



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
ANIMAL CARE SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

Policy Title	Foster Program
Policy Number	37-12-003
Initial Effective Date	11/6/2012
Revision Number(Date)	V.03(12/16/2016)
Policy Owner	Live Release Manager

Purpose

To describe the foster application process, foster conduct, the care of foster animals, and the department and foster responsibilities.

Primary Audience¹

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| <input type="checkbox"/> All ACS Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter Operations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Division | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clinic Operations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Live Release | |

I. Policy Details

1. The objective of the ACS Foster Program is to provide temporary care for the following types of animals:
 - a. Those with temporary medical issues such as malnourishment or physical wounds pending Vet approval.
 - b. Puppies or kittens that are too young to be adopted.
 - c. Adoptable animals that have a temporary condition affecting their physical appearance (e.g. an animal that needs to be shaved, etc.).
 - d. Adoptable animals requiring greater socialization and/or training.
 - e. Adoptable animals suffering from kennel induced anxiety and stress.
 - f. Adoptable animals that may be euthanized due to a shortage of shelter space.

2. The following policy guidelines shall apply in **all** Foster situations.
 - a. ACS retains all rights and ownership of any animal in the Foster Program as well as the final say in disposition decisions (adoption, rescue, euthanasia, foster, or return to owner).
 - b. Pets must meet the minimum holding period requirement as designated in *Policy 37-04-004: Holding Period* prior to being placed in Foster care.
 - c. While in foster care, ACS is not liable for any injury or damage caused by a foster animal (to include spread of disease to owned animals).
 - d. ACS is responsible for providing essential materials for foster including food, litter, and prescribed medical care.
 - e. Permanent placement via adoption, rescue, or return to owner shall take precedence over animals placed in foster care.
 - f. Foster providing care for foster animals must complete an application and be approved by ACS before taking a pet home.
 - g. Foster is matched with animals based on past experience and information provided on the ACS Foster Application.
 - h. Any Foster Application can be denied at the discretion of Rescue/Foster staff and supervisor. The applicant may appeal the application decision in writing to the Live Release Manager.
 - i. Foster are subject to periodic home inspection, with prior notification from ACS.
 - j. At any time and without prior notice, ACS may require a Foster to relinquish possession of any animal in foster care.
 - k. ACS is free at any time, with or without notice or cause, to end the foster relationship.

¹ While every employee is responsible for adhering to all policies, the primary audience section of this policy simply identifies those divisions whose operations will heavily rely on the content of this policy.

- l. Before taking a foster pet, any personal animals owned by the Foster must be current on all vaccinations, including DHPP and rabies vaccinations. Cats must also receive a FVRCP vaccination.
- m. All pets owned or at the home of the foster must be sterilized.
- n. Acceptance as a Foster requires the following criteria:
 - i. Be 18 years or older
 - ii. Be able to provide government issued identification (i.e., valid driver's license). Proof of residency within the allowed area must be supplied if current ID does not have the correct address.
 - iii. Complete an ACS Foster application and provide all needed medical and vaccination history on personal pets. The ACS staff is not able to verify owned pets medical information.
 - iv. Applications will be reviewed within three (3) business days by the Foster Coordinator.
 - v. Agree to and sign the ACS Foster Contract.
 - vi. Once approved, discuss and agree to general guidelines, policies, and procedures with the Foster Coordinator.

3. Foster Criteria and Procedure

- a. Criteria for selection of foster animals shall include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Medical Condition: Pet is not able to be placed at current time due to a medical condition that ACS is able to provide outpatient care for. ACS will not place a pet into foster care with medical needs that are not able to be provided by the department.
 - ii. Behavior: Pet is not able or has not been able to be placed before the release date due to behavioral issues. Each pet will be evaluated by the Rescue-foster staff for availability. ACS will not place a pet into foster care whose behavior has been deemed unsafe for human and/or animal interaction.
 - iii. Age: Puppies and kittens under the age of 8 weeks may be fostered, as they are too young for adoption.
- b. The procedure for foster care placement shall occur in the following manner:
 - i. ACS may contact fosters directly with pets needing placement or fosters may contact ACS with pets they wish to foster.
 - ii. The Foster shall be advised by the Foster Coordinator or other designated staff on the specific needs of the animal.
 - iii. Each time that an animal is placed into a foster home, the animal will be outcome into foster care in the Chameleon database.
 - iv. The foster will pick up the animal at ACS at a prearranged time.
 - v. As soon as the animal is available for adoption a picture and biographical description of the animal shall be provided to the Foster Coordinator.
 - vi. An animal may need to be brought back to the shelter periodically for a physical/medical checkup by the ACS veterinary staff.
 - vii. Upon final disposition of the animal (adoption, rescue, return to owner, or humanely euthanized), the policies and procedures of that outcome will be followed.

