**Fosters Welcome Checklist**

*Please note, this document is by no means an exhaustive list. Please let me know of other items that should potentially be included.*

1. Review current foster materials and processes.
	1. Materials and policies audit
		1. Find and remove/revise any [policies](https://humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-diy-action-plan#two) or requirements that may be a [barrier](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AVqPcRdIN6rNVhg_8ZGjzT0tFLLQCamJ/view).
		2. Ensure that any questions asked have a purpose and are not needlessly invasive (for example, there’s no reason to ask a person’s gender on a foster sign-up form).
		3. Ensure that the language used is [inclusive](https://buffer.com/resources/inclusive-language-tech/).
		4. Check fonts and text sizes to ensure that text is [accessible](https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/accessibility-topics/text) to all.
		5. Materials to review (minimum)
			1. Foster sign-up form
			2. Foster manual
			3. Email templates
			4. SOPs and logistics
			5. Foster page on your organization’s [website](https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/resources/tips/web-accessibility)
			6. Marketing materials
			7. Foster communications (newsletters, emails)
		6. Reflect on your process for matching people with foster pets.
			1. Is the process equitable? What happens if multiple people are interested in fostering the same pet? How can you ensure that your program is engaging fosters who are members of marginalized groups? (For example, an older person with a disability who can only take small dogs-- maybe go out of your way to make sure they get matched with one even though you may have other fosters who want to take that dog home, but who have a wider range of possible pets they can foster)
	2. Ensure that your organization offers multiple options for fostering.
		1. Ideally, there should be several options for length of time the foster will care for the pet
	3. Include BIPOC, persons who are differently abled, a variety of ages, etc. within the [management structure](https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkit/options-for-foster-care-management/) of the program (foster coaches, etc.)
	4. Matching fosters and pets
		1. Open adoption and fostering
			1. If your organization allows fosters to help make adoption matches, provide them with HSUS’s [Adopters Welcome Manual](https://humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-manual).
			2. If it’s not included already, work the open adoptions philosophy into any training or resources on how to work with potential adopters.
2. Analyze your [community’s demographics](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/), along with those of your foster caregivers (if you don’t have this information on your fosters and it’s the first time you’ve done this, an estimate may suffice)
	1. Some data points to consider
		1. Community’s size & population
		2. Racial/ethnic groups
		3. Languages spoken
		4. Number of citizens with disabilities
		5. Socioeconomic levels
		6. Access to technology
		7. sexual orientation
		8. Ages
	2. Create a list of groups you may not be adequately recruiting and would like to focus on.
	3. Determine if you need to build support into your program for any of these groups (people whose primary language is not English, etc.)?
3. Create/strengthen a support system for community members who may need it. When you begin targeted recruitment, the support they need will be built-in.
	1. Barrier: primary language is not English
		1. What are the languages spoken most often in your community other than English? Choose one or several to begin creating support for.
			1. Choose and train bilingual foster mentors
			2. Have foster materials translated into one or more of the languages spoken most often locally other than English
			3. If your website uses Google Translate or another online translation program, ask bilingual volunteers or fosters who speak the most common languages spoken in your community to look at the foster page(s) and make needed edits to the text
	2. Barrier: doesn’t have access to internet
		1. Can you provide on-the-spot training during the hours the shelter is open? If not, how can you offer this when it’s needed?
		2. How can you create a communication workflow for fosters who don’t have internet access?
		3. Have printed materials available such as information sheets, registration forms, training manuals, and emergency contacts.
	3. Barrier: unable to afford extra fostering expenses
		1. What do you provide fosters with now? Would you want to offer extra assistance to all fosters, or just those who need it the most? What would this look like? Consider:
			1. Create and market an [Amazon wish list](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/ch/list/47-4160770/) (it’s possible to create one list for an organization and sort the items by program)
			2. Ask local volunteer organizations, scout troops or even other fosters to help gather donations that fosters need
			3. Creating a space where fosters can select supplies they need from donations that aren’t needed by your organization (sharing shed, etc.). Supplies don’t all necessarily need to be pet-related.
			4. Reach out for in-kind donations like dog crates and carriers to groups like [Freecycle](https://beta.freecycle.org/) or Free Stuff on Facebook’s Marketplace
			5. Provide monetary stipends to some or all fosters
			6. Providing additional in-kind supplies like pet food for *both* a caregiver’s foster and owned pets.
	4. Barrier: disability
		1. Add closed caption options to any recorded resource materials
		2. Create a mentor program where 1-on-1 support can be given
		3. Consider ways to desensitize shelter pets to wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility assistance tools
	5. Barrier: doesn’t have their own transportation
		1. Volunteers or foster teams who help transport pets to and from foster caregivers’ homes, to vet appointments, etc.
		2. Create a document outlining ways to ride with pets from your local municipality’s bus system and other transportation companies that work locally, like [Uber](https://help.uber.com/riders/article/pet-friendly-rides?nodeId=e4468070-c193-41cf-b792-fa66ecfb1163) and Lyft, if possible.
		3. Create foster [supply houses](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vZVpVay9j9d3i9Q2vu63WTIP5MxqITew/view?usp=sharing) or satellite service centers throughout your community to reduce the distance that fosters need to travel
4. Create and implement a [comprehensive recruitment plan](https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkit/comprehensive-foster-recruitment-plan/) that includes [strategies](https://americanpetsalive.org/blog/open-fostering-its-time-to-make-fostering-inclusive) for extending the invitation to all segments of the community
	1. How can you reach out to those in the community that you’re not currently reaching?
	2. How can you change your messaging to reflect your community?
		1. Include BIPOC, persons who are differently abled, a variety of ages, etc.in photos and stories of people who are fostering and foster pleas