



OAKLAND PET ADOPTION CENTER

1700 Brown Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
(248) 391-4101
(248) 391-9266 – Fax

**VOLUNTEER FOSTER
CARE PROGRAM
MANUAL**



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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Oakland Pet Adoption Center is:

- **To provide the highest quality service and compassion,**
- **To the animals entrusted to our care,**
- **To measurably reduce companion animal over-population,**
- **To take a leadership role in promoting humane values for the benefit of all animals, and**
- **To collaborate with the Oakland Pet Fund goal of becoming an Oakland County no-kill shelter.**

This mission is accomplished through sheltering, public education, rescue, cruelty investigation and inexpensive veterinary care. The Oakland Pet Adoption Center sees approximately 10,000 homeless, injured and needy animals through its shelter and clinic annually.

The Oakland Pet Adoption Center sometimes receives animals that, for various reasons, cannot be placed up for adoption immediately. The goal of the foster program is to provide opportunities for a larger number of these animals to find permanent and loving homes. As a foster volunteer, you will be providing an essential service to animals in need and will have a direct affect on the number of animals who get a second chance at life.

In an effort to move forward with our mission, the Oakland Pet Adoption Center has set forth the goal of finding homes for 100% of all adoptable animals by the year 2010. Therefore, the foster program will play an integral role in obtaining this goal as we strive to place as many animals as possible. By becoming a foster parent, you can measurably increase the amount of animals adopted and help achieve our goal. Any suggestions you have are greatly appreciated. Comments can be addressed to either the shelter manager or the volunteer department.

Before you begin fostering animals you will need to meet with qualified Oakland Pet Adoption Center staff for a general orientation.

WORDS FROM VOLUNTEERS

Talk about going above and beyond the call of duty! That's what happens when you volunteer to foster. You and your family's comfort zones are definitely affected. This is not for everyone. That said, let me tell you now of the pure love and joy you experience in volunteering this way.

An animal is in need of care: too young, injured, sick, stressed, the shelter in overload. Whatever the reason, they need help. Once in your care, their thanks to you is the healing, growing bigger and fatter, becoming a happy dog or cat – never mind all of those hugs and kisses. There is nothing more rewarding than looking into a dog's eyes and seeing the fear gone or having a cat very slowly come out of hiding and come over to you to say hello.

The foster program has made and will continue to make a difference. With your help, it will. Thank you to everyone who gives their time and talents to make this program work.

Sue Pudlo, Foster Volunteer

Some volunteers hesitate to become fosters because they are afraid of becoming too attached. The first few fosters you will have are so very hard to part with because you get so attached to them. Trust me though it does get easier – especially when you see how delighted the new families are with their new pets. Some of these families have been waiting a long time for their perfect pet and, frankly, fostered animals come “pre-socialized”. I attempt to keep in touch with them by making myself available for any questions since I've had the animal longer than they have. I give the family pictures and they have sent me pictures of these pets as they grow – how wonderful it is to see how they look after they've been in the new family's home for awhile. There will also be an instance (or instances as in my case) when you just can't let them go. I've adopted several cats and a dog who were fosters but they “just fit” into our family, and we love them dearly.

Please take some time to think over this truly rewarding experience and see if you can devote some of your time to these animals. The people currently fostering are a great bunch, and there is always someone willing and able to answer any questions you may have.

Lin Gardiner, Volunteer

PROCEDURES FOR FOSTERING

Criteria for fostering:

Unfortunately not every animal can be fostered. Animals eligible for foster care are only those who qualify for general adoption or special adoption upon completion of fostering. Reasons for fostering include weight gain, socialization, young age, wound healing, minor injuries, cruelty cases, URI (upper respiratory infection), or other illnesses/injuries at the shelter's discretion. The shelter manager retains discretionary authority for selecting animals for foster care. In addition, the manager ultimately determines the eligibility of any animal who is a potential candidate for this program.

