

Foster Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the responsibilities of a foster parent?

Foster parents are responsible for providing a safe and supportive temporary home for a rescued pet. This includes tending to the pet's medical, social, and behavioral needs. Specifically, foster parents will:

1. Submit a Foster Agreement for each new pet upon receiving the pet.
2. Return the animal for veterinary care as required, according to the standards described in our Foster Home Policy.
3. Keep careful medical and other records on the animal.
4. Handle day-to-day care of the pet, including
 - (a) feeding a proper quantity of a good quality pet food;
 - (b) providing monthly flea preventative;
 - (c) keeping the pet clean and groomed;
 - (d) ensuring the dog gets monthly heartworm preventative each and every month without fail;
 - (e) ensuring the pet's safety at all times.
5. Provide socialization and training, according to the pet's needs, to try to help the animal become a highly desirable, adoptable pet.
6. Help to "market" the pet by submitting a profile (bio and photos) for listing on our websites, and periodically updating the profile.
7. Assist in the adoption process by quickly responding to correspondence about the pet, providing feedback about potential adopters, and helping get the animal to its new home upon adoption.
8. Joining the MCAS-PETS Yahoo Group to keep abreast of needs and changes to the Foster Home Program. Please join the MCAS-PETS Yahoo Group. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/>, then search for MCAS-PETS and join the group.

Group Email Addresses

Post message: MCAS-PETS@yahoogroups.com
Subscribe: MCAS-PETS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Unsubscribe: MCAS-PETS-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com
List owner: MCAS-PETS-owner@yahoogroups.com

Q: Can foster dogs be kept in a secure outdoor climate-controlled kennel?

A: An outdoor kennel may be used for limited daytime hours or a temporary emergency situation, but an *outdoor-only set up will not be approved* for a foster home. Part of our role as foster parents is to help socialize and train the dogs as good household pets. That requires that they develop good indoor "manners," housetraining skills, and compatible relations with humans and other pets, and that won't be achieved if the dog isn't kept inside as one of the "family."

Q: Can I become a foster home if I live in an apartment? Or don't have a fenced yard?

A: If you can show realistic expectations and understanding of a dog's needs and potential behavior "issues," and have a plan for how you'll deal with such eventualities, then you can still be approved as a foster home. Have you considered issues such as how a high energy dog would get adequate outdoor exercise, what the "potty" schedule would be, and how you would deal with a dog that turned out to be a loud barker or howler? You will also need approval from your apartment manager.

Q: What types of things would disqualify me as a foster home?

A: It's not always black and white, because a lot depends on your individual circumstances. But these are some of the things that would wave red flags in our foster home approval process:

- * planning to move or have major home renovation within the next 3-6 months
- * will be changing jobs or starting school within the next 3-6 months
- * have a heavy travel schedule
- * pregnant or have new baby
- * have a newly-adopted pet (within the past 3-6 months)

If any of these things apply to you, please think long and hard before applying to foster. In many cases, you may be better off waiting until your household situation is more stable before taking on this new commitment.

Q: How do I get a foster pet?

A: The MCAS Pets distribution list will let you know when there is an animal needing to be rescued and will tell you as much as we know about the animal. If you choose to foster the animal, we will then make arrangements with you to get the pet. Please join the MCAS-PETS Yahoo Group. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/>, then search for MCAS-PETS and join the group.

Q: What if I get an animal with behavioral problems?

A: Most dogs WILL come to foster care with some behavioral issues, large or small. Whether it's chewing, howling, marking, growling, digging, "counter surfing," snake-chasing, door dashing, or something more significant, it's best to recognize that few new dogs will truly be 100% problem-free, and you'll need to be prepared to deal with these things. Fortunately, most behavioral problems will be minor, and it can be extremely gratifying to take in a less-than-perfect dog and help him develop to his full potential. You can start reading books and Internet sites on obedience training and figuring out ways to dog-proof your home or otherwise prepare yourself for the challenges that come with fostering. Our volunteer network is also on hand to support each other with advice, suggestions, and encouragement. We also suggest you work with our trainer Gerry Freidman.

