

Common Questions About Fostering

How do I become a foster parent?

You need to be at least 18 years old to foster, and we want everyone in the household to be in agreement of your decision to foster. Additionally, we ask that all new Foster Home Volunteers attend an Adult Volunteer Orientation, though it is not mandatory. These occur once a month at the shelter, and an official schedule is available online. Then, you just need to fill out a Foster Care Application form to tell us a bit more about yourself, your home situation, and what animals/situations you would be interested in fostering. The foster care department staff will review your application and contact you to talk a bit more about the program, your interests, and to answer any additional questions you may have. Another volunteer will contact you to arrange a Home Visit. The State of Colorado requires that we do an annual home inspection of all active foster home volunteers. This entails coming out to your house and seeing your foster area, how you store food, and what your cleaning methods are; and additional annual inspections are required. After that, you are all set and ready to foster! We will add you to our contact list and then you just respond as you can to the foster requests! A comprehensive manual and information about each of your foster animals will be provided as well.

How much does it cost to foster?

We provide all veterinary care for the duration of the foster period, as well as all necessary supplies (including dry and wet food, litter, crates, leashes, etc). However, we do ask that every foster parent donate as much of the non-veterinary supplies as they can to off-set our costs. All purchases made for your foster animals are considered a donation to the Longmont Humane Society and are tax deductible.

Do I have to respond to every foster request?

It is entirely up to you how, what, and when you foster. If you are only up for a couple of litters of kittens over the summer, or want to always have kittens in your house, we're happy to have you. We ask that you respond as you can and take in only as many animals as you feel comfortable. It is supposed to be a fun and rewarding experience, so it is important to limit yourself so that you do not burn yourself out on the experience. If you feel you need to take a break, it is always okay. Just let the foster care department know so we can know what's going on and when you think you might be ready again.

How long is the average foster period?

Every foster is different, and foster periods vary depending on the age, needs, and other unpredictable factors about the animal(s) that you take into your care. Generally, most foster situations range from about 2 weeks up to 2 months but can be longer if the situation requires it. With every available foster animal, we also note what the expected foster period will be. Those dates are not 100% set in stone and can often change due to the health or behavior of the animal. However, if ever a foster animal is not working out, or you become overwhelmed with the situation for whatever reason, you are always welcome to bring an animal back to us.

What animals are available for foster?

We have foster opportunities for all of the animals we house in the shelter, though our greatest need usually comes with Kitten Season, which normally lasts from mid-April through November. During this time, we can receive upwards of 400 kittens into the shelter, most of which are too young to be adopted. They can vary in age from a newborn up to 3-4 months in age. The younger the kitten, the more important it is that they go into a foster home due to their vulnerability. Young kittens and puppies will remain in foster until they are ready for the adoption floor (around 8-10 weeks of age). We also have dogs of all ages who may need some time out of the shelter to test a manageable behavior issue, de-stress from shelter life, or recover from a surgery or illness. There are also many adult cats and small mammals who may need some time out of the shelter as well! You, as the foster parent, decide how, what, and when you foster!

Where do I go to pick up and drop off my foster animals?

Our intake desk is the place to go for almost all things foster! They are available 7 days per week from 11am to 6pm to help with foster requests. We ask that you pre-arrange dates and times with the foster staff to pick up/drop off your foster animal(s) so we can make sure everything will be ready for them when you arrive.

Can I adopt an animal I foster?

It can be very easy to become attached to your foster animals and you may want to keep every single one. It is usually best to return at least one set of foster animals back to the shelter to be adopted out to the public to get that experience. It makes every future set a little bit easier to give back. However, you are certainly welcome to adopt an animal you foster if you think they are a great match for your home.

What if my foster animal isn't working out?

If you do not feel that you are able to handle your foster animal for whatever reason, you are more than welcome to bring them back. Sometimes, you will run into an issue between your own animal(s) and your fosters, or a group of 3-week-old kittens turned out to be more work than you expected. Don't feel bad! It happens to everyone, and we often learn something new about the foster animal regardless of the situation.

What do I do if there is an emergency with my foster animal?

The foster care staff is on call 24/7 for foster animal emergencies and is happy to help you in any situation. The emergency number will never change and will be provided to you with each foster you take. We just ask that it be used only for emergencies with your foster animals. The shelter is open 7 days per week and we have veterinary staff here every day to help you with any health issues.