

Short-Term Foster Care

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Short-Term Foster Care

There are lots of great reasons why short-term foster care is great for shelters. It helps get dogs out of the shelter and reduces kennel stress. It enables more of the community to get involved with the shelter in a fun way. It enables shelters to learn more about the behavior of the dogs in their care and to market them in new ways.

Short-term foster care options make it easy for people to make a commitment. With busy lives, many people like the flexibility of having short-term foster options, so you'll find that these programs will increase your foster base. Better, what we found is that when short-term foster is tried, families often realize that they're also suited for long-term foster care as well.

There is a perception held by some of the public that shelter dogs are "unknown." Short-term foster care does much to combat this stigma. The better our shelters get to know the animals in their care, the better things will be for all shelter dogs.



Weekend/Overnight Foster Care

Weekend and overnight foster care is a great way to get to know shelter dogs better, reduce kennel stress and find new ways to market them for adoption. Programs can be created based on the needs of your shelter.

Some programs focus on days and times that the shelter is closed, and some allow dogs to be taken home anytime. Depending on the shelter, all dogs may be available for weekend foster, or just a select few (for example, dogs with long shelter stays).

Weekend Foster Process Case Study: Austin Animal Center

The shelter makes it just as easy to foster as it is to adopt. No sign-up is needed; volunteers and fosters can come to the shelter and take a dog on an overnight any day of the week. Customer service staff is trained to process fosters, and they're managed just like adoptions. This way, the only work that the program adds to the foster coordinators' plates is in promoting the program and the dogs taken on outings on social media and troubleshooting any issues.

Weekend Foster Process Case Study: Fairfax County Animal Shelter

Volunteers and fosters are able to participate in weekend foster at the shelter. There are 4 trained weekend foster volunteers, whose job it is to help implement weekend foster. On Saturday, at least one of these volunteers is at the shelter to assist in making matches, getting paperwork in order and helping families get the supplies they need.

During the middle to the end of the week, an email is sent to fosters with the dogs who may be available for weekend foster. Fosters are encouraged to reply with questions and offers to take a dog home. Foster families arrive at the shelter around 4pm, when the shelter is about to close for the weekend. Foster volunteers help them locate needed supplies, assist with putting harnesses and leashes on the dogs and make sure the relevant paperwork is read and signed.

Families are encouraged to post photos, videos and stories about their weekend. There are two time slots when families can bring the dogs back from weekend foster.

Guidelines for the Weekend Foster Program

- Only dogs available for adoption are eligible to go, unless a manager gives approval.
- Dogs must have had a rabies vaccination.
- Foster must read and sign the shelter's foster contract.
 - The day(s) and time(s) that the dog should be brought back to the shelter should be listed.
- Foster dogs should be kept separate from other pets in the home, especially small animals, cats, and smaller dogs, unless approval is given from the shelter. The foster family should have a plan in place if they do wish to introduce the foster dog to their dog (or other animal) and it doesn't work out – i.e., a place to keep their animals separated from the foster dog.
- Dogs must:
 - At all times wear a martingale collar with foster dog tags attached.
 - Be fitted with an Easy Walk or other approved harness, worn on walks.
 - Be walked using a leash.
 - Not go to any off-leash areas, including dog parks.
- Caregivers must be given any medications needed by their foster dog. (*Note: always check for meds!*)
- "Weekend Foster" sign is placed in the dog's cage card holder.

Weekend Foster Process Case Study: Humane Rescue Alliance

Humane Rescue Alliance's In Real Life (IRL) program is open to volunteers, fosters and shelter staff. It's focused on dogs who have been in the shelter for over 30 days, who are seniors and those who are exhibiting signs of kennel stress. The purpose of the program is to gather out-of-shelter information on their medium and large dogs and to recruit and build the confidence of foster parents for this population of dogs.

The IRL program is very well organized in order to facilitate efficiency and data collection. Fosters sign up for the program and send behavioral feedback ("IRL homework") via Google forms. The data from these forms is imported to spreadsheets to keep data collection simple. This makes it easy for foster coordinators to answer questions like, How many staff are taking home IRL fosters? How many of the dogs are getting adopted by their fosters? How many dogs are coming back when IRL ends, and how many IRL fosters have decided to foster the dogs until adoption? For more information on this program, see Appendix E.

Sign-Up - IRL Dog Foster Program

Thank you for fostering! We're so appreciative that you're willing to give a dog a break and help us share with adopters and fosters a true picture of what these guys are like in a home!

Please remember, the In Real Life (IRL) Foster Program is only for dogs OVER 40 lbs.

Please answer the following questions, we will be using this information to match you with your IRL foster dog.

In most cases we will have a match for you on the date you indicate you would like to pick up. If in the unlikely event we're unable to match you, we will be in touch.

Foster staff will be contacting you 12 to 24 hours before your scheduled pick up date with info about your match and the shelter location you'll be picking up from.

*** Required**

Contact Info *

Name, e-mail, phone number (all items must be given to be matched)

Your answer

Is this your 1st IRL foster? *

If this is your 1st IRL foster we ask that you give us 72 hours notice prior to your pickup date so we can get you set up in our system and answer any questions you may have before your scheduled pick up date.