Animals will not be considered for foster care if any of the following apply:

- **Represent a threat to public health**
- **Have medical or behavioral problems where the condition, prognosis or the clinical course is unclear**
- **Have conditions (medical or behavioral) requiring an unreasonable investment of time and expense by the Oakland Pet Adoption Center, the foster home or a potential adopter**
- **Have a prognosis of poor quality of life or chronic pain or suffering**

The following guidelines will also be adhered to:

- **All animals fostered will be at the shelter's discretion**
- **The length of fostering for any animals should not exceed three months. This may be overturned by a manager on a case-by-case basis.**
- **Any animal that shows signs of illness at the time of surrender is not eligible. This may be overturned by a manager on a case-by-case basis.**
- **If a state of overload is identified by the shelter manager (i.e., the number of animals in the shelter exceeds available case space), animals that are allowed to be fostered must stay in foster until the overload status is removed. We highly recommend that these fosters be placed up for adoption through the Petfinder foster program. This moratorium may be limited to the summer months and/or be applied only to one group of animals (cats/kittens). The shelter manager will be evaluating overload status on a continual basis.**

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Once you have decided to become a foster volunteer, you will be placed on the foster contact list. When an animal is in need of fostering, either a shelter manager or a volunteer foster chairperson will contact you. Time limits vary, but in many cases you will only have a short period of time to decide if you can accommodate the animal. Animals need to be moved out of the shelter environment within twenty-four hours.

Supplies will be distributed at the time of pick-up, if necessary.

If you are unable to continue to care for the animal you are fostering, there is no guarantee that another foster can be found to assume the fostering for the remaining period. If you are in a situation where you cannot foster the animal any longer, you must contact the shelter manager to discuss the situation and see if the animal can be located into another foster home.

If you believe that your foster has completed the foster period, contact the shelter manager. In conjunction with the manager, you can determine the best time to return the animal(s) to the shelter.

FOSTER RECHECKS

If you are bringing your foster animal in for vaccinations, to check the age, or to determine if the animal is ready for adoption, please call the shelter manager/shelter coordinator listed below. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WILL BE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

If your foster animal needs to be seen by clinic personnel (for wound checks, bandage changes, etc.), please call the shelter manager/shelter coordinator. They will set an appointment with the clinic. Please keep in mind that when being seen by the clinic, there may be a bit of a wait. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause, however, we do our best to get fosters in and out of their appointments as quickly as possible. Please call the shelter at least 2 days in advance of the recheck date to schedule an appointment.

Once approved for adoption, a foster may be pre-sterilized on the clinic's ability to schedule the surgeries. Please contact the shelter to schedule this procedure.

Contact Information during business hours:

248-391-4101 (Shelly). If she is not available, please leave a message and she will return your call.

URI AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Introduction

Upper respiratory infections (URI) is a broad term that covers various infections which attack the upper airway of dogs and cats. Parainfluenza/bordetella infections in dogs and rhinotracheitis in cats are just two examples of well-known upper respiratory infections. Fostering of animals with URI is not for everyone. It can be time consuming and labor intensive. In some cases, animals need to be fostered up to eight weeks. All URI animals usually require at least one trip back to see an Oakland Pet Adoption Center veterinarian during the foster period – please make an appointment for this visit. The majority are sent into your home with a prescription medication. You may be giving your foster animal(s) medication twice, even three times daily. Understanding policies regarding URI can also be difficult. Please read over the following protocol carefully before you decide to foster an animal with URI.

Risks associated with fostering animals with URI:

- **There is always the risk that your own animal(s), even if vaccinated, can contact URI or any other contagious disease that the foster may be carrying. Opinions vary on the likelihood of this event, but please keep in mind that all veterinarians agree that it is a possibility. Confining the foster animal(s) and your own pet(s) to different areas may decrease your pet's exposure but still does not insure complete protection from infection. The Oakland Pet Adoption Center cannot cover the cost of treating your own animals if they become ill.**
- **An animal that was initially fostered for URI may have a more serious disease than was originally known. In cats a condition that originally appeared as URI may actually turn out to be far more serious with feline leukemia (FeLV), feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), or feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) ultimately being diagnosed. Cats/kittens of age will be tested for FeLV/FIV before leaving the shelter.**
- **Upon a new diagnosis, certain animals may no longer be candidates for adoption. All volunteer fosters must realize and accept that fostering does not guarantee that the Oakland Pet Adoption Center can adopt out the animal.**

