

# **Saving Cats and Kittens with a Foster Care Program**



## About Alley Cat Allies

Alley Cat Allies is the only national nonprofit dedicated exclusively to the protection and humane treatment of all cats.

For 25 years, Alley Cat Allies has led the movement to save cats' lives. With advocacy, education, and grassroots organizing, we champion innovative programs and policies that serve communities and save cats. Since our founding in 1990, we have popularized Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) as the only humane and effective approach to community cats. Before Alley Cat Allies, TNR was virtually unknown in America, and no local governments supported it. Today, a growing list of more than 500 municipalities has officially embraced TNR.

Alley Cat Allies has changed how all cats are treated—pet, stray, feral, and each cat in between. We advocate for a variety of progressive policies to protect cats, including the transformation of the American animal shelter system, which still routinely kills 70 percent of all cats who enter.

Thanks to our more than half a million supporters, and countless advocates, Alley Cat Allies works in hundreds of communities each year. To learn more about how we save cats' lives, visit [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org).

## Shelter Series

This resource is one in a series for shelters and animal control, and was developed by Bonney Brown and Diane Blankenburg of Humane Network.

# Saving Cats and Kittens with a Foster Care Program

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction—What creating a foster care program will do for you.....	4
Overview of Program Components .....	4
Step-by-Step Guide to Develop Your Program.....	5
<b>1. Goal-Setting</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Gathering statistical information about cats and kittens in need .....	5
Writing measurable goals .....	8
Creating a timeline .....	9
<b>2. Policies (types and elements of policies)</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>3. Record-Keeping</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Tracking animals.....	13
Tracking statistics.....	14
<b>4. Communications and Structure</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Identifying leaders and coordinators.....	15
Establishing a communications system .....	16
<b>5. Logistics (flow of animals)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>6. Funding</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>7. Volunteers</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Marketing for successful volunteer recruitment.....	23
Retaining volunteers.....	28
Launching Your Foster Care Program.....	28
Revitalizing an Existing Foster Care Program.....	29
Troubleshooting Guide for Creating a Foster Care Program .....	30
Conclusion .....	33

## Introduction

Implementing a new Foster Care Program will enable you to dramatically improve your shelter's and community's live release rate for felines. It will also elevate your organization's presence in the community and enable you to develop deeper relationships with supporters. It will be challenging but also incredibly rewarding! With the many benefits, it's well worth the effort to make your foster care program as effective as possible and get it going as soon as possible.

This toolkit will help you get your program off the ground quickly and avoid common pitfalls and difficulties. It includes worksheets to lead you through the needed elements of a successful program, provides editable sample documents and forms and offers recommendations from experts who have led a successful program that provided foster care for more than 2,500 animals a year in a community of 418,000 individuals.

## Overview of Program Components

This toolkit will assist you with creating a successful foster care program—walking you through each of the key components, including:

- **Goal Setting**
  - Understanding the scope of the need through statistics and information-gathering
  - Creating inspiring goals and a timeline for your program
- **Defining policies**
- **Record-keeping, tracking animals and managing statistics**
- **Developing a communication and program structure**
  - Identifying leaders and coordinators
  - Establishing a communications system
- **Logistics, managing the flow of animals**
- **Funding your foster care program**
- **Volunteers**
  - Marketing to recruit volunteers
  - Training volunteers
  - Retaining volunteers



## Step-by-Step Guide to Develop Your Program

Here's your step-by-step guide to establishing the key components of your foster care program. These no-nonsense, down-to-business planning steps cover each of the key areas listed above.

Each step contains essential information, offers recommendations based on successful programs, and provides spaces for you to document decisions and check off completed tasks. In some cases, suggested future work is recommended, e.g. tasks to undertake at some point in the future, once your program is up and running.

### STEP 1: Goal-Setting

#### Part 1: Gathering statistical information about cats and kittens in need

It's helpful to gather information about the need for a foster care program within your shelter and possibly within your whole community. Understanding the scope of the need and knowing the number of animals that could benefit will help guide you in developing an effective program that will have the lifesaving impact you are seeking. The best place to start is with your own shelter (if you work or volunteer at an open-admission shelter). If you work at a limited-admission shelter or are working to improve the overall save rate for your community, you may also want to gather information from the largest open-admission shelter(s) in your community, as that is where you will likely find the greatest numbers of cats and kittens in need.

## Fill in the numbers below. (Statistics unavailable? See the suggestions below.)

Incoming cats: Use the number of incoming cats/kittens in the most recent full calendar or fiscal year. (IMPORTANT NOTE: You are looking for total numbers without any animals eliminated due to their age, condition, or owner-requested-euthanasia status.)

