

HOPE For PETS

Foster Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to Hope for Pets. HfP would not exist without compassionate animal lovers like you! Rescue animals can make wonderful, life-long companions if only given the chance. Fostering a rescued animal is a great way to save lives and do your part in combating pet overpopulation. In return, you'll be rewarded with the unconditional love only a pet can give. It is a fulfilling experience to know that you played a hand in ensuring a happy, healthy life for a pet in need.

This handbook is designed to give guidance so that your foster experience with HfP is a pleasant one. Thank you for your interest in fostering!

Our History

In August 2012, Hope for Pets was founded by numerous volunteers and members of the community. The organization was created in response to the community's urgent need for a solution to the problems with animal cruelty and overpopulation of stray companion animals within East Texas.

Our Mission: RESCUE, REUNITE, RE-HOME

Hope for Pets is a volunteer-run animal rescue dedicated to the reduction of homeless and mistreated companion pets in East Texas by finding loving forever homes for those currently in need, spaying and neutering existing adoptable animals to prevent future litters, returning lost animals to their owners, and reaching out to the community and educating the public. Hope for Pets will never use euthanasia as a means of population control.

How to Foster an Animal

Thank you for deciding to become a foster for Hope for Pets! Bringing an animal into your home (and your life) is a big commitment, one that comes with many benefits and joys. Fostering an animal is a wonderful way to give him or her a safe and happy place to live while awaiting its forever home. Plus, foster pets are often more well-rounded and adoptable!

Steps to Fostering

1. Read this handbook, and complete and submit the attached foster application. A HfP representative will contact you to review the application and address any questions.
2. Schedule a meet and greet to determine if there is an animal that you would like to foster.
3. Review and sign the Foster Contract.
4. Schedule a home check to ensure you meet the minimum requirements to foster a pet as outlined in the handbook. Pictures of the home may be taken for our records.
5. Prepare your home and have your foster pet come for his/her first contact visit.
6. Love and care for your new foster pet!

Adoption Qualifications

Any person at least 18 years of age may apply to foster an animal. Applicants between the ages of 18 and 21 must either have parental approval (if living with or supported by parents) or provide proof of emancipation. A photo ID must be submitted at the time of application to verify age and physical address. All members of the applicant's household must be agreeable to fostering a pet. HfP reserves the right to reject any application for any reason.

The Foster Process

Selecting an Animal to Foster

Once you've been approved to foster an animal for HfP, we will move on to the process of finding an animal that will best fit your home. We will take into consideration your preference (species, breed, size, age, etc.), as well as the needs of the animals in our program. We will allow you to interact with the animal under HfP supervision before completing the selection process to ensure both you and the animal are comfortable with the arrangement.

Our Expectations

Accepting any pet into your home is a big responsibility. When you foster an animal, we expect you to treat the animal with love and respect. Some of these animals may have been abandoned, abused, or neglected, and they may have issues due to these circumstances. We ask you to be understanding and patient with these animals.

We will do our best to assess the animals before sending them to their foster homes and will disclose any issues to the best of our ability. Please realize that the complete history of these animals may not be known and unexpected issues may arise. By agreeing to foster these animals, you agree to help them deal with these issues to the best of your ability.

Housing Requirements

All foster homes must provide a safe place for foster animals to thrive. Foster animals need to have enough space to play in a safe & healthy environment. Animals must be provided with food and fresh water daily. Additionally, animals need to be given human contact and positive attention daily.

Homes with children and/or other pets can be wonderful opportunities to socialize our adoptable pets, but sometimes problems can arise in these situations. For houses with children, it's important to select an animal that is age appropriate for your children. You must also be diligent about providing guidance, instructions and rules to your children about how to treat and care for an animal.

For houses with other pets, keep in mind that there are always risks when exposing your pets to other animals. The health risk is minimal if your animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young.

Documentation

During their stay with HfP, all animals have record books where we document facts and events in the animal's life to the best of our ability. We may periodically ask you to help us maintain these records by providing information about the animal's health and behavior while in your home.

Maintaining Good Health

If you or someone in your household is immune-compromised, consult your doctor before adopting a pet. Proper hygiene, preventative measures and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease. HfP is not responsible for illness contracted by a foster's resident pets, children, or adults.

