



What is a foster parent?

A foster parent provides temporary care for kittens, puppies, dogs, cats or other animals. Fostering can last from a few days to several months, depending on the animal's needs and circumstances. The devotion and care provided by a volunteer foster family gives the animal a second chance to be adopted into a loving home. Even if you have a pet at home, you might be able to fit in a temporary tenant – a dog or cat that needs your help.

Foster Families:

- Save animals' lives when a shelter is full.
- Care for animals that don't do well in shelters because they're frightened or need a little extra care.
- Protect newborn animals that are at higher risk for disease in a shelter.
- Give animals time to recover from an illness or injury before adoption.

Whatever the reason, these animals need some extra love and care before they can be adopted. Providing foster care for a few days, weeks or months can be a lifesaving gift for an animal.

How much time will it take?

The specific needs of the animal will determine how much time is involved. Newborn orphaned puppies and kittens, for instance, must be fed every few hours. A frightened animal who needs socialization or training will also require some extra time. Dogs may require transportation to behavior testing. All animals may require transportation for veterinary appointments.

Would I be a good foster parent?

Taking animals into your home, loving them and then letting them go requires a special kind of person. Your role as a foster parent is to prepare the animal for adoption into a loving home.

Fostering can be fun and rewarding if you:

- Enjoy pets but are not in a position to make that lifetime commitment right now.
- Want a flexible volunteer job that doesn't require you to show up at a specific time for a certain number of hours.
- Would like to add a dog or cat to your household and would like a temporary guest first to make sure being a pet parent is right for you.
- Want to make a real difference in an animal's life.

Just by getting to know the animal, you'll help NHAR and the future adoptive family learn more about his/her personality prior to adoption.



What skills are needed?

It's best to have some knowledge about pet behavior and health. NHAR will provide training for you.

You will need to provide basic care such as food, water, shelter, grooming and exercise. Your foster dog will need his own leash, collar, bowl and toys. You will probably need to give the dog a bath when he or she arrives.

Some animals require a little extra help or some training. Shy cats often need a quiet home and time to learn to trust. Dogs often benefit from housetraining and crate training. Being familiar with some basic training techniques will be a big help in preparing your foster dog for a new home.

Younger children should be introduced slowly to determine the compatibility with the new foster animal. It is recommended that an adult supervise all interactions between foster animals and young children.

Carefully preparing the areas that the foster animal will have access to can help reduce the potential for damage or destruction to your home.

By far the most important thing you need to provide is love and attention. Whether your foster animal came from a loving home or an abusive situation, he will probably be confused and anxious. Spend time cuddling, fetching, playing tug and just hanging out watching TV together. Be patient; it might take him a few days or weeks to really settle in.

 How much will it cost?

NHAR will cover the costs of veterinary care and food. The role of the foster parent is not to provide financial support, but rather to provide the love and patience necessary for the animal to thrive. This includes both the animal's physical and mental well being. By the time the pet is ready to go to a permanent home he or she will not only be in good health but also have learned to love and trust human beings and adjust well to the foster home.

 I qualify as a foster parent?

To foster dogs we prefer that you have a fenced yard that is adequate for the size dog you want to foster or be willing and able to provide exercise by leash walking. You need to be able to offer a place in the house to the foster dog. Your own pets must be spayed or neutered and up-to-date on their shots (the foster dog will be vaccinated before going to your home). You must be 21 years of age or older. You also need the time to socialize and care for your new foster animal.

In order to foster cats, you must be able to separate them from your own animals for several days until they are more secure with their surroundings. Mothers and kittens must always have separate living quarters to give momma cat a secure place to take care of her young. Most foster parents use a spare bathroom or utility area for the family. Cats must stay indoors at all times where it is safe and secure until they are adopted.



 What about when it's time to say good-bye?

Giving up an animal you've fostered, even to a wonderful new home, can be difficult emotionally. Some people like to be there when the pet goes home with the new family. Seeing your foster animal ride off into the sunset will help you remember that he has found a loving new home.

A lot of foster families get photos and updates of their fosters enjoying their new homes. Knowing you were part of saving a life and helping the animal find a loving home is tremendously rewarding.

If you are interested in learning more...

please contact
**New Hope
Animal Rescue**

(304) 562-0300

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lies the singular desire to be loved...



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**New Hope
Animal Rescue**