4. Responsibility of Foster

- a. Providing a safe and secure environment:
 - i. Ensure a humane indoor environment for animal with the ability to quarantine pet from personal pets for 2 weeks to prevent spread of disease and ensure compatibility.
 - ii. If applicable, administer medication under the direction of the clinic.
 - iii. As needed, ensure that landlord is aware of any and all changes to the number of pets on property.
- b. Providing access to ACS veterinary care:
 - i. Up to 2 months (60 days) of free veterinary care will be provided by the ACS clinic. Foster is not authorized to take animals to outside veterinarians unless authorized by an ACS Veterinarian or their designee.
 - ii. Any additional veterinary care provided by ACS after the first 2 months will be at the discretion of the Rescue/Foster staff or ACS Veterinarian or their designee, and decided on a case-by-case basis. To receive additional care, the Foster may be required to show proof of attendance at adoption events deemed acceptable by the Rescue/Foster staff.
 - iii. If an appointment for treatment in the ACS Clinic is made, Clinic staff will need to be notified of appointment confirmation or cancellation within 24 hours of appointment time by the foster.
 - iv. All non-emergency medical treatment will be provided during ACS Clinic hours, which are currently Monday and Wednesday 11:00am – 1:00pm and Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - v. Special circumstances or emergency appointments must be authorized by the Foster Coordinator or Clinic staff.
 - vi. Any non-ACS Veterinary expenses not authorized in advance by an ACS Veterinarian or their designee are not reimbursable.
 - vii. During non-business hours, Foster must call the ACS Clinic emergency line to obtain approval for non-ACS veterinary care.
 - viii. Approval for reimbursement of non-ACS veterinary care will be at the discretion of ACS veterinarians or their designee, the Director, or the Assistant Director.
- c. Foster is required to assist in obtaining permanent placement for foster animals. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Providing reliable transportation for the animal to and from ACS facilities, ACS adoption events, or an adoption location when requested by the Rescue/Foster staff.
 - ii. Attending a minimum of two ACS approved adoption events per calendar month.
 - iii. Providing ACS with updated pictures and biography if needed and as requested by ACS staff.
- d. All Foster (if inside city limits) must comply with the City of San Antonio's, Ordinance Article 5, Section 5-109 (d) on Animal License and Permits:
 - i. A maximum number of eight (8) cats or five (5) dogs, or an aggregate number of eight (8) is permitted at a residence. In order to have more dogs and/or cats than this chapter allows at a residence, an owner must apply for an excess animal permit which shall be valid for one (1) year.
 - ii. This limit shall not apply to a Foster caring for a litter of animals. In this case, the Foster volunteer is limited to caring for a single mom and litter.
- e. At any given time, Fosters are limited to caring for a maximum of 4 ACS animals, or 1 nursing mother and an un-weaned litter.
- f. Orphaned Neonates will only be available to Fosters at the discretion of the Rescue-foster team.
- g. Foster interested in adopting foster animal(s) is subject to the all applicable ACS adoption policies and procedures.

- h. Fosters must give the rescue-foster team 48 hours notice if returning a foster pet, unless warranted by a severe medical or behavioral concern.
- i. Any concerns by a foster should be first brought to the attention of the foster coordinator and/or supervisor; secondly, the Live Release Manager; and third, if not resolved, to the Director's Office.
- j. Adherence to the department's Patron Conduct Policy.

5. Guidelines for ACS Staff Fosters

- a. Staff must complete an application and be approved prior to initiating any foster proceedings.
- b. Staffs foster are subject to the same general foster policies and procedures as the public, including foster animal selection, medical treatment, residence inspection and communication with the rescue-foster staff.
- c. Staff foster may not leave foster animal(s) in the Rescue/Foster office or kennels without permission of Rescue/Foster staff or shelter staff.
- d. Job duties must not be affected by the presence of foster animal(s) when in the workplace. At any time, staff may be required to remove foster animal(s) from the workplace if the animal(s) compromise job performance, are disruptive to coworkers, or are considered a liability.
- e. ACS Staff fosters must give the rescue-foster team 48 hours notice if returning a foster pet, unless warranted by a severe medical or behavioral concern.

6. Fosters Communication Guidelines

- a. Fosters are expected to maintain open communication with the rescue-foster team and respond promptly to requests.
- b. Fosters will use the acsrescue-foster@sanantonio.gov email or call 210-207-6669 and leave a detailed message with their name and animal AID.
- c. Fosters will communicate in a professional manner and abide by the Patron Code of Conduct policy 37-15-006 in person, in email and on social media.

Policy Authorization

Signature: _____

Name (Title): HEBER LEFGREN (ACS DIRECTOR)

Date: _____

12/16/2016