



ADOPT-A-PET

PO Box 408, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056

(847) 550-9690

[www.adoptapet-il.org](http://www.adoptapet-il.org)

email: [info@adoptapet-il.org](mailto:info@adoptapet-il.org)

*Fostering a pet isn't a lifetime commitment-  
It's a commitment to save a life.....*

## **FOSTER HOME INFORMATION – FAQ'S**

### ***What is Adopt-A-Pet?***

ADOPT-A-PET is a local Chicagoland community not-for-profit humane organization whose purpose is to save the lives of lost, abandoned or otherwise homeless dogs, cats, puppies and kittens and find them permanent loving homes. Adopt-A-Pet is a licensed animal shelter, but does not own a shelter facility. Aside from a small satellite adoption center at Wilmette Pet Center, all other animals are kept in volunteer foster homes, including doggie daycares, until they are adopted into their new family.

### ***Where do the animals come from?***

Adopt-A-Pet receives animals from numerous sources, including animal control officers, municipal pounds or other high-kill shelters, abandonments at vet clinics/groomers/boarding facilities, owner give-ups, independent rescuers, or are simply found wandering the streets or forest preserves. Some have just lost their owner through death or serious illness, some have been intentionally abandoned or thrown away. Some have led pampered lives up till now, and some have known nothing but neglect.

### ***How does fostering benefit an animal?***

Animals who have lost their home and find themselves in a strange environment are often confused and stressed. It is very hard for these animals, already abandoned once (sometimes more) to adjust to kennel life which offers only minimal care and much confinement. The true personality of an animal can be much better assessed when placed in a home environment where the animal is more comfortable and receives the love, personal attention, proper exercise and guidance that it needs. This allows us to learn more about the animal, its personality and habits, so that we can then make a better match for a permanent adoption.

### ***How can I help?***

Adopt-A-Pet is limited in the number of animals it can save by the space it has in which to temporarily house them. You can help save the lives of more animals by becoming a foster home for one or more of Adopt-A-Pet's animals.

### ***Is fostering for me?***

The reason most of our foster homes give for fostering is the most basic: They want to help. They want to make a difference in an innocent animal's life. In addition to the simple desire to help animals, lifestyle, inability to make a long-term commitment and financial considerations are the main reasons people choose to foster rather than adopt. When you foster, the commitment you make is not for life. Your commitment ends when you are satisfied that your fostered animal is moving on to a permanent, loving home. If you are already a multi-animal household and have flirted with the idea of adding another, fostering may be just what you are looking for. You get all the fun and joy of another animal in your household, but on a temporary basis without all the expenses.



### ***What should I expect? Is it really all fun and joy?***

Yes, it can be fun, but you must have reasonable expectations. Fostering is not just about housing animals and playing with them and giving them love. There is work involved. You must have tolerance. You must have patience. Shelter animals may come to you confused or frightened. Dogs especially are not "turnkey" from the start, and we rely on our foster homes to begin whatever corrective or therapeutic measures are needed to improve the pet and its chances for adoption. This may include socialization, building confidence, teaching trust, calming fears, potty training, obedience training, addressing specific behavioral issues and the like. If you don't have the knowledge to provide the guidance needed, we have trainers that will help you, but you must be willing to learn.

### ***What are the requirements for fostering an animal?***

- Foster pets' basic needs must be met on a daily basis: food & water, grooming, exercise, clean litter boxes, TLC.
- Some pets may have special needs such as medications, bottle-feeding, socializing or training.
- Foster pets may occasionally need to be taken to a veterinarian, groomer or trainer.
- You will be required to provide information and periodic updates on your foster animals to the Foster Administrator.
- You will need to respond in a timely manner to adoption screeners' phone calls and emails when we have an inquiry or application on your foster pet.
- You will need to make time to schedule visits with prospective adopters to meet the pet.
- You will need to occasionally bring your foster pet to weekend adoption events.
- You will be required to attend an initial foster training session, plus various update/refreshers seminars/trainings once or twice a year.
- To minimize confusion for the pet, all household members must be on board and willing to enforce consistent rules and use consistent vocabulary.
- Dog foster parents must attend a Safe Dog Handling class which are scheduled periodically throughout the year.
- You will be required to contact adopters to follow up on your adopted foster pets 3 times post-adoption, on a set schedule, and document the results.

### ***What are my duties related to finding a home for the animal?***

While we encourage our foster homes to be proactive in posting their foster pets on social networking sites or putting up posters at work, the ultimate burden is not on you to find that special someone. Adopt-A-Pet has systems in place to attract adopters, including website promotion, community adoption events, and referrals from a large network of vet clinics, groomers, pet sitters, trainers and other pet-related businesses. Before an applicant is referred to you, they are first pre-screened by one of our adoption screeners to determine if they are qualified to adopt and that there is a reasonable chance that your foster pet is a match for their family. Ultimately the foster home must meet the family and approve the adoption.

### ***What does it cost me to foster an animal?***

When you foster for Adopt-A-Pet, we pay for all of the animals' veterinary expenses. We will also outfit you with all necessary supplies. Though some foster homes provide their own pet food and litter and consider it their donation to the animals, we provide these items for those who have the heart to foster but not the financial means. The only items that we ask the foster home to pay for are: 1) a personalized, reusable, "generic" ID tag if you are fostering a dog; and 2) your initial foster license fee of \$25. Adopt-A-Pet will pay for all future annual renewals.



