

Foster

It takes a special person to open their heart and home temporarily to an animal in need. Our foster parents are true life savers. Apply today!



Q: What is Foster Care?

Animal foster care volunteers provide temporary care for bottle baby kittens, puppies, dogs and cats. The Animal Foster Care Program serves as a lifeline for those animals that come in under eight-weeks-old, very sick, injured, or needing some extra socialization or training. Our Foster Families provide quiet, stress-free, and loving environments, allowing every pet that is fostered through our program a better chance at a happier and healthier life with a forever family.

Some animals may only need a home for several days if they need to gain weight before surgery, while others may need several weeks of care in the case of a broken bone. By offering your time, energy and home to an animal in need, you prepare the animal for adoption into a permanent home as well as prevent overcrowding at our shelter. The [Humane Society of Charles County](https://www.humanesocietycc.org/) is always looking for foster parents to help save more animals' lives.

Some animals need more socialization and behavioral help than others and we can help and support you with proper training based on the animals need.

Q: Do I get to choose what types of pets I foster?

Yes. In your initial interview our Animal Foster Caregiver Director will ask what types of pets you are interested in fostering. During this time, the director will also go over in detail all the types of fostering situations. Together you will discuss the best fit for you and your family. If you begin your fostering journey with dogs, you may always switch to cats (and vice versa) in the future. Switching is as easy as a discussion with the director when that time comes.

Q: What if the foster in my home is not fitting into my lifestyle and/or not getting along with my pets?

We do our best to make a good match from the beginning by providing foster parents with all of the information we know about a pet before pick up. We ask that when you bring a new animal home from the shelter, that you **provide a room or an area away from the other pets in your home to provide the shelter animal with the time it needs to get use to new sights, sounds and smells.** Do not lavish too much praise and affection right from the beginning, remember that they need time to adjust. We call this time the “transition period” and sometimes it goes smoothly, but other times it might test your patience. We ask that you give it 3 to 4 days and if it just isn’t working, we do understand that sometimes it is just not a good fit. We also ask that if you do hang in there during this “transition period” that there is a **“two-week shutdown period”** where you will not have the foster and your pet together under any circumstance. If after that time it is too difficult to keep them separate and/or they are not getting along please contact the director and we will assist you in returning the pet back to the shelter.

Q: What if I need to unexpectedly leave town while I have a foster in my home?

We understand that things come up! If you unexpectedly need to leave town you will be expected to inform the director and return your foster animal to the shelter.

Q: How often does a foster animal need to be brought in for check-ups?

Our shelter makes every attempt to ensure that animals leaving for foster homes are provided the required vaccines which are:

Dogs: Rabies vaccine, Bordetella and the DHPP vaccine

Cats: Rabies vaccine, feline distemper, 2 doses 3 weeks apart for adult cats.

Puppies & Kittens: Very young puppies and kittens will need to be brought in to the shelter for booster vaccines and for weight checks as well as deworming. Spay/neuter surgeries will be scheduled only when they are old enough and weigh enough.

Q: What should I look for health wise when I get home?

Once home, allow your dog and/or cat to just take some days to relax and de-stress. They were just surrendered to a shelter, spent some time at a very noisy chaotic and loud place, and now they are in a totally new environment. Try not to stress over them, just allow them some quiet time. Meet their basic needs, which are, fresh water, food twice a day (except for puppies and kittens), and take them out to make sure they get a potty break. .

Dogs: Kennel cough, the common name given to infectious canine tracheobronchitis, is a highly contagious respiratory disease among dogs. As the name suggests, it is typified by inflammation of the *trachea* and bronchi. A persistent cough is the most common symptom, retching, watery nasal discharge, in mild cases; dogs are often active and eating normally. If you notice your dog coughing and it is not getting any better, contact the foster director and we will have your foster animal seen to determine the treatment. If your personal animals have been vaccinated against Bordetella, it is uncommon for them to become infected, but this is why we strongly suggest for the first two (2) weeks, to keep your animals separate.

Cats: Give them days to settle in, watch for a healthy appetite, and if you suspect any health issues, contact the Foster Director immediately, or post on our “Animal Caregiver Facebook Page.”

