37-12: ACS PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES	POLICY TITLE:	37-12-003: Foster Program
	EFFECTIVE DATE:	11/06/2012
	REVISED DATE:	04/15/2014

POLICY SUMMARY:	Provides the guidelines and parameters of the department's foster program.
PURPOSE:	To describe the foster application process, foster conduct, the care of foster animals, and the department and foster responsibilities.
DESIRED OUTCOME:	To successfully place eligible animals in foster care that do not have another live outcome possibility. To ensure foster animals receive adequate medical treatment, and are subsequently adopted within a predefined time period.
RESPONSIBLE PARTY:	Rescue/Foster Team, Clinic Team Members
POLICY OWNER:	Live Release Manager

POLICY DETAILS

TYPES OF FOSTER ANIMALS

Ultimately, the ideal final disposition of animals in the Foster Program care is permanent placement via an ACS adoption, or placement through an approved ACS Rescue Partner. The objective of the ACS Foster Program is to provide temporary care for the following types of animals:

1. Those with temporary medical issues such as malnourishment or physical wounds pending Vet approval.
2. Puppies or kittens that are too young to be adopted.
3. Adoptable animals that have a temporary condition affecting their physical appearance (e.g. an animal that needs to be shaved, etc.).
4. Adoptable animals requiring greater socialization and/or training.
5. Adoptable animals suffering from kennel induced anxiety and stress.
6. Adoptable animals that may be euthanized due to a shortage of shelter space.

POLICY GUIDELINES:

The following policy guidelines shall apply in **all** Foster situations.

1. 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).
2. Pets must meet the minimum holding period requirement as designated in *Policy 37-04-004: Holding Period*. Prior to being placed in Foster care.
3. 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).
4. ACS is responsible for providing essential materials for foster volunteers including food, litter, bowls, leashes, and medication.
5. Permanent placement via adoption, rescue, or return to owner shall take precedence over animals placed in foster care.

6. Foster volunteers providing care for foster animals must complete an application and be approved by ACS.
7. Foster volunteers are matched with animals based on past experience and information provided on the ACS Foster Application.
8. Any Foster Application can be denied at the discretion of Rescue/Foster staff, Director, or Assistant Director. The applicant may appeal the application decision in writing, to the Live Release Manager.
9. Foster volunteers are subject to periodic home inspection, with prior notification from ACS.
10. At any time and without prior notice, ACS may require a Foster volunteer to relinquish possession of any animal in foster care.
11. ACS is free at any time, with or without notice or cause, to end the foster relationship..
12. Before entering a foster care, any personal animals owned by the Foster volunteer must be current on all vaccinations, including DHPP and rabies vaccinations. Cats must also receive a FVRCP vaccination.
13. Acceptance as a Foster volunteer requires the following criteria:
    a. Be 18 years or older
    b. Be able to provide government issued identification (i.e., valid driver's license)
    c. Complete an ACS Foster application (available for pick up at ACS, ACS events or on the ACS website). Applications will be reviewed within three (3) business days by the Foster Coordinator.
    d. Agree to and sign the ACS Foster Agreement and Service Agreement
    e. Once approved, discuss and agree to general guidelines, policies, and procedures with the Foster Coordinator

FOSTER CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES:

1. Criteria for selection of foster animals shall include but are not limited to the following:
    a. Any sick or injured animal entering the shelter shall receive veterinary attention as soon as possible. If medical care is needed and would be impracticable for the shelter staff, that animal may be placed in a foster home.
    b. Temperament and overall disposition of the animal will be considered. Potential foster animals should be friendly, sociable, and considered by shelter staff to be an adoptable animal.
    c. The age of an animal shall not exclude it from being fostered, provided it meets one or more of the other criteria for selection. Puppies and kittens under the age of 8 weeks may be fostered, as they are too young for adoption.