***Can I choose the particular animal that I want to foster?***

No foster home is forced to foster any animal and we will work within your parameters regarding size, age, breed and personality, keeping in mind that we often may not have a lot of historical information on some animals. If your preference is to foster only friendly or low maintenance animals, we will try to accommodate you. Conversely, many foster homes enjoy the challenge and receive great personal satisfaction of teaching an animal that may never have known human kindness to trust. Watching the animal change from fearful and hiding to playful and lap-loving is the ultimate foster home reward.

***Can I foster more than one animal at a time?***

This is a personal decision that only you can make depending on the dynamics of your household. Many of our foster homes foster multiple animals, such as a litter of kittens, a mom with puppies, or a pair of adult cats or dogs. Some choose to only foster one animal at a time.

***Once I've committed, do I have to continually foster with no break?***

No. Though we hope that you foster in succession, fostering is still voluntary and you are allowed to take breaks when you need to.

***What if I travel frequently? What if I am a teacher and can only foster during school breaks? What if we are snowbirds and spend the cold weather months at our Florida condo? What if we spend the summer at our Michigan beach house?***

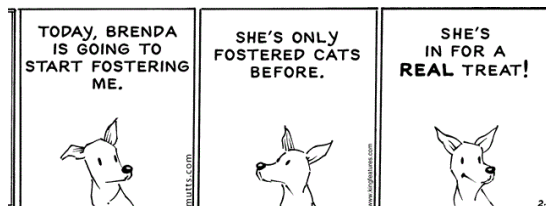
If there are only certain blocks of time that you can foster, we will do our best to work with your schedule. As long as you commit to continuing to foster during the times you are here, you can still be an asset to our group by fostering an animal that we anticipate will get adopted quickly, or by filling in as vacation relief for other foster homes, or by fostering an animal that needs to recuperate from an illness or surgery before being placed at a doggie daycare, or by bottle feeding orphaned kittens or puppies.

***Will I be given a sick animal to bring into my home?***

If your concern about fostering is the well-being of your own pets, your concern is anticipated. All Adopt-A-Pet animals have been vet checked and treated for fleas, ticks, worms and other parasites, skin disorders, infections, viruses or other medical problems discovered. Cats are Feline Leukemia and FIV tested. Dogs are heartworm tested. Distemper combo (DAPP, FVRCP) and rabies vaccinations are given to all animals (age-appropriate), and Bordetella vaccination is given to dogs. Animals are spayed or neutered if age permits. We do our utmost to ensure the animal is healthy before it arrives in your care so that your animals are not put in harm's way. We cannot, however, eliminate all risk. It is impossible to guarantee the health of any animal since we don't know what an animal may be incubating or when a stressed animal may relapse into a condition already treated. We recommend that your own pets be up to date on appropriate vaccinations. If feasible, we recommend that your foster pet be kept separate from your own pets for the first several days or weeks.

***Will I be given a vicious animal to bring into my home?***

We do our best to screen an animal's temperament before accepting into our program. We will never knowingly put a vicious animal in a foster home. We do not believe in recycling this type of problem animal. However, sometimes we don't have complete or reliable information on an animal, or behaviors and personality traits come out as time goes on, as an animal gets more settled in his new environment. Should an animal show vicious tendencies while in a foster home, it will be removed from the foster home.



***What if I'm given a foster animal that doesn't get along with my own pets?***

We will work with you in finding solutions to see if the issues can be rectified. For dogs, we will have a trainer consult with you. If we cannot resolve the situation, we will move the animal out of your home. A foster home is never "stuck" with an animal that is not compatible with their household.

***How long does it take before a foster animal will get adopted?***

This is strictly pot luck. Though there are certain predictors as to which animals will get adopted quickly and which will take more time, there is no way to really know when the right person will come along who's looking for the particular animal you're fostering. Some animals are with us for one day, one week or one month, and some are with us for multiple months. Though we prefer not to shuffle an animal around too many times, alternate arrangements can be made if you can no longer foster a particular animal or are going on vacation.

***Once I have cared for the animal and bonded with it, how can I possibly then give it away?***

Some folks don't want to foster because they feel they'll fall in love with the animal and it will be hard to give up. While this may be true, what's more important is the good you'll be doing for the animal, which is the ultimate focus of fostering, and the payoff of seeing it get adopted by someone who will love it and provide a permanent home lessens the difficulty we have in saying good-bye. You will have done a good deed ... and keeping an eye on the bigger picture, you can then move on to the next one who needs your help.

***What if I decide I want to keep my foster animal?***

Though fostering can sometimes lead to a permanent adoption if the foster parent decides he/she simply cannot part with the animal, this is **not** something we encourage. Because enlisting new foster homes involves a substantial amount of administrative and paper work, and because fostering has a learning curve which requires we invest a significant amount of our time and resources in the application and training process, we are really only looking for people with intentions of making an ongoing commitment for repeat fostering. If you are really interested in adopting, we suggest you do that first – then if you're still able to foster, you can begin your training at that time.

***How do I get started and what if I have more questions?***

- 1) Attend a New Volunteer Orientation where you will receive more information about Adopt-A-Pet and our fostering program.
- 2) Complete a Foster Home Application. Fax or email to us. The application can also be completed before attending the Orientation.
- 3) Once we receive your application, our New Foster Home Liaison will contact you for an interview and answer your preliminary questions.
- 4) Meet with your assigned Foster Mentor and go over the items in our Foster Handbook. Sign our Foster Agreement and remit payment for your foster license.
- 5) Get your home set up with the necessary supplies.
- 6) Pick up your first foster animal.