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

### Incoming cats:

Total felines coming into the shelter: \_\_\_\_\_

If more detailed information is available, document those intake numbers here. (Shelters record animals differently, so you may need to add or eliminate categories.)

Senior cats: \_\_\_\_\_ Adult cats: \_\_\_\_\_ Kittens: \_\_\_\_\_ Neo-natal kittens: \_\_\_\_\_ Feral cats: \_\_\_\_\_

### Euthanasia of cats:

Total number of cats/kittens euthanized for any reason and regardless of age or condition.

Total felines euthanized: \_\_\_\_\_

If more detailed information is available, document those numbers here.

Senior cats: \_\_\_\_\_ Adult cats: \_\_\_\_\_ Kittens: \_\_\_\_\_ Neo-natal kittens: \_\_\_\_\_ Feral cats: \_\_\_\_\_

The difference between the number of cats euthanized and the number coming into the shelter are those cats with a live outcome or those still in the shelter population. You can use these numbers to calculate the save rate or euthanasia rate. There are several other ways to analyze shelter statistics that offer additional insights into the needs of the animals in the community, but for our purposes, these basic statistics will help us gain an understanding of the number of cats that could potentially be saved by a robust foster care program.

For a look at your whole community, gather this same data from all the shelters. Adding the statistics from all major shelters in your area can give you an approximate community-wide save rate. In doing your calculations, take care not to count incoming animals that are transferred between agencies in your community twice. For example, if a cat comes into animal services and is transferred to another local shelter, you want to count that cat only once in terms of community-wide intake, so when looking at multiple shelters you need to obtain separate numbers for transferred animals (from other local shelters) from those arriving at the shelters as strays, owner surrenders, or other sources.



The goal is to achieve a community-wide save rate of 90% or more. There will always be a small percentage of animals too sick or injured to be saved and for whom euthanasia is the most humane option. In general, this number is less than 10% of the population of animals arriving at the shelters. Of course, 90% is just a benchmark. Some communities save substantially more than 90% of the cats and kittens.

Current save rate for felines in our shelter is \_\_\_\_%.

Current save rate for felines in our community is \_\_\_\_%.

### Why are statistics important?

Knowing the numbers helps you determine the extent of the need in your community. Additionally, it helps you track your progress and to know if what you are doing is working or if it needs tweaking or even a major overhaul. It is important to be able to share your lifesaving successes with staff, volunteers, donors, and the public at large, as you will need the support of all of these groups.

### Statistics unavailable?

What if you cannot get statistics? Don't despair. You can still get a picture of the level and type of need by talking with people. Seek out knowledgeable individuals, such as staff members who work with cats, the shelter veterinarians, managers, and volunteers, and ask them which of the animals are most in need of help in order to be saved. Ideally, you will get several different sources to help you form a fairly accurate picture.

### Kinds of cats that are most at risk (quantify when possible):

- neonatal kittens: \_\_\_\_\_
- weaned kittens: \_\_\_\_\_
- treatable (sick/injured) cats: \_\_\_\_\_
- geriatric cats: \_\_\_\_\_
- feral cats: \_\_\_\_\_
- healthy adult cats: \_\_\_\_\_

Of these at-risk animals, which ones could benefit from a foster program?

## Part 2: Writing measurable goals

Goals help keep you focused on achieving results, guide you in making effective decisions, and inspire you to take action. They also enable you to measure your success and make adjustments to the program, as needed, to ensure you achieve them. Ideally, your goals will be specific, measurable, and have a target date associated with them. You can create your own goals for this program or adapt these recommended goals.

### Sample foster care program goals that you can adapt

(Statistics you have gathered should help guide you in your goal-setting)

1. Provide foster care for \_\_\_ cats/kittens within the first six months of the program and \_\_\_ cats/kittens within the first year.
2. Ensure positive outcomes (adoptions) for the cats and kittens that go through the foster care program with a \_\_\_% increase in cat/kitten adoptions.
3. Improve the save rate for cats/kittens this year by \_\_\_\_% (15%, 20%, 40%, and more?)





### Part 3: Creating a Timeline

You will want to consider when to launch your foster care program.

Many communities experience a routine “kitten season” or times of the year when shelter admission of cats is predictably heavier. If this is the case in your community, you can have the greatest impact by launching the foster care program before the height of this high-intake period.

It is possible to put the basic elements in place and create a foster care program within an existing organization in only a few weeks with dedicated effort. In general, it works best to decide when the program will be needed and then work to meet that time frame. Keep in mind that you can grow and develop your program as it is under way.