Choose

When do you want to pick up your foster? *

This will be the start date of your foster period. Please give us at least 24 hours notice in advance of your pick-up date (unless this is your 1st IRL foster - then see above).

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

When do you want to drop your foster off? *

This will be the end date of your foster. You're welcome to foster your dog for 24, 48, or 72 hours. Please note - you will need to plan on dropping off your foster at the same location you picked up from unless otherwise instructed by foster staff.

Date

☐ Adult Male[illegible]



Field Trip Fostering

Field trip fosters take a dog off the shelter grounds for an outing, which can last from an hour to all day. The short timeframe makes it easy for busy volunteers and fosters (who may not have the ability to take a dog overnight) to get them out of the shelter and get to know them better.

Fosters should be aware that the purpose of the outing is to learn more about the dog's behavior outside the shelter and to get the dog adopted by documenting what is learned through photos, video and text. Fosters should take the dog to fun places that will make for great pictures. It may be helpful if they bring a buddy so that one person can take pictures while the other is handling the dog.

Items to Consider Bringing on Field Trips:

- Water
- Bowl
- "Adopt me" vest or bandana
- Treats
- Dog waste bags
- Leash
- Properly fitted harness
- Foster dog tags

- Properly fitted martingale collar (snug-fitting with room for no more than two fingers between the collar and the dog's body)



Field Trip Foster Case Study: Austin Animal Center

The people who take dogs on short outings are already volunteers, fosters or staff members. The volunteers manage the short-term foster outings themselves, with oversight from the shelter's foster coordinators. They get the dogs ready, get their own supplies and check out with customer service.

Field Trip Foster Case Study: Fairfax County Animal Shelter

The shelter's volunteer coordinator creates slots in the shelter's volunteer management software so that volunteers and fosters can sign up to take dogs for "Power Hour" foster at specified times. The slots coincide with times the shelter is closed, such as mornings and Sundays. This enables the dogs to get more exercise before the shelter opens to visitors and enables the dogs to be visible at the shelter while it's open.

The shelter has several trained volunteers who assist with the Power Hour program. These volunteers arrive at the shelter before the power hours begin, assist in matching fosters with dogs, help fosters gather needed supplies, and check Power Hour fosters in and out via the shelter's software, saving the foster coordinator's time.



Figure 1: Volunteers knew that getting a 'puppachino' was French Fry's favorite way to end an outing

Guidelines for the Power Hour Program

- Foster must read dog's biography before checking dog out
- Only dogs on the adoption floor are eligible to go, except with manager approval.
- Dogs must have had a rabies vaccination.
- Foster must read and sign shelter's Foster Contract.
- Dogs need to:
 - Be wearing a martingale collar with foster dog tags attached at all times.
 - Be walked using a leash.
 - Not go to any off-leash areas, including dog parks.
 - Be fitted with an approved harness.
 - Be wearing an 'Adopt Me' vest.
- Put a 'Foster Field Trip' sign on the dog's kennel.
- No interaction with other dogs except with manager's approval.
- Fosters must have shelter's emergency contact numbers programmed into their phone.
- Foster caregivers must have adequate training to take home the dogs they are matched with (if the shelter uses a colored dot system for behavior)

Field Trip Foster Location Examples

It may help to give your fosters a list of suggested locations for power hour fostering (or better yet, ask one of them to create a list!). The following is an example of locations near the Fairfax County Animal Shelter in Fairfax, VA. The locations are listed from closest to the shelter to farthest, and include parks, outdoor shopping areas and [stores that allow dogs](#).

Fairfax Government Center- 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax, VA

- Less than 5 minutes away
- Expansive lawn in back, with paths leading to short, wooded trails.

Fairfax Corner- 4100 Monument Corner Dr. Fairfax, VA

- Approx. 5 min away from shelter
- REI, Lucy, and Plow and Hearth are dog friendly. Cupcakes Actually sells Pupcakes.

Old Town Clifton- 7150 Main St, Clifton, VA

- Approx. 10-15 min away
- Petersons – sells mini dog sundaes

Frying Pan Park- 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon, VA

- Approx. 15 min
- Interact with kids and farm animals

EC Lawrence Park- 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly, VA

- Approx. 15 min

Reston Town Center-11900 Market Street, Reston, VA

- Approx. 15 min
- Shelter dogs can get exposure



Offsite Walks and Dog Walking Groups

A dog walking, hiking or running group is a great way for shelter dogs to expend energy and practice walking on leash with other dogs. The best part is, even reactive dogs tend to walk calmly after the first half-mile or so of walking with others.

Pack walks are easy to set up and run. They can be designed with formal rules or a more informal style. Shelters can schedule offsite walks for volunteers and/or the public, and volunteers can be trained to lead them. Informal groups outside the shelter can create dog-walking groups as well.



Group Walk Case Study: Animal Ark Rescue

Animal Ark Rescue runs a successful group hike program that is open to the public. They hold hikes once a month and use Facebook to invite supporters to join them. They generally have between 10-20 volunteers who hike for a few hours with a shelter dog and then have a picnic lunch. They focus on bringing their longest-stay dogs and have had several dogs adopted by hikers and supporters who have seen a dog in photos of the hike online.