The bottom line is that each dog, no matter what its issues, is the responsibility of the foster parent who took it in. So it's best to be prepared and to understand the commitment, and if the thought of having a dog that requires much dedicated attention and training is a significant concern, then perhaps fostering isn't for you.

Q: What if I start fostering but then can't continue?

A: Because it's not easy (and sometimes not even possible) to move a pet from one foster home to another, it's important that you not agree to foster an animal unless you are able to make a commitment to that animal for however long it takes. If your situation changes and you can't continue fostering, we will TRY to move your current pet, if feasible, but there's no assurance we'll be able to accomplish that in a timely manner so you'll likely need to figure out a way to stick it out until that animal is adopted. After that, we will try to find other ways for you to remain involved and help our rescue effort, other than fostering.

Q: How long does it take a pet to get adopted?

A: It's common for healthy dogs with few behavioral problems to be adopted within a month or less, especially if the foster parent is diligent about taking good photos of the dog, setting up an on-line photo album, and writing an informative bio for the websites and attending off-site events. It is a requirement of the Foster Parent to bring the animal to off-site events if it is healthy. Most pets are adopted within 2 months unless the pet has significant "issues" and/or the foster parent is not proactive about helping to "market" the pet. Even senior pets and ones with special needs (such as blindness) are often adopted in just a few months if the foster family parent assists the process.

Q: What if my foster dog doesn't get along with my cats?

A: A good number dogs will not get along with cats. So if you have cats, it's your responsibility to figure out a plan to be able to reliably separate them. If that's not feasible, it will be essential for you to only agree to take in dogs that are known to be trustworthy with cats.

Q: What if I must go out of town on a trip?

A: As the foster parent, it will be your responsibility to make arrangements for this eventuality. Some foster parents have trade-off arrangements with dog-loving friends or relatives or other nearby foster homes. Others take their fosters on vacation with them or hire a house-sitter or board the dog(s). Any arrangements are at the foster parent's own expense. You may use the MCAS-PETS Yahoo website to connect with other foster parents that may be available to help short term.

Q: Will MCAS pay for all of a pet's medical expenses?

A: We will ask that you bring the animal in for an exam by our veterinarian. We will provide medication for conditions such as mange, kennel cough and heartworm treatment. However, as a county run facility we have a limited budget and do not have a full service clinic. If the pet is in need of treatment beyond the scope of our capabilities in house, we will seek assistance through charitable organizations that assist us with these needs.. ALL out-of-the-ordinary medical care must be pre-approved by our veterinarian.

Q: What expenses does the foster family have to cover?

A: Foster families will incur the following expenses for their foster pets: food, treats, collar and leash, flea preventative, toys, and chewies. Each foster home will need to also have basics on hand, such as food & water bowls, crate &/or X-pen, car harness or tether, pet bed, shampoo, nail clippers, "accident" cleaner (enzyme-based, such as Simple Solution), pooper scooper, and baby gates.

Q: If a foster dog destroys something of mine, will I be reimbursed?

A: *Sorry, no. Our budget doesn't cover loss of property. We recommend that you keep a close monitoring eye on each new dog until you're assured of his trustworthiness.*

Q: May I independently find someone to adopt my foster dog?

A: Sure! But the prospective adopter still must go through our MCAS adoption process. We are legally responsible for each animal brought into our organization, and have an obligation to follow proper procedures to ensure that the animal will be going to the right home. If you have a relative, friend, or neighbor that is interested in your foster pet, have them fill out an adoption application and list you as one of their references.

Q: How long does it take to get approved as a foster home?

A: It will probably take us a few days to reach your references and then call you for a telephone interview. We then recruit a home visit volunteer, who will contact you to schedule a time to come inspect your property. After that, it should be just a short time before you hear if you're approved to be an MCAS foster home.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Open Daily for Adoptions

936-442-7738

Fax: 936-442-7739

Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

8535 State Hwy 242

Conroe, Texas 77385