PARAMETERS FOR FOSTERING ANIMALS WITH URI

- **If an animal is fostered for URI, the foster must hold the animal in his/her home until resolution of clinical signs. This will help insure the animal is no longer shedding the infectious agent that could infect other susceptible animals in the shelter. If the foster volunteer must return the animal prior to the animal reaching the end of the shedding period and the Oakland Pet Adoption Center cannot locate another foster home within one working day, the animal may be euthanized.**

PLACING THE ANIMAL DIRECTLY FROM THE FOSTER HOME

- **Once the foster animal(s) are asymptomatic (not exhibiting signs of illness) and have been re-examined by a veterinarian, volunteers have the option of adopting the animal out of the foster home before they are eligible to return to the shelter. This “out-of-home” adoption allows the animal to forego the waiting period while the animal is still shedding. The exact length of the shedding period depends on the illness and the species in question.**
- **Petfinder is a highly successful means of adopting your animals out of the home and gives animals much greater visibility. The foster can supply photos and information on their particular foster animal(s) to be sent via e-mail to: Angie Schumacher, phone # 586-286-7118, OCACpets@comcast.net, who will then place this information on the internet. She may ask several questions in order to best represent your animal(s) in the write-up. Digital pictures should also be included in your e-mail. If you have any questions, she is more than willing to help.**
- **Processing of all paperwork must be done at the Oakland Pet Adoption Center. The qualification of the potential adopter signing the adoption contract can be submitted by the foster volunteer. Please see the volunteer department if you are a volunteer and would like to learn adoptions.**
- **The shelter is always available to support fosters in the placement of their animal(s). The goal of the foster program is placement. It is required that volunteers contact the shelter when questions arise. Shelter management will be the final arbitrator.**
- **Should you be interested in adopting your foster(s), you will have first choice to adopt at a discounted fee.**

WHAT TO EXPECT

While the personality of every foster animal is unique, there are things you can expect from certain animals. Kittens, for example, are highly active, may play rough with littermates, and may even run after you and bite your pant leg. All of these behaviors are normal. No matter what type or age of animal you are fostering, your endeavor will require substantial time, patience and work.

HOW TO DEAL WITH COMMON PROBLEMS

Adult cats

Adult animals are often easier to accommodate in your home than litters of kittens. However, there are several facts that are important to realize. Introducing a foster cat to your own animals can also be a challenge. Experience with your pets may already tell you how they will react when fosters are brought into our home. A baby gate that separates your pets from the foster(s) can be very helpful. However, it is important to introduce them slowly. If you need more information about this process, please ask shelter staff before you pick up your foster(s). They will be able to help you determine the best way for you and your pets.

Kittens (with or without the mother cat)

Kittens have a very curious nature and will explore all areas of your home if left to roam freely. They can climb to high places and crawl into spots you might not expect. This is normal behavior for kittens. It is quite helpful to confine them to a room of their own with their litter box, food, water and toys when you are not home and/or at bedtime. Many fosters feel that kittens are easier to foster than puppies because they are litter box trained and do not require scheduled feedings. Regular cleaning of the litter box will help prevent them from choosing another spot in your home for that function.

In addition to the above general guidelines, material has been created that contains information on a variety of common behavioral problems experienced with pets and general care information. Please take the time to read over all of this information. These flyers may answer some of your questions, but please consult with a shelter manager if you are having a serious problem with your foster animal(s) behavior or temperament.

QUESTIONS AND EMERGENCIES

Questions, especially those concerning policy or procedures, should be directed to the shelter manager at 248-391-4100, ext. 224.

Foster coordinators can also help you with many general care questions or concerns you have regarding your foster(s). Please do not hesitate to call if you need support. One of our foster coordinators is Maureen and she can be reached at 248-391-7917

Shelly (veterinary technician) can also be reached at 248-391-4100, ext. 277.

Sue Pudlo our volunteer coordinator can be reached on her cell phone at (248) 310-5808 or you may e-mail her at susan.pudlo@fte.de.