Rules

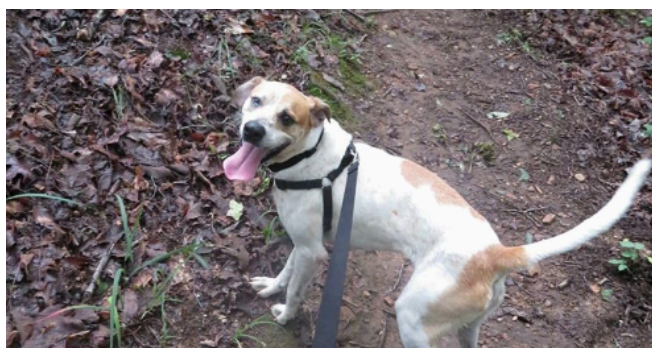
- Participants must be 18 years or older with a valid photo ID, or 16 years old with a parent or guardian present.
- Participants are asked to go to the shelter prior to the hike to pick a dog.
 - Play group coordinator helps to make good matches.
- Dogs are 1 to a vehicle.
 - Exception: if dogs have already been paired and one or both are kenneled
 - They lend airline crates for transport.

The day of the walk

- Upon arrival, group is given a safety briefing on handling tips, medical and environmental emergencies, how to handle dog bites or fights, etc.
- Volunteers are asked to check the dog's harness and collar to ensure that they cannot slip out.
- Group is asked to focus on the dogs and not allow the dogs to socialize.
- If a dog becomes reactive, they ask that the handler step off the trail and create a safe distance between their dog and the group.
- Volunteers coming up behind others are asked to notify other hikers if they are about to pass them.
- Staff brings water, an extra bowl, a map, bug spray, sunscreen and a first aid kit; volunteers are also asked to bring water for their dog.

Marketing

- Create FB event for the hike 1 month in advance.
 - Share once a week to encourage people to participate.



JUL 23 Dog Hike In Pine Mountain
Public · Hosted by Animal Ark Rescue

★ Interested ✓ Going ...

🕒 Sunday, July 23, 2017 at 8 AM
about 5 months ago

📍 Animal Ark Rescue
7133 Sacerdote Ln, Columbus, Georgia 31907 [Show Map](#)

About Discussion

Details

Our first hike in Pine Mountain went so well we decided to make it a monthly field trip! Anyone 18yrs or older with a valid photo I.D. may participate.

****No children will be allowed on the group hike for safety reasons. If you have a child and would like to take a shelter dog on an outing or hike individually, you may swing by the shelter any day during business hours and check out a child-friendly dog for an outing.**** Children 16yrs or older may participate if accompanied by an adult. We will meet at the shelter at 8am sharp. Participants will need to be able to transport a dog of their choosing to Pine Mountain and back to the shelter. You may bring a crate to transport if you like. We have some airline kennels available, but limited quantity.

We recommend you come to the shelter a few days before to select a dog to hike with (take them on a test walk if needed).

****If you plan on transporting and hiking with 2 dogs, please come to the shelter 1-2 days prior to the hike to be matched with a pair of dogs****

We are going to be hiking the Overlook Loop Trail. The trail is 3.4 miles. You will need to pay a fee to park in Pine Mountain. See the Pine Mountain Trail Association website for more details:
<http://www.pinemountaintrail.org/>

Things to bring:

- Flat leash (No retractable leashes allowed)
- water (for you and the dog)
- bowl
- sunscreen
- bug spray
- snacks/dog treats
- picnic lunch (optional)

You are welcome to pack a lunch and picnic with us after the hike or you may head back to the shelter right after to drop your dog off. The choice is yours.

****This outing is for Shelter dogs only. No personal dogs allowed****

This hike will take place rain or shine! This is a public event and any adults are welcome. Please share with your friends!



Group Walk Case Study: Vanderburgh Humane Society

The shelter's Cardio for Canines program allows the public to take dogs for a walk at a specific park every Saturday morning from 8am to 9:30am. Participants don't actually have to walk in a group, but they walk along the same route. This program is managed entirely by volunteers and has its own Facebook page. The program's coordinator is a shelter volunteer, and she has other dedicated CFC volunteers who assist with training and preparation (they are all considered active VHS volunteers).

Preparation:

- The program coordinator and CFC volunteers personally spend time with each dog and place them into the following categories:
 - Walking companion
 - Running OR walking companion
 - Running companion
- CFC volunteers fit each dog with a harness and tie waste bags to each leash. They put together coolers of bottled water for the people and bowls of water for the pups at 2 stations throughout the park.

On Arrival:

- New participants fill out a short registration form and a waiver. This is kept on file, so they do not need to re-register each time.
- Participants are asked if they would like to walk leisurely or if they would like to take an energetic dog on a run. They are then matched with a dog based on their preference.

After the Walk:

- Participants are able to fill out a Behavior Report on the dog they walked. Once a week, a volunteer enters this information into the shelter's software system and puts paper copies in the dogs' folders. This way, potential adopters and the shelter's adoptions staff can see how the dogs interacted with people and other animals at CFC.

