

Lampasas Animal Shelter
301 College St
Lampasas, TX 76550
(512) 556-8586
Lampasasanimalshelter@cityoflampasas.com

Lampasas Animal Shelter Foster Program Manual

Understanding Your Handbook

This handbook summarizes many of Lampasas Animal Shelter's (also known as LAS) policies and procedures, including the ones that you, as a Foster Parent, must follow. A Foster Parent's failure to comply with the policies and procedures contained in this handbook may result in a termination of the relationship between a Foster Parent and LAS. All LAS staff members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook. We are happy to provide further information or clarification on this Handbook if needed. Please note that LAS supervisor and their designees may modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If any changes are made, LAS will notify Foster Parent(s) as soon as possible.

We want every animal brought to us to have a chance for a long and happy life. Due to our limited resources and personnel, we are not able to care for sick, injured and very young but otherwise adoptable animals. Our foster care will allow us to help these animals. The Foster Care Program brings caring individuals and animals in need together, providing special care in a home setting until the animals are ready for adoption.

Fostering Program Description

A foster home is a temporary living arrangement for animals in our Foster Program through placement with individuals, known as Foster Parents, in the community of Lampasas. As a Foster Parent with LAS, you are a volunteer and part of a massive life- saving mission to help prevent animal homelessness and overpopulation. The animals in our Foster Program need a temporary place away from the stress of the shelter, to grow large enough to enter our adoption program, wait their turn to be transported to a shelter in another area, or mature as a pet. We see you as a part of our team, and with that we have expectations that must be met to ensure a positive fostering process.

Currently we offer fostering for kittens/puppies that are too young for adoption, and nursing moms with their litters, that may need to be bottle fed, or need more round-the-clock feeding that we cannot provide during normal shelter hours.

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Foster Requirements

- The primary foster caretaker must be 18 years or older
- The foster family must live close enough to be able to transport foster(s) to LAS for medical appointments and to return at the end of foster time period
- Must live in pet friendly housing
- You must have reliable transportation to get to LAS for foster medical appointments
- You should be able to safely house the foster pet completely separate from other pets in the house (e.g. an extra room, a crate) for the first 14 days & when unsupervised
- Cats/kittens are indoor-only fosters; sick foster pets must be quarantined from owned pets for the duration of the foster
- You must care for the foster pet as if it's their own, keeping it in a climate-controlled area, providing fresh food and water daily, and follow the guidelines for foster(s) provided by LAS

Foster Expectations

- Please note that foster pets remain LAS property while in foster care, and they cannot be handed off to adopters without a staff completed adoption contract.
- Ensure that all personal animals are current on vaccines. LAS cannot cover the cost of treating your own animals if they become ill due to contact with a foster animal
- We recommend speaking with your vet prior to fostering to ensure your own pet's safety
- Please note: not all pets will welcome new animals – don't feel obligated to introduce fosters to existing pets; they are short-term guests
- Foster cats/kittens are indoor-only
- If fostering a mother dog with her litter, the dog may go outside on a leash or in a contained yard, but foster must be present the entire time the dog is outside. DO NOT LEAVE FOSTER DOG UNATTENDED WHETHER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE. FOSTER MUST ALWAYS BE PRESENT IF DOG IS LOOSE IN THE HOME
- Foster dogs are not to leave the foster's place of residence (such as a dog park or a friend's house) to ensure the health of the animal. Leashed walks are acceptable and encouraged
- Medical care for your foster is provided by LAS, but we cannot pay for outside vet expenses, and we will not be able to reimburse you if you take your foster animal to a vet
- We do our best to provide food, crates, foster supplies when available, but we are donation based for our foster program.
- If a foster pet bites or scratches a person, please report the incident immediately to Animal Control and email your foster coordinator at FOSTER@CITYOFLAMPASAS.COM
- We strongly recommend keeping your current pets separate from your foster pet for up to fourteen (14) days to limit risk of disease spread. LAS is not responsible for other pet(s) becoming ill due to exposure to a LAS foster pet, and LAS cannot reimburse vet expenses.
- The foster coordinator makes final decision on what animal(s) qualify for foster care and to which homes they can go to
- If you need to return your pet for a non-emergency reason, please contact the LAS Foster Coordinator

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- Returning or Re-Fostering Your Foster Pet: fosters must schedule a return to LAS through the foster coordinator. We recommend trying to re-foster (using an approved foster of LAS to provide a new foster home) by posting on our Foster Facebook Page, but fosters must meet at LAS to transfer paperwork and have it approved by foster coordinator in advance.
- If your pet is not a bite risk and healthy, boarding and pet sitters are OK with prior notice.

Time Commitment

The time commitment for foster care can range between a few days to several months depending on the animal's needs for foster care. The length of time is usually predetermined for each foster animal. This is something you should be aware of when you sign out a foster.

Emotional Investment

Bonds will form between you and our foster animals. This is perfectly normal, but this does not mean that you should adopt the pet. The foster should analyze whether the foster pet fits in with their household long term, or if the urge to adopt is just an emotional response to caring for the animal(s). Please realize that foster homes are always in need and in demand, so if they "fill up", fewer animals can be helped.

Animals eligible for foster care:

- Very young kittens/puppies and nursing moms with their litters that are approved by the supervisor and the foster coordinator.
- Others as approved by the supervisor and foster coordinator.