HfP pays for all medical costs associated with its animals, even those in foster homes, unless the medical issue is a direct result of problems or accidents within the foster home as a result of the primary foster caregiver's actions or negligence. This includes, but is not limited to: improper feeding, failure to administer medications properly, injury by children residing in the home, attacks by other animals owned by the foster family, escape of the pet from the home resulting in injury, etc.

Foster parents are asked to provide animals with transportation to and from vet visits. HfP's animals are often spayed or neutered while living in foster care. These animals will need special attention during the recovery period. Additionally, special health needs may require foster parents to provide extra medical attention to some animals. All the aforementioned issues will be discussed in detail during the selection process and assistance with learning how to administer medications and other procedures will be given by trained HHP personnel as needed.

We do our best to ensure that you are receiving a happy, healthy foster pet. Unfortunately, we cannot assess every animal for every disease. Foster parents must notify HfP as soon as they suspect any illness or medical problems with their foster pet. We will be available to assist you with the special medical needs and medical care of these animals.

Costs of Fostering

As previously stated, HfP pays for all medical costs unless they arise from the foster parent's actions or negligence. Foster parents are, however, responsible for providing animals with, at a minimum, nutritious food, water, housing, litterbox and litter (for cats). If you are not sure if a certain brand of food meets our standards, please ask. In some instances, HfP may provide foster homes

with food or other supplies. Any remaining materials must be returned at the end of a foster care arrangement.

In Case of Emergency

On occasion, unexpected medical issues may arise. If a foster animal becomes sick or is injured, foster parents must first attempt to contact HfP. You will be given contact information at the beginning of any foster arrangement. If you cannot reach us in the case of an extreme emergency, you may take your foster animal to Kimbrough Animal Hospital during normal business hours, or to East Texas Animal Hospital after hours or on weekends. HfP may approve reimbursement of reasonable and customary expenses, solely at HfP's discretion.

Travelling with your Foster Animal

Under normal circumstances, foster animals are not to be transported beyond a 50-mile radius of the foster home. However, HfP recognizes that situations may occur in which you would want to take the foster pet with you on vacation or shopping in other areas. This will be approved on a case by case basis with each foster family. Issues of concern would be health of the foster animal, length of travel and stay, and travel accommodations. Prior written authorization must be obtained by HfP before taking the fostered pet outside of the area. If you know that this type of travel may occur, you should discuss this with HfP personnel during the contract signing.

If foster parents wish to travel without their foster animal, or if other circumstances require temporary caretakers for the animal, the foster parents must contact HfP personnel to make arrangements for HfP approved caretakers.

Helping Them Find Forever Homes

For animals that have been cleared for adoption, foster parents are expected to help promote the animals to help them find a forever home. Foster parents are asked to utilize social media outlets and other avenues to help find loving forever homes. Additionally, foster parents are required to bring foster animals to adoption events at least once per month. To provide animals with the best chance of adoption, foster parents must ensure that animals are clean and presentable when attending any events. Authorized events are posted on HfP's website and Facebook page. Exceptions will be considered by HfP on a case by case basis. If you would like to attend a non-HfP sponsored adoption event with your foster animal, you must obtain preapproval from HfP.

Adoption of Foster Animals

At no time may foster parents surrender custody of foster animals to any person or entity wishing to adopt or take possession of a HfP pet under their contracted care unless it is a designated HfP representative. Additionally, all adoptions must be coordinated by HfP. If a foster parent finds a suitable home for the animal, the foster parent must notify HfP and the potential adopter must complete the proper paperwork and be approved.

We have found that sometimes foster parents fall in love with their foster pets and decide to adopt them. We love this!!! As long as foster parents meet our requirements for adoption, foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster animal. The foster parents will still be required to complete the adoption paperwork before being approved to take permanent possession of the animal.

Length of Foster Contract

The lengths of foster contracts vary from case to case. Generally, foster parents keep their foster animals until permanent homes are found for them. Frequent relocation can cause the animal unnecessary stress. The length of an animal's stay with HfP depends on several factors, such as adoptability, behavior, age, and health. We ask each foster family to commit to foster each animal until it is adopted.

Cancelling a Foster Contract

We understand that sometimes circumstances change and foster parents can no longer keep the animal in their homes. In these cases, foster animals are returned to HfP or transferred to a new foster home. Foster parents may cancel their contract and return the animal to HfP at any time for any reason. Advance notice is strongly preferred but not required. Our primary concern is the health, safety, and happiness of our animals.