Appendix A: Resources

Field trip fostering

Foster field trips: A gateway to community engagement in getting pets adopted

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/foster-field-trips-community-engagement-in-getting-pets-adopted.htm>

This New Year, resolve to start a 'Dogs Day Out' program at your animal shelter

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2017/12/dogs-day-out/>

Mutual Rescue's Doggy Day Out toolkit

<http://mutualrescue.org/doggy-day-out/>

Give 'em a break: Program aims to give dogs a much-needed respite from daily life

http://www.dailyprogress.com/newsvirginian/news/local/give-em-a-break-program-aims-to-give-dogs-a/article_69ac22c2-b4f4-11e6-b64b-0ba8b51d9539.html

We borrowed a shelter dog to go hiking. You can- and totally should- too

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arini-greenwood/shelter-dog-hiking_b_6041240.html

Dog shelter offers ice cream and adventures, sadly isn't accepting human applications

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/20/dog-eating-ice-cream_n_5514558.html

Doggie day trips

<http://www.northernvirginiamag.com/family/pampered-pets/2015/03/23/doggie-day-trips/>

Hawaiian animal shelter on Kauai lets visitors take dogs on a daytime adventure

<http://www.latimes.com/travel/la-tr-d-1018-kauai-canines-20151018-story.html>

Weekend/sleepover fostering

Study: do shelter dogs benefit from short-term foster sleepovers?

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2017/09/study-do-shelter-dogs-benefit-from-short-term-foster-sleepovers/>

How foster sleepovers can improve the lives of shelter dogs

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/foster-sleepovers-can-improve-the-lives-of-shelter-dogs.htm>

Sleepovers lead to forever homes

<https://signalscv.com/2017/02/sleepovers-lead-forever/>

This nonprofit's shelter pup sleepovers aim to help spur adoption

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/people-can-host-shelter-pup-slumber-parties-thanks-to-nonprofits-genius-program_us_57c83956e4b0e60d31dd6749

ASU researcher finds way to reduce stress in shelter dogs

<https://asunow.asu.edu/20170328-solutions-asu-researcher-finds-ways-reduce-stress-shelter-dogs>

Foster sleepover program gives dogs a break

<https://compassionatecircle.bwar.org/foster-sleepover-program-give-dogs-a-break/>

Looking to adopt? A shelter dog slumber party might seal the deal

<http://people.com/pets/looking-to-adopt-a-shelter-dog-slumber-party-might-seal-the-deal/>

Group Walks

A simple walk can teach reactive dogs how to make friends and help owners find the support they need

<https://animalfarmfoundation.blog/2017/03/22/a-simple-walk-can-teach-reactive-dogs-how-to-make-friends-and-help-owners-find-the-support-they-need/>

Georgia shelter tries anything- and everything!- to get pets adopted

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2018/01/innovative-thinking/>

Take a shelter dog hiking

https://www.petsmartcharities.org/blog/take-a-shelter-dog-hiking?utm_source=social&utm_campaign=content&utm_medium=facebook

Appendix B. Cardio for Canines' Animal Behavior Report

Animal Behavior Report

Please Print

Today's Date _____

Your Name _____

Animal's Name _____ ID # _____

Dog _____ Breed _____ Color _____

Please describe the dog's behavior: (circle the answer that best describes)

Energy level – Low/Medium/High; **Follows commands** - Yes/No/Sometimes;

Knows tricks – Yes/No; If yes, what? _____

Easy to walk – Yes/No/Sometimes;

Chases other animals - Yes/No/Sometimes; If yes, playful or predatory?

Fearful - Yes/No/Sometimes; If yes, of what?

This dog may have been found as a stray. Any additional information is helpful in placing this dog in the right home. Would you like to add anything else?

Thank You!

Appendix C. Fredericksburg SPCA's Adventure Tails Protocol



Here are the rules of the game:

1. Person must be 18 years old to take one of our dogs off SPCA premises
2. SPCA Front Desk Personnel must confirm that person knows how to properly walk a dog:
 - A. Do not bring our SPCA dog to a dog park and avoid nose-to-nose interactions
 - B. Dog must remain on a leash at all times
 - C. Person "checking out" animal must have control of leash at all times
3. Front Desk Personnel will recommend an animal based on a list of approved dogs
 - A. Approved dogs MUST have all vaccines, be fixed, and be micro chipped
 - B. Approved dogs cannot be on our behavior watch list
4. Front Desk Personnel will put animal in a tight fitting harness and attach leash for dog walker
5. Front Desk Personnel will get a copy of dog walker's Driver's License, as well as TWO means of contact (phone, email, etc.)
6. Front Desk Personnel will have dog walker sign a liability waiver
7. Dog walker will be informed that SPCA animal should be kept hydrated, especially on 70 degrees plus days. Dog walker will be furnished with a pet bowl and a bottle of water
8. A sign will be placed on kennel of animal on a walk- "I am on an adventure!"
9. SPCA animals must be back to the building no later than 5:45pm
10. Front Desk Personnel will place liability waiver and Driver's License copy into an Adventure folder, which will be kept at the front desk. The front of the folder will have the dog check out sheet on it, and must also be filled out completely.
11. At 5:30pm, Front Desk Personnel will call any dog walker's who have not returned with SPCA animal to remind them of the 5:45pm drop off
12. When SPCA animal is returned, Front Desk Personnel will take a moment to ask how the dog behaved. Leash manners? Interactions with people? Notes taken will be put into PetPoint.
13. When SPCA animal is returned, they will be placed in their kennel with a full bucket of water. If their dinner is not in their kennel, Front Desk Personnel will find or prepare their dinner.
14. Any unusual behavior of animal must be reported to a supervisor immediately.

