefer foster dogs be in a home that has a completely fenced area for the dog to romp and play daily. If you don't have a fenced area, the foster dog must NOT be off leash at any time unless in an enclosed, safe area. A large kennel run, an overhead trolley or ground level cable may also work. The RHS Foster Coordinator who visits your home before you can begin fostering can discuss the options with you.



Who can be a Foster Parent?

Anyone who is 18 years of age or older and has experience with dogs or cats can be a foster parent. Preference is given to those persons who own their own home, but renters will be considered with landlord approval. Also, all pets that are owned by the foster parent must be in good health, up to date on vaccinations, spayed or neutered and not aggressive. Foster homes must be in compliance with all laws pertaining to the number of animals allowed at any given time. The foster parent is responsible for the care and control of the animal at all times while the animal is being fostered.



A RHS Foster Coordinator will visit the foster home before placement of the first animal. This will enable the Foster Coordinator to make a good choice in placing the animal, taking into consideration how many pets you have, how many children are in the household and their ages, home and yard size, and other factors.

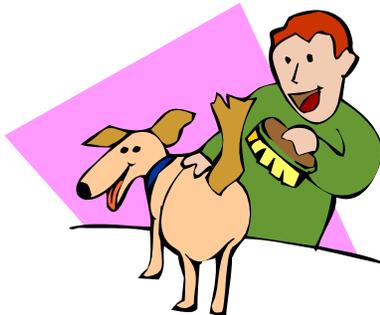
What is the role of a Foster Family?

We carefully match up foster dogs/puppies and cats/kittens with foster parents based on what works for your household. Some people choose to foster a puppy or two or even a litter of kittens; others prefer a small adult dog or a large dog and some prefer adult cats. We work with you to find the best possible match.



Foster family responsibilities include:

- ♥ Providing the basics for a happy and healthy animal. This includes shelter, appropriate and adequate food, plenty of clean water, and litter box (for cats). All animals will be indoor pets and dog foster homes require a suitable fenced yard.
- ♥ Providing care and affection for your foster animal, to include socialization, some training and healthy practices like grooming.
- ♥ Transporting the foster animal to vet appointments as scheduled and providing updates on their progress.
- ♥ Letting us know if there are any problems so that we can work with the animal before he/she goes to a permanent home.
- ♥ Participating in the adoption process by allowing our Adoption Counselors to bring potential adopters to your home to interact with the animal. We also encourage your participation in the adoption interviewing process and may have you even do the adoption home visit, when appropriate.



What will Rimrock Humane Society provide?

- √ We will provide you a foster animal best meeting your criteria. Before entering your home, all animals will be examined by a veterinarian and provided all necessary vaccinations, diagnostic testing and micro-chipped. We will make every effort to ensure the animal is healthy before entering a foster home. All medical needs will be addressed by RHS.
- √ For cats, all food and litter will be provided. For dogs, food will be provided by RHS.
- √ All dogs will be provided with a collar and identification tag.
- √ All dogs will undergo a temperament evaluation to determine personality. This evaluation will enable us to make the best possible selection of a permanent family based on the dog's disposition. Any dog showing aggressive tendencies or serious behavioral problems will not be placed in a foster home. While we will make every effort to identify and address undesirable behavior, please understand that RHS cannot guarantee how the dog will react entering a foster home.
- √ Upon adoption, each dog or cat will be spayed or neutered if they have not already been altered. Each will also be microchipped with the new owner's contact information.

How do I become a Foster Parent?

Each foster parent must complete a Foster Care Application, read through the orientation materials and complete a Foster Care Agreement. Specific training may be required. Also, a RHS Foster Coordinator will visit your home and can answer any questions you may have.

Are there any expenses for a Foster Parent?

Generally, the only expenses incurred by a foster parent would be the cost of gas to transport the fostered animal to a veterinarian and/or to a local adoption event. All other expenses such as food and veterinarian care are provided by RHS. Some foster families like to purchase items for their new foster animal but this is purely upon the discretion of the foster parent and not subject to reimbursement by RHS.