**VOLUNTEER/FOSTER APPLICATION
OAKLAND COUNTY ANIMAL CARE CENTER
1700 BROWN ROAD
AUBURN HILLS, MI 48326**

DATE: _____

ARE YOU 18 YEARS OR OLDER?(Circle One) Yes No*

*If you answered no, shelter policy requires any volunteer under 18 to be accompanied by a parent or guardian

NAME: _____ DRIVER LICENSE NO: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

CELL PHONE: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

DAYS AVAILABLE: _____ HOURS AVAILABLE: _____

COMMENTS: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FOSTERING VOLUNTEERS:

HOW MANY PETS DO YOU OWN AT THE PRESENT?

#DOGS _____ MALE FEMALE STERILIZED? ___ YES ___ NO
#CATS _____ MALE FEMALE STERILIZED? ___ YES ___ NO
Other pets _____ Describe _____

Veterinarian _____

Have you ever cared for: Young puppies Young kittens Injured dog Injured cat

Do you have an area in your house to confine foster animals? _____ If so, where? _____

Do You: Rent an apartment Rent a house Own a house Live with parents
If you rent, what is your landlord's name? _____ Phone? _____

Who will be the primary caretaker of the foster animal? _____

What hours will the caretaker be home? _____

Do you have children? _____ What ages? _____

Are there any other factors that may limit your foster work? _____

Please indicate below what you would be willing to foster:

- Sick/injured cat-indeterminate amount of foster care (from one week – three months)
- Young kittens (from two – four weeks)
- Mother cat and kittens (from six – eight weeks)
- Foster on overload condition?
- Sick/injured dog – indeterminate amount of foster care (from one week – three months)

Additional Comments: _____

NOTE: We cannot guarantee immediate placement for your foster animal(s), although we will exhaust all efforts. If we determine that due to lack of room or illness the foster animal cannot remain in the shelter any longer, do you want to be notified? _____ Yes _____ No

Oakland County Corporation Counsel

**County of Oakland
Oakland County Department of Public Services
Animal Care Center
Waiver and Release of Liability Form**

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

1. In consideration of participating as a volunteer, I hereby waive and release for any actions, claims, demands or suits against Oakland County, the Oakland County Department of Public Services, Oakland County Animal Care Center, its agents, servants, employees or anyone connected with Oakland County and/or Oakland County Department of Public Services, Oakland County Animal Care Center for any injuries or damages to property while engaged in activity on behalf of Oakland County and/or Oakland County Department of Public Services, Oakland County Animal Care Center.
2. That I further acknowledge and understand there may be risks associated while engaged in activity on behalf of Oakland County and/or Oakland County Department of Public Services, Oakland County Animal Care Center and therefore assume all risks of injury incurred or suffered while on and/or upon the premises of Oakland County and/or Oakland County Department of Public Services, Oakland County Animal Care Center.
3. That I further acknowledge and understand that no compensation or benefits will be received. That no credit will be earned in the Oakland County merit system should I become employed by Oakland County in any capacity.
4. That I further acknowledge and understand that transportation to and from the Oakland County Animal Care Center is not the responsibility of Oakland County and/or Oakland County Department of Public Services, Oakland County Animal Care Center.
5. That I acknowledge that I have read the terms of this Waiver and Release of Liability Form, and understand and agree to the terms.

**Oakland County and/or Oakland County
Department of Public Services,
Animal Care Center**

Signature Date

GENERAL SHELTER INFORMATION:

LOCATION: 1700 Brown Road, Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Hours: Monday & Friday 10:00 AM – 6:15 pm

**Tuesday, Wednesday,
And Thursday 10:00 AM – 5:15 pm**

**Saturday 10:00 AM – 2:00 pm
(closed when @ offsite-
Call 248-391-4100 for
additional information)**

Shelter is closed most County Holidays....

WEBSITE INFORMATION: www.Oaklandpetcenter.com

VOLUNTEER CONTACT INFORMATION:

Shelter Manager ext. 224

Veterinary Technician ext. 277

Administration ext. 222

Kennel supervisor ext. 223

After hours emergency (ABSOLUTE EMERGENCY ONLY)

**Shelter Foster Coordinator - (248) 391-7917
Maureen**