Name of dog walker	Contact Number	Name of Dog checked out	License Copied and in Folder?	Waiver signed and in folder?



Adventure Tails Dog Walker Agreement

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____
Dog's Name: _____
Address: _____
Primary Phone: _____
Email: _____

Thank you for your interest in walking and socializing our dogs. Please read and abide by the following dog walking rules and initial each line AFTER reading.

- _____ Dogs can ONLY be walked by volunteers over the age of 18.
- _____ Dog leashes must be held securely and wrapped around your hand a few times.
- _____ Dogs must be kept on a short leash at all times.
- _____ Never allow any of the dogs to be off-leash.
- _____ Do not allow any dogs to interact with each other (because of aggression or illness).
- _____ Dog must remain in harness and collar at all times.
- _____ Check here if you would like to be added to our monthly email newsletter.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Adventure Tails Waiver

This Waiver and Release of Liability, Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement

("Agreement") is between the Volunteer and the Fredericksburg Regional SPCA, 10819 Courthouse Rd in Fredericksburg, VA 22408 and its directors, officers, members, employees, agents, assigns, legal representatives and successors.

As a volunteer that is 18 years old or older, I hereby understand and agree to the following: I agree to WAIVE and RELEASE the Fredericksburg Regional SPCA from all liability, manner of actions, causes of action, debts, contracts, claims and demands for or by reason of any illness, death, damage, loss or injury to person and property, which has been or may be sustained as a direct or indirect consequence of the Volunteer's volunteering at or for the Fredericksburg Regional SPCA and notwithstanding that such damage, death, illness, loss or injury may have been caused partly by the negligence of the Fredericksburg Regional SPCA.

I agree to INDEMNIFY and HOLD HARMLESS the Fredericksburg Regional SPCA for any costs or liabilities which they may incur as a result of my volunteering at or for the Fredericksburg Regional SPCA. I acknowledge and agree that I have carefully read this Agreement, that I fully understand the Agreement, and that I freely and voluntarily execute the same. I understand that I may seek independent advice prior to signing this Agreement. I understand that this Agreement is binding on me, my spouse, my executors, administrators, personal representatives and assigns and that this Agreement has important legal consequences. The terms of this Agreement are contractual and not mere recitals. This Agreement will be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of Virginia.

Signature of Volunteer _____ Date _____

I AM ON AN ADVENTURE!



Check me out later!

I AM ON AN ADVENTURE!



Check me out later!

Appendix D. Austin Animal Center's Short-Term Fostering Information

Short-Term Fostering Overnights and Outings

Want to give a shelter dog a break from the stress of the shelter and an opportunity for new experiences? Want to get valuable information about the dog's personality, behavior and needs, thereby helping adopters or rescuers make more informed decisions? The shelter has two different options for short-term fostering.

1. Overnights: Check out a foster in the evening and return the next morning
2. Outing: Check out a foster dog for one hour or an afternoon

Please note:

- Fosters interested in short term fostering opportunities are required to complete the Foster Program Orientation and Outings and Overnights Training.
- These types of outings are most important for longer stay dogs (dogs that have been at the shelter for more than 30 days), those who have behavioral challenges, or those that are overwhelmed in the shelter setting.

Requirements:

- You must be an approved foster and have a completed and signed Foster Agreement on file.
- You must have completed the additional training that is required for short term fostering opportunities.
- You must be available to pick up and return the dog during regular business hours.
- You must review the "Public Outings and Walks - Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog" section on page 12.

Steps:

1. If you are interested in taking a specific dog for an overnight or outing, please contact the foster coordinator to verify that the dog is available, review the dog's behavior records, and to confirm a pickup date and time. If you were not able to confirm with the foster coordinator in advance, please check in with customer service staff in the Cashier's Office for more information about the dog that you are interested in.
2. Once you have confirmed with staff that you will be picking up a specific dog. Staff will make a note in the dog's record concerning where it is going and when it will be returning.
3. When you are ready to pick the dog up, you will need to visit the Cashier's Office and speak to customer service staff.

4. Customer service will need to see a valid ID, get your DL#, confirm your current address/contact information, and have you sign a Foster Agreement if you haven't already.

Timing for taking a dog out:

For an overnight:

- Make arrangements ahead of time for taking a dog out.
- Pick up the dog prior to 7 p.m. in order to complete arrangements.
- Return the dog to its kennel at 11 a.m. the following day, so it will be available for customer viewing.
- Be sure to notify the animal care staffer in the run that the dog has been returned so staff can assure that the dog is fed.

For an outing:

- Pick up anytime between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- Return the dog to its kennel by 7 p.m.
- Remember, being available for customer viewing during open hours increases the dog's chance of being adopted from the shelter. Heaviest customer times are generally on weekends, right after shelter opening, mid to late afternoons, and during special adoption events. The best time of day for an outing will also depend on the times of greatest activity or calm for a particular dog, and their specific needs.

Kennel Sign & Supplies:

Supplies and signage are located in the Cashier's Office.