2. The following procedure for foster care placement shall occur in the following manner:
    a. Any ACS staff can select animals to be placed in foster care. The Foster Coordinator will make the final determination for matching an animal with a Foster volunteer.
    b. The Foster Coordinator will contact the Foster volunteer to advise him/her of an animal in need of foster care, specifying the type of care giving that is needed. If that home is not available, another foster home will be contacted until the appropriate home is found.
    c. The Foster volunteer shall be advised by the Foster Coordinator or other designated staff on the specific needs of the animal.
    d. Each time that an animal is placed into a foster home, the animal will be outcomed into foster care in the Chameleon database.
    e. The foster volunteer will pick up the animal at ACS at a prearranged time.

f. As soon as the animal is available for adoption a picture and biographical description of the animal shall be provided to the Foster Coordinator.
g. An animal may need to be brought back to the shelter periodically for a physical/medical checkup by the ACS veterinary staff.
h. Upon final disposition of the animal (adoption, rescue, return to owner, or humanely euthanized), the policies and procedures of that outcome will be followed.

RESPONSIBILITY OF FOSTER VOLUNTEER

1. Providing a safe and secure environment:
   a. Ensure a sterile living environment for animal
   b. If applicable, administer medication
   c. If applicable, obtain approval from a landlord to foster animals
   d. Fosters are not permitted to pulled pets directly into boarding care. A foster may request to use a boarding facility on a temporary basis when traveling or boarding personal pets as well. These requests are subject to written approval from a live release supervisor and must be made 72 hours prior to the potential boarding date.

2. Providing access to ACS veterinary care:
   a. Up to 2 months (60 days) of free veterinary care will be provided by the ACS clinic. Foster volunteers are not authorized to take animals to outside veterinarians unless authorized by an ACS Veterinarian or their designee.
   b. 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 volunteer may be required to show proof of attendance at adoption events deemed acceptable by the Rescue/Foster staff.
   c. If an appointment for treatment in the ACS Clinic is made, Clinic staff will be notified of appointment confirmation or cancellation within 24 hours of appointment time.
   d. All non-emergency medical treatment will be provided during ACS Clinic hours, which are currently Tuesday and Thursday, between the 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
   e. Special circumstance or emergency appointments must be authorized by the Foster Coordinator or Clinic staff.
   f. Any non-ACS Veterinary expenses not authorized in advance by an ACS Veterinarian or their designee are not reimbursable.
   g. During non-business hours, Foster volunteers must call the ACS Clinic emergency line to obtain approval for non-ACS veterinary care.
   h. 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.

3. Foster volunteers are required to assist in obtaining permanent placement for foster animals. This includes, but is not limited to:
   a. 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.
   b. Attending a minimum of three ACS approved adoption events per calendar month.

4. All Foster volunteers (regardless of where they reside) must comply with the City of San Antonio's, Ordinance Article 5, Section 5-109 (d) on Animal License and Permits:
   a. 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.
   b. This limit shall not apply to a Foster volunteer caring for a litter of animals. In this case, the Foster volunteer is limited to caring for a single mom and litter.

5. At any given time, Foster volunteer are limited to caring for a maximum of 3 ACS animals, or 1 nursing mother and an unweened litter. Orphaned Neonates will be available to Foster Volunteer at the discretion of the Live Release or Clinic Staff.
6. Foster volunteers interested in adopting foster animal(s) are subject to the all applicable ACS adoption policies and procedures.
7. If concerns from a foster volunteer are noticed, the concern(s) 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.
8. Adherence to the department's Patron Conduct Policy.

GUIDLINES FOR ACS STAFF FOSTERS

1. Staff must complete an application and be approved prior to initiating any foster proceedings.
2. Staff foster volunteers are subject to the same general foster policies and procedures as the public, including foster animal selection, medical treatment, and residence inspection.
3. Staff foster volunteers may not leave foster animal(s) in the Rescue/Foster office without permission of Rescue/Foster staff.
4. 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.

POLICY AUTHORIZATION

Signature: Kathy Davis Date: 5-19-14

Name: **Kathy Davis**

Title: ACS Director