



BAHS Foster Manual

Until they all have a home...

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Dear Future Foster Parents,

Greetings! Thank you for your interest in fostering with the Belleville Area Humane Society (BAHS). We are so grateful that you chose our shelter to participate with and help improve another animal's quality of life.

Fostering is an extremely rewarding, educational, and fun experience. The impact you can have on our community's animals is huge! Some animals come to us as susceptible young puppies and kittens and their young immune system does not do well in a shelter environment. Other animals find their way to us with existing behavior problems and would benefit from some consistent training and discipline. Whether you are looking to nurture a youngster towards more health or help a troubled animal learn social skills, fostering will be a journey that will benefit both animal and foster parent. This handbook will provide a comprehensive guide to our program.

Before we jump into the guidelines of fostering, here is a bit of history about how our organization began:

In 1959 two women, Marilyn Heidelberger and Georgeana Frick, spotted a stray dog that was desperately in need of attention. They realized they had nowhere to take the animal. They wanted a place where residents could bring unwanted pets. Ads were placed in the paper asking others for help. Dozens responded to the call for help and they became a charter. At that time there were not funds to buy property, so animals were kept at the homes of good Samaritans. They would have as many as twelve animals at a time, but space was limited so they had to turn many away. This predicament only made them strive harder to find a solution.

Five years later, the charter took possession of a barn on a small tract of land at 1301 South 11th Street. Fast forward another five years and a lot of fund raising, the group built a small cinder block building with kennels and pens on the land. The building was eventually enlarged to include small runs, more kennels, an office and a kitchen. In 1989, an addition valued at \$100,000 became the current shelter people visit today, with a few more renovations that would happen over the next few years.

As BAHS enters a new chapter, we want to provide our foster parents with those key purposes in our mission. We saw a need to seek out additional foster parents, so thank you for taking the time to read through our handbook to guide you. Our foster program was set up to best serve the animals in our care and our community. Our goal is to ensure the animals are comfortable and happy during their stay with us. With the help of many, we are able to do just that. Thank you for sharing your time, talent, expertise, and compassion to benefit animals in need.

I look forward to seeing you at the shelter or at a community event!

Sincerely,

Katie Nelson
Co-Executive Director

Mission Statement:

The Belleville Area Humane Society will provide temporary care to homeless companion animals and find them loving homes; keep the shelter safe, healthy, and comfortable for our animals; teach the community to properly care for their companion animals and to eliminate overpopulation; increase adoption rates; and raise the necessary funds to provide these services.

Hours of Operation:

Tuesday-Saturday 12:00 AM-6:00 PM

Contact Information:

For foster questions, email Amanda Lalich: foster@bahspets.org or call 618-235-3712. In case of emergency when the shelter is closed, please call shelter managers Dawn Blackwell 618-401-6365 or Tammy Allen 217-825-9087.

BAHS Facts:

- BAHS houses approximately 35 dogs and 25 cats at any given time.
- BAHS never puts down an animal due to lack of space.
- Over 500 animals are adopted from BAHS each year.
- BAHS is 100% donor and business funded. We do not receive any government funding.

For More Information About BAHS Go To:

- **Website:** www.bahspets.org
- **Facebook:** [Facebook.com/bellevilleareahumanesociety](https://www.facebook.com/bellevilleareahumanesociety)
- **Twitter:** @bahspets
- **Instagram:** bahspets

Foster Permits:

Valid until June 2020: All foster permits belong to BAHS. We ask fosters to pay the \$25 foster permit fee. Checks can be made out to Belleville Area Humane Society.

Fostering 101

Animals in foster at BAHS are typically:

- Sick or injured animals
- Puppies and kittens
- Animals with behavioral issues
- Adult animals who are not thriving in kennel environment

Fostering helps these animals by:

- Providing an environment where these animals can prosper. Young, sick, or injured animals, in particular, respond better outside the stressful shelter environment. Stress decreases their already compromised immune systems.
- Teaches animals valuable skills to help them adapt to a home environment.
- Animals who get adopted from foster are less likely to be returned.

BAHS will supply:

- Food and litter (only non-clumping litter with kittens please!)
- Veterinary care, medicines, vaccines
- Crates, leash, bedding, litter box

You supply:

- A separate area in your home for your foster animal (It should be near enough for your animal to receive attention and easy to clean). Utility rooms, bathrooms, sunrooms, and basements can all work well.
- Love

All medical care goes through the shelter. The shelter has a medical coordinator, veterinary technician and access to medication. We also work closely with area vets. We do occasionally send animals to be seen by a veterinarian, but the shelter must make that determination. If you decide to take a foster animal to a veterinarian without approval from Katie Nelson, Shoshana Mostoller, or Tammy Allen you will not be reimbursed. If your foster goes to the vet and medication is prescribed, please call to see if that medication is available at the shelter.

Foster animals should be separated from your own animals for at least 10 days. This is to allow them to get used to you and your home. Separating your animals from the foster also insures that the foster is not presenting a health risk to your pets.

Your foster dog can be taken outside. Dogs should be on leash at all times or in a fenced yard. You must supervise your foster at all times when they are outside. Do not take foster dogs to dog parks. Cats should stay inside and be placed in a carrier any time that they are transported.