- Hang the appropriate sign on the interior door of the dog's kennel, with its kennel card, so that staff and visitors will know that the dog is an overnight or outing.
- Grab an "Adopt Me" vest or bandana to help draw attention to your lucky shelter pup during your outing.
- When returning the dog to its kennel, remove the sign that you placed when taking the dog out, and return it to the Cashier's Office.

Keep the following in mind:

- If the dog will be visiting a place other than your home during your time together, consider whether they will truly benefit from, and enjoy the particular environment to which you will be taking them. Think about the surroundings, the traffic (both people and other animals), and whether or not the environment may cause further stress to your chosen dog.
- Crowded public areas should be avoided, including school grounds.
- You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on-leash, under your control, at all times.
- You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other animals, except those in your home.

- Have a blast! Ride in the car, walk in the neighborhood, play, watch TV, whatever you want to do within the limits outlined above. Use structure, kindness, attention, training, and snuggling as needed. Some dogs will want to spend their time resting and some will want to do lots of fun things. Keep in mind the dog's safety and needs and yours, and have fun!

Share the experience:

- Complete a behavior profile for the dog documenting your experience. This can be done in person at the time of drop off, or preferably, via email beforehand. The Foster Dog Profile can be found in the documents section of GivePulse.
- Post fun pictures and details to the "Austin Animal Center Staff, Volunteers and Fosters" Facebook page.

Public Outings and Walks: Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog

Before the Outing/Walk

- Make sure that you have the appropriate supplies. These include: a cell phone, poop bags, a bottle of water, a collapsible bowl, and a list of emergency numbers.
- Make sure that the dog is properly fitted with a collar. If needed, a harness can be used in addition to the collar. If you aren't sure whether or not the dog is properly outfitted, ask staff to check.
- The dog should have a leash properly attached to their collar, or harness. Check to be sure that all equipment is fastened, and that no equipment is frayed, worn or has stitching coming out. Flexi/retractable leashes should not be used.
- Take time to introduce yourself to the dog that you'll be walking. The dog may be excitable. Be calm and assertive and try not to get the dog any more excited or playful than it already is. If you feel that you cannot control the dog, please return it and select a dog that you can safely handle.
- Do not wrap the leash around your hand. It would be terrible for a dog to get loose, but much worse if the dog drug you, the handler, into a dangerous traffic situation. If you feel that a dog is pulling you off your feet or that you are at risk of losing control of the dog, please return it and select a dog that you can safely handle.
- Walk your dog on a short leash – a long leash gives the dog more strength and leverage.

During the Outing/Walk

- Be aware of other dogs, bicyclists, runners and walkers that might cross your path and give them the right of way. Keep your distance from other animals and do not introduce shelter dogs to privately owned dogs.
- Be visible! Wear bright colors so that you can be easily seen by oncoming traffic.
- Cross safely. Look both ways when you cross traffic and remember that the prey drive of any dog can kick in at any time. Be aware of your surroundings and do not let the dog walk far in front of you or far behind you.

- Do not use headphones or talk on a cell phone while walking the dog. Use all of your senses to ensure that you, those around you, and the dog remain safe.
- Pay attention to the dog's respiration rate and overall appearance and attitude. Since many of the dogs have been relatively non-mobile for weeks or months, they may become fatigued quite quickly. Make sure to offer water regularly and take breaks periodically so the dog can catch his breath.
- If you notice the dog acting strangely or you find yourself in a dangerous situation, do not hesitate to contact 311 for animal protection's assistance. You can also contact the foster hotline at 512-978-0541.
- If there is an emergency, such as a person being bitten, call 911 for assistance.

Additional Tips

- Use distance or distraction to reduce aroused behavior
- Keep two hands on leash for best control
- Let faster traffic pass on left, keep slower traffic on your right.
- Reward & praise the dog for calm behavior, easy walking or jogging, and sitting for greetings.
- Have fun!

Appendix E. Humane Rescue Alliance's In Real Life (IRL) Protocol

IRL Dog Foster Program

Purpose: The purpose of this program is twofold: (1) to gather out of shelter information on our medium and large dogs and (2) to recruit and build the confidence of foster parents for this population of dogs.

Gathering Information

Medium and large dogs tend to face significant barriers to placement in foster homes and for adoption. Their size, breeds, and in shelter behavior impact our ability to connect adopters and fosters with these dogs. The In Real Life (IRL) Dog Foster Program will target dogs OVER 40 pounds and/or pitbull type dogs over 6 months to gather information about what a dog is like outside of the shelter. Knowing what a dog is like in a home will help adopters or longer term fosters connect with this population of dogs.

Building a Foster Program for dogs over 40 pounds

While we currently have a traditional foster program that identifies dogs of all sizes and breeds as foster candidates, our population of dogs over 40 pounds is the most difficult to find placement for. We have found two main reasons for this: (1) many fosters specifically request dogs under 40 pounds and (2) once placed with a foster parent, the foster parent often lacks the skill set and/or confidence to persist with fostering the dog they are placed with. It is our hope that the IRL program will enable the recruitment of dog foster parents from our pool of dog behavior volunteers and HRA employees. Additionally, for our existing population of foster parents this program removes the unknown of an undefined foster timeline. With shorter amounts of time that foster parents are expected to be responsible for this population we are hoping that repeated exposure to medium and large dogs will build the the confidence and skill sets of all of our foster parents so that they are able to foster our medium and large dogs for longer periods of time.