Animals usually not eligible for foster care:

- Animals with serious medical problems and a poor prognosis for recovery or rehabilitation
- Animals with serious behavior problems, such as serious aggression issues that put humans or other animals at risk of harm

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Volunteer fostering:

- When an animal is a candidate for foster, we use trained and supervised volunteers who are approved for foster.
- The approval for the animal to be fostered must first be obtained by the supervisor and foster coordinator. The status of the animal is changed to “available for foster.”
- The foster coordinator will work to find a foster provider, this may be done on the **Foster Facebook page**, or the foster coordinator may reach out by phone or email.
- Volunteers that are approved to foster are organized by the foster coordinator.
- Fosters need to understand that ongoing decisions about care will remain in the hands of the shelter staff, and are dependent on financial resources and prognosis for recovery.
- Fosters also need to be aware that the shelter makes all medical/surgical decisions about foster animals. The shelter provides a contact for medical emergencies. Fosters will not be reimbursed if they take an animal to another veterinarian for exam, diagnostic testing, treatment, etc.
- Any animal that leaves the shelter in foster care must be recorded as such.
- Fosters do not have a say in who adopts

Medical

Emergencies (surgery complications, extreme lethargy, allergic reactions, distemper): In the event of a medical emergency please contact to Foster Coordinator at (512) 556-8586
Medical emergencies include fading kitten syndrome, bloody stool, excessive vomiting/diarrhea, or seizures. Please see Foster Medical Handout for more information.

Lost Foster Pet

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, your foster pet may escape from you or your home. If this should happen, please email the LAS foster coordinator immediately at (512) 556-8586 if during business hours, or FOSTER@CITYOFLAMPASAS.COM if pet is lost after hours, with the following information:

- The animal’s ID number (EX: P12735) and Name (this can be found on your foster pet’s paperwork)
- Last known location
- Date and time of escape
- What the situation was when escape occurred (opening the front door, walking the foster pet, etc.)

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We suggest that you put up fliers around your neighborhood and place ads on local lost and found websites, Facebook pages (including your personal page and the LAS Volunteer and Foster page), Next-door and Craigslist. Should the animal be picked up by an Animal Control Officer, the Foster coordinator will be notified and will contact you immediately. The foster coordinator can request that an officer be sent out to survey the area if the animal was lost in the City of Lampasas. Always keep the Foster Team informed with any updates by phone or email.

Interaction with the Public

In order to maintain community support and a constructive working relationship with the public, fosters are guided by this policy in their interactions with citizens. The maintenance of a good relationship with the public should develop public appreciation for the shelter. Staff and fosters alike are encouraged to achieve a positive relationship with the public. As a member of the LAS team, you are a representative of LAS's brand and image and are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. You must be

respectful and courteous in your interactions with the public and with staff.

Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior, sexual harassment, threats, disparaging remarks, discrimination, or vulgar language will not be tolerated, and you may be asked to cease your foster work as a result of such conduct. This code of conduct applies to online and/or written material as well as personal interactions with staff, other fosters, and members of the public. Las will not tolerate any negative post made on any public forums regarding the shelter, staff, or the foster program. Making such comments or posts will terminate you as both a foster and a volunteer. Bottom line - commit to providing excellent customer service to our visitors, staff, and fellow fosters.

Returning your foster

Foster pets are to be returned to LAS by the date that is given on the foster sign out form. If you are needing to reschedule the return due to your schedule, contact the foster coordinator to try to reschedule. Fosters are to return any supplies that they signed out at this time as well. At any time if the foster decides that they would like to adopt their foster pet, they will be required to contact the foster coordinator and fill out an adoption contract in person at LAS.

Failure to Return Foster Pet(s)

If a foster fails to return a foster pet(s) to LAS, they will be taking ownership of the animal(s) that they have signed out. It will be treated as if the foster has adopted said animal(s). The foster will be responsible to get the rabies vaccination(s) and the spay/neuter done by the dates stated on the foster sign out sheet (see Lampasas City ordinance section 10-62, titled Adoption and Texas Health and Safety code Chapter 828 and Texas Health and Safety code Chapter 826.) Failure to do so is a Class C misdemeanor, a fine of up to \$500 for every day you are in violation.

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Failure to adhere to our policy regarding the return of the foster pet will terminate you as a future foster. Staff will attempt to reach a foster by phone and/or email, if there is no response from the foster after three attempts, ownership will be transferred to foster, and foster privileges will be terminated.

Grounds for Termination

There are times when it is no longer safe or beneficial to maintain a relationship with a foster family. LAS reserves the right to end the relationship with a foster family/provider and reclaim the foster pet if foster agreement is broken. Please see additional reasons for termination.

Reasons for Termination may include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate, cruel, neglectful treatments, threat of physical or verbal violence of or towards the foster pet
- Threats, physical or verbal, to LAS staff, other fosters, volunteers, or adopters – verbal or written
- Lying, stealing, or lack of transparency regarding the whereabouts or status of a foster pet or the environment in which the foster resides
- Foster pets repeatedly returned to LAS in poor condition
- Refusal to return a foster pet to LAS in a timely manner
- Non-responsiveness or failure to follow up with foster coordinator
- Self-medicating animals and/or not following medical advice
- Not showing up for scheduled appointments with LAS, whether for a scheduled vaccine appointment or an appointment to bring foster animal back to LAS