Fostering is a 24/7 responsibility. Animals cannot be transferred to any other person. If you cannot keep your animal for any reason you must contact the shelter and we will find your animal another foster home. If you have a vacation or travel plans, please let us know and we will make arrangements for your foster animal during that time.

The average time that an animal is in foster is between 2 weeks and 2 months.

The foster coordinator will work with you to select a foster animal that meets your specific requirements. We will always do our best to match you with an animal that fits with your lifestyle and schedule.

Foster animals may be adopted while they are in your care. We promote animals on Facebook, our website, and at events. Please provide us pictures and video of your foster and information about your foster's behavior. Remember to be honest, but truthful. Send photos to social@bahspets.org.

We ask all fosters to attend at least two offsite events per month with their foster so that your animal can be seen by potential adopters. Don't forget to have your foster dog wear his "adopt me" vest! Fosters will be provided with a list of scheduled offsite events, but you can also take your foster dog on solo outings around town with "adopt me" vest on in order to network for adoptions. You can schedule viewings with approved adopters at the shelter, except in the case of puppies. Puppies must be viewed at designated offsite events or in your home. Fosters must be willing to schedule visits with potential adopters.

If you decide that you want to adopt your foster animal, please let the shelter know as soon as possible. As soon as your foster is posted on our website, we will begin accepting applications on that animal. Your foster will go to the first approved applicant.

Your foster animal may not be house-trained and may have behavioral issues. If you need help with any issues regarding your fosters' behavior please let the shelter know. We have trained staff available to assist you. If your foster animal bites you, you must contact us within 24 hours. We are legally required to report all bites.

BAHS Fosters must agree to the following:

- If BAHS tries to contact you regarding your foster animal, you must respond within 12 hours. Failure to respond could result in BAHS taking your foster animal back.
- You will need to bring your foster to the shelter for vaccinations and worming.
- Animals will be brought to BAHS fundraising events and adoption events.
- You must work with BAHS to arrange the visits of approved adopters.
- Fosters agree to contact BAHS regarding your foster animal's medical care.
- Foster animals may not be placed in anyone else's care. If you can no longer foster, please contact BAHS so that we can make arrangements for that animal's care.

Preparation & Homecoming:

Preparing for your foster

- When you take your foster home, he may be frightened or unsure about what's happening. It's important not to overwhelm him.
- Prepare a special area for the foster to help ease his adjustment into a new home environment. It is better to confine the foster to a small room or area at first, to let him adjust before giving him free rein in your home.
- During the first couple of weeks, minimize the people and pet introductions to your foster dog.
- Don't leave your foster dog unattended in your home with your personal pets until you are comfortable that all of the animals can interact safely.

Daily Routine

- Establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings, potty breaks, and walks
- On a daily basis, be aware of your foster dog's appetite and energy level. If he/she is not eating well or seems inactive, please contact BAHS staff as something may be wrong medically

House-training

- Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (3-6 times daily, depending on age)
- Initially, you may need to take your foster out more frequently to remind them
- Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise indoors

Grooming

- A clean and well-groomed dog has a better chance of getting adopted, so bath your foster dog as needed and brush him regularly if he has longer hair or requires more frequent grooming. BAHS can arrange for grooming services of animals needing extra attention.

Dog-proofing your home

- Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on
- Latch securely any cupboards and doors that the foster dog could get into
- People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by dogs, so please store them in a place that the foster dog cannot access
- Make sure that all trash cans are covered, latched or kept inside a closet
- Keep the toilet lids closed
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals like hamsters or fish are securely out of reach of your foster dog
- Remove medications, lotions, or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach

- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster dog could knock down

Dog introductions

- If you have dogs, BAHS staff will arrange to do a meet and greet at the shelter with your animals and any potential foster dog.
- Once home, we recommend that you keep dogs on leash while they are getting to know one another, this will allow you a safer opportunity for breaking up any potential disagreements by simply grabbing the leash.
- Make sure that high-value items (food, chew toys, plush toys, Kongs, rawhides or anything else that your dogs hold in high regard) are put away whenever the dogs are interacting.
- Never feed your dogs in the same room as the foster dog; always separate them at feeding time.
- Never insert yourself bodily into a dog fight. BAHS staff can provide you with tools and techniques to safely disengage the animals.

Children and dogs

Since we don't always know a foster dog's history or tolerance level for different types of people and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster dog. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and your foster dog.

Key things to remind your children:

- Always leave the foster dog alone when he/she is eating, chewing or sleeping. Some dogs may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the foster dog.
- Do not tease the foster dog.
- Pick up all your toys. Some dogs may not be able to tell the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to the kids.

Cat introductions

- Start by either keeping your cats in a separate room (equipped with food, water, litter boxes and beds) or confine your foster animals to a room.
- Over a one- to two-week period, let the foster animal and cats smell each other through the door, but don't allow them contact with one another.
- Exchanging blankets or towels between the foster's area and the cat's area will help them get used to each other's smells.
- After a week or two, do the face-to-face introduction
- If your foster animal is a dog, keep him on leash, allow your cat out in the same area. (If you have more than one cat, introduce one cat at a time.)

- Watch the body language of each animal closely and don't continue the interaction if either pet becomes over-stimulated or reacts aggressively. The idea is to keep the interactions positive, safe and controlled.
- Never leave your foster animal unsupervised with any cats in your home.