Who Can Participate?

- HRA foster parents
- PACK volunteers
- Ipaw Volunteers
- Shelter Scholars
- HRA volunteers who have completed a dog handling training (Open Paw, NYA)
- HRA staff members

What dogs will be candidates?

**Dogs can be in various stages of being made available for adoption (must have a behavior eval)*

- All dogs must be 40 pounds (or more), a pitbull type dog over 6 months, or at the discretion of the foster program
- Additionally they must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Long length of stay (30+ days and/or hidden gem status)
 - Exhibiting stress in shelter
 - Exhibiting fear in shelter
 - Exhibiting poor kennel presence

- Exhibiting signs of deterioration in the kennel
- 8 years or over
- Exhibiting behaviors that are presenting a barrier to adoption and/or foster placement but we suspect are shelter related.

Identifying Candidates

- Candidates for the IRL foster program will be identified through the same means as any other foster candidate (through PMT, foster staff identification, and direct email to foster team from shelter staff).

Matching Candidates with Foster Parents

- Foster Parents will self identify their ability by completing an IRL sign up [Google form](#)
- Foster parents will indicate a pick-up and drop off time, info about their household (other animals, people, single family home etc.) and breed restrictions.
- Foster Parents will need to complete the IRL sign up at least 24 hours prior to requested pick-up date.
- Foster Parents will need to plan on returning their dog to the facility the dog was picked up from.

Before a Dog Leaves for IRL Foster

- Dogs must: have a behavior eval, dog intro, be up to date on rabies, DAPPV, bordatella, be chipped, and have a heartworm test.
- Dogs must not have any medical issues (exceptions will be made at the discretion of the foster program).
- Foster Staff or Program Volunteer will e-mail: contract, foster memo, and rabies certificate to the foster parent in the pick up notification e-mail.
- A copy of the contract will be left at the front desk for the foster to sign upon pick up
- The dog must be fitted with a martingale collar with an attached ID tag and a front clip harness by foster staff prior to pick up.
- Foster staff will hang sign on kennel indicating dog is in IRL foster with scheduled dates of foster.

Animal Care

- It is the discretion of the animal care supervisors and manager to keep or use the dog's vacant kennel.
- Foster staff will share the spreadsheet used to track departures and returns of IRL foster dogs so that animal care managers/supervisors know when dogs will be leaving and arriving back to the shelters. A kennel will need to be available upon the dog's return date in the same area the dog left from (if in an adoption area must be returned to an adoption area without delay).

**During periods of high volumes of dogs the Animal Care Director will have discretion over IRL dogs having to be returned to a different shelter site, and/or location within the shelter, or potentially delaying the return of the foster dog to the shelter by 24 hours.*

Requirements of Fosters

- Ability to send/receive e-mail, access and ability to complete google forms, able to send digital videos/pics, and if on Facebook will become member of foster dog FB group
- Photos, videos
- Provide food, toys, bedding, 4 to 6 foot traditional leash, crate

- Signed the IRL Agreement (to be documented in their person record in PP)
- Signed general foster release (to be documented in their person record)
- Pick up foster without delay (pick up date and time will be provided to the foster parent in the pick-up notification e-mail)
- Drop off on scheduled day, if they would like to keep the dog for a longer period of time they will need to notify foster staff 24 hours ahead of scheduled drop off.
- Provide bio info – testimonial
- Must complete homework survey within 24 hours of returning animal (will not have another dog placed with them until homework is completed)

How the Foster Department will set up IRL Foster in PP

Person Records

- Add/use IRL Foster as the person association
- If the person fostering is not an HRA foster parent:
 - Create the IRL Foster association in the person's record.
 - Add a memo stating they are an approved IRL foster because ____ (indicate that they are a staff member or from the approved pool of volunteers, i.e. "Steve is approved to participate in the IRL foster program because he is a PACK volunteer").

*Remember that when adding a person association go to the details tab of the person record >select the correct association> select add. *If you just change the association from the express tab it will overwrite the other associations that the person has in PP!*

Prior to Departure

- Change the foster start to scheduled prior to the dog leaving for foster care
- The start reason for all IRL Dog fosters should be congruent with the reason the dog is in need of foster placement (LOS, kennel presence, ect.)
- Change the end foster to scheduled and enter the scheduled return date

After Departure

- Once the dog leaves for foster change the foster start to completed
- Make sure the foster start date is the actual date the dog left for foster care
- Change the location to Foster Program and the Sublocation should be changed to IRL Foster

Upon Return

- Change the foster end to 'Completed'
- Change the reason for return to 'end of IRL foster'
- If the dog is returned prior to its scheduled return, enter a reason congruent with the reason the foster had to return the dog early
- Ensure the completed end date is the actual date the foster was returned.
- Ensure that the location of the dog is correct in PP

If the foster elects to keep through adoption

- Change the foster end to 'Completed'
- Ensure the completed end date is the actual date the foster was returned.
- Change the reason to "end of IRL keeping through adoption"
- Start a traditional foster
 - If the IRL foster is not already a traditional HRA foster that has attended a foster orientation, ask that the person to watch the IRL Intro to Fostering Videos [production is in progress]
 - When assigning a case manager, if this is not an HRA foster, indicate to the CM that this person is an IRL foster and will likely need greater support in foster procedures.
 - Do not change the person association
 - Add a note to the person's record to indicate that they are an IRL foster and have not attended an HRA foster orientation.
 - Add them to the dog foster Google group (indicate in PP the e-mail address added to the google group).