Kittens & Puppies: More caution is to be taken with the very young with the weekend immune systems. Contact immediately if you suspect one of your puppies or kittens is having a health issue. Do not delay.

Q: Now that we are home and fostering, how do I stay in touch?

The Humane Society of Charles County has a closed Facebook Group Page solely for our animal foster caregivers. This page is the venue for all questions, any concerns you might have, any behavior issues you might be encountering you can post to that page. Please keep in mind that there are other fosters who have been in your shoes and can help you and provide support. This Facebook Group Page is also a great place to post and upload pictures and provide information about your foster animal. These pictures and the information about their temperament will be used for the online animal gallery on the Humane Society of Charles County website. It is so important to provide bright clear fun pictures of your foster animals and post them to that page.

The link is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HSCCAAnimalFosterCaregiver/>

Q: What if I'm unavailable to foster an animal when you post?

We want to make sure you feel like you'll be able to give the time needed, so we don't pressure you into taking an animal if you are unavailable. If you can't foster this time around, there will always be another animal that will need a foster home.

Q: Will a foster animal have accidents or cause damage?

Foster animals, like any other companion animal will need to be shown where the appropriate place is to relieve itself. NEVER assume that a shelter animal is potty trained, because animals need to learn in each new environment where the appropriate place is to do its' business. Preparing your home and the area the animals will stay in can prevent most accidents, but not all of them. Confining the area to a crate, or a room if

you cannot watch them will help keep the foster from having accidents. It is up to you to show your animal where the appropriate place is, and to keep an eye on them and watch for accidents.

Q: Do I need to keep foster animals separate from my pets?

As mentioned above there is a “two-week shutdown period” during which you will need to keep the foster animal separate from your pets. The shutdown period is meant to give the new animal time to adjust to you and your family and new environment, and to prevent the spread of illnesses. It may seem complicated but trust us, it’s best for you, your pets and your foster!

Q: Will the Humane Society of Charles County treat my personal pet if he is injured or becomes sick because of a foster animal?

No. If your pet is injured or becomes sick you will need to take them to your veterinarian. We try and prevent this from happening with the “two-week shutdown” and by informing you of all of the potential risks and how to minimize them. (If you have dogs at home we will do a dog-meet-dog at the shelter in advance of taking foster dogs home. Our behavior team is always available to speak with fosters and will create specific plans for animals depending on the case.)

Q: I love the idea of fostering, but I’m worried about how I’ll feel when it’s time for the animal to be brought back to the shelter for adoption.

It can be difficult to let go once you have become emotionally attached to a foster animal. Be prepared for tears and some heartache when you bring your foster animals back to the shelter. But remember, foster care volunteers play a crucial part in helping unwanted animals get to permanent, loving homes they deserve. Foster families are their voice, and you can answer questions of potential new adopters and figure out if your foster is a good fit for the new family. We ask that you be honest about your foster animals temperament, energy level, etc., and help the new potential adopter decide if it’s a good fit.

Q: What if a friend or family member wants to adopt my foster animal?

Thank you for helping find homes for your foster animals! We encourage you to share your foster animal picture everywhere! Chat with friends and family about fostering and how it makes you feel, not only might you find your fosters next permanent family, but you might advocate for another family to join you in fostering!

Please keep in mind however, that the animals will not be available until their medical work, including spay or neuter surgery, is completed. Please refer interested adopters to contact the shelter to fill out an [adoption application](#) if they are interested in adopting your foster animal.

Q: What if I want to adopt the animal I'm fostering?

This happens, and the foster parents fall in love with the animals, and it is perfectly wonderful! If you wish to adopt a foster animal, please call the director to start the adoption conversation as soon as possible. Do not wait until there is a potential adopter wanting to meet your foster animal. This leads to hard feelings and you not wanting to foster for us again. It is important that you let us know quickly! Having available foster homes is crucial for saving lives, so we ask foster parents to consider how adopting a foster animal may affect their ability to continue fostering other animals in the future.

NEXT STEPS:

If you are interested in fostering for the Humane Society of Charles County, you can begin the application process by completing our [foster care application online](#). The questions asked in the application are to ensure that your foster experience is positive for both you and the animals. When completed, please email your application to fosters@humanesocietycc.org, or you can drop it off at the shelter location at 71 Industrial Park Drive, Waldorf, MD.