Statistics to be Managed Through Google Sheet

- Who fostered - meaning was this a Shelter Scholar, PACK, HRA foster, ect.
- If the foster elects to adopt the dog while in the IRL Foster program
- Average length of IRL stay

Communicating with Foster Parents

Advertising Program

Direct e-mail to targeted foster populations

Ask Cathy to include in weekly HR e-mail

Ask Jackie to include in volunteer e-mail

Promo on Volunteer FB group

Promo on Staff FB group

Direct e-mail to all foster parents

Promo on Foster FB groups

Include in 411

The 1st Time E-mail

Instructions for joining the program and the following attachments:

- HRA Foster Release
- IRL Agreement
- IRL Program Guide
- IRL Quick Reference Sheet

Pick-up Notification

To be sent 12-24 hours prior to pick-up

- Pick-up instructions and the following:
 - IRL Quick Reference Sheet
 - Dog's foster & memo
 - Dog's rabies certificate
 - Copy of the foster contract

- Link to HRA Dog Foster Facebook Group
- Link to IRL Homework
- Link to photosbios@

Return Reminder

To be sent 24 hours prior to drop-off

- Thank-you, return instructions, homework reminder, and the following:
 - Link to HRA Dog Foster Facebook Group
 - Link to IRL Homework
 - Link to photosbios@

Follow-up to complete homework as needed

- Make a note in the person's record that this step was required and should it be required again the person can no longer participate in the IRL program.
- To be sent if the IRL homework isn't completed within 24 hours of the dog's return or switch over to traditional foster.
- Include:
 - Link to HRA Dog Foster Facebook Group
 - Link to IRL Homework
 - Link to photosbios@

Homework

IRL foster parents will be asked to collect photos and videos of their IRL dog.

During the foster period they will need to post one photo/video and a testimonial of their foster to the HRA Dog Foster Facebook group. They will need to complete the IRL Homework Survey and submit photos and/or videos to the photosbios@ email no more than 24 hours after their fosters return to the shelter

Dog Data Collection

- A foster program staff member or designated volunteer will enter the information captured in the IRL Homework into the memo's section in PP.
- Should there be any concerning behavior reported in this information the Foster Program Manager should be notified.
- Should there be any medical concerns reported in this information an exam for the dog should be scheduled in PP



HRA In Real Life (IRL) Dog Foster Program Agreement

____ I have ready all supplies related to caring for a dog such as a standard 4' to 6' leash, dog food, and toys.

____ I will pick up, without delay, my IRL foster dog on the scheduled date during the designated pickup hours communicated to me via foster staff

____ I will complete my IRL homework form within 24 hours after returning my IRL foster dog to the shelter.

____ I will submit photos and videos of my IRL foster to photosbios@humanerescuealliance.org

____ If I am on Facebook I will join the HRA Dog Foster Facebook group

____ If I am on Facebook, I will post at least one photo/video of my IRL foster to the Dog Foster Facebook page.

____ If any of the following behaviors are observed I will immediately notify Hollis Lampe

(hllampe@humanerescuealliance.org) and I agree to follow the instructions provided for next steps:

- Growling
- Charging
- Biting
- Freezing (body is completely still and stiff, often staring at you)
- Behaviors that concern people enough that they don't want to touch the dog or put on or take off equipment
- Nipping that hurts
- Hard mouthing
- Head-whipping (may quickly whip their head and mouth toward your hand or body, especially if you're touching them. You may feel the dog's teeth or nose. This may also happen if you touch the dog while they are highly aroused by another dog or animal)
- Scratching with nails a person that leaves marks
- Compulsive humping where you can't get the dog to stop
- Not being able/willing to go outside on leash or come back inside on leash with just one person walking the dog
- Cornering someone in a den, room or outside
- Compulsive vocalization that sounds like screaming or whining
- Compulsive spinning

____ I have read the IRL Program Guide.

____ I have signed the HRA Foster Program Release

____ I will not take my IRL foster dog to any off leash dog areas and will not allow my IRL foster dog within 10' of other dogs while out on walks

____ I will not allow my IRL foster dog to meet any other animals other than my resident animals.

____ If I choose to introduce my resident animals, I will follow the instructions provided by HRA staff

____ I have a copy of the IRL quick reference sheet handy to use for emergency needs

____ I have the phone number of the New York Avenue Front Desk programmed into my phone (202-576-6664)

____ I will be the only care taker for my IRL foster dog – my IRL foster may not go to a foster sitter, doggie day care, or have anyone other than me care for her. Should the situation arise where I need assistance with the dog's care I will need to return her to HRA.

____ I acknowledge that failure to adhere to the agreements outlined in this contract could result in the immediate request for the return of my IRL foster dog and can jeopardize my participation in the HRA foster and/or volunteer program.

Printed Name

Signature

Date