Once you set the launch date, you can work back from there to plan the components of the program. Depending upon the size of your program, the available resources, and the amount of time available to get the planning and preparation done, using this step-by-step toolkit, it may be possible to launch a program within as little as two weeks. Look over each of the steps and consider how quickly you will be able to work through them in order to meet your ideal program launch date. Record the dates below. (Note: These may be completed in a different order.)

Target launch date for the foster care program: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer recruitment and training due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Policies and forms due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Logistics due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Record-keeping and animal tracking due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Communications and structure due date: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 2: Policies

Establishing policies will help your program run smoothly, but keep in mind that you want to avoid creating too many restrictive and limiting policies that in practice make it harder to achieve your lifesaving goals for the program.

### Recommendations for Policy Setting:

- Keep policies to a bare minimum so that you can be as flexible as possible.
- Don't be too strict or you run the risk of losing great potential foster homes. Avoid imposing unessential requirements on foster caregivers such as home inspections.
- Look to other successful programs as models.

### Apply Your General Policies

It is possible to simply apply the current organizational policies to many aspects of the foster care program. For example, if currently only a director-level staff member can approve after-hours care at an emergency clinic, it makes sense to duplicate policy as part of the foster care program. Thinking through the things that might come up are important though, so that you can be sure that any new staff members and volunteers are aware of policies that will impact their work with the foster care program.

For example, if your organization discourages the declawing of cats as part of the adoption process, it would be prudent to routinely inform potential foster caregivers so that people who feel they must declaw their pet cats but still want to become foster caregivers are aware of this issue up front—before they decide they wish to adopt one of their foster kittens and are then blindsided by this policy. One way to handle this is to include the question about current pets that may be declawed and then to have a gentle conversation where you ask a lot of questions about why they decided to declaw their cats (perhaps the cat was declawed when they got her, their vet advised it, or they simply did not know that it was detrimental to the cat). It is possible through a kind discussion and sharing information to change minds about declawing, so it is important not to make assumptions based on the answer alone.



## Supplies

One thing that you will definitely want to decide on and include in the documentation provided to foster homes is who is responsible for providing the care basics; food, litter, toys, etc. Will the organization provide some or all of this? Are you able to provide it if the caregiver cannot? Or is providing these items a requirement for the foster home?

## Vet Care

Vet care is probably the largest expense associated with foster animals. If you have a clinic and will be treating the kittens there, be sure that this is clear to the caregiver. You may want to spell out that if they decide to use their own vet, the organization will not be able to provide reimbursement. You will want to be sure that it is very clear how the caregivers arrange for basic care such as vaccines and spay/neuter for the animals, as well as what they are to do in the event of an emergency.

## Adoptions

Another key issue is whether foster parents will be allowed to process adoptions independently or if they must use the organizational paperwork. Whatever you decide about the adoption process, it is very important to ensure that all of the kittens are spayed or neutered before adoption, so requiring that this be done at your clinic (or that proof be provided before adoptions are finalized) will probably be a policy you will want to implement. Waiving adoption fees for pets that a foster care volunteer has cared for is a nice way to say thank you.

## Create and Adjust

Keep in mind that you can make adjustments as your program goes along. It does not need to be perfect on the launch date. We recommend a “create and adjust” approach in general. This way you do not have to wait for everything to be perfect before you launch your lifesaving foster program, and you can feel comfortable applying what you learn to make the program better as you move forward. How strict should you be? It’s important to make sure that you are not too restrictive in your policies. Always remember that policies are just guidelines and should be able to be waived or amended by managers as common sense and lifesaving priorities dictate.

## Editable Sample Documents

The documents in the Appendices are editable and provide language for addressing all of these common issues. You can adapt them to work for your organization to help you get your program off the ground quickly. The Appendices containing the Program, Process, and Animal Care documents will be most helpful to you for this aspect of developing your program.

## Documenting Policies

Depending upon your personal and organizational comfort level, you may decide to document the policies as part of the working documents used for the program (such as those in the Appendices).

Below is a list of some essential policies you will want to discuss and plan before launching your program.

**Basic Supplies are provided by:**

- Your organization
- Foster caregiver
- Both

(elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

**Veterinary Care will be provided by:**

- Your organization
- Foster caregiver
- Both

(elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

**Adoptions (check all that apply)**

- May be arranged by the foster caregiver.
- Adopters must sign organizational adoption contract .
- Animals must be spayed/neutered and vaccinated before adoption.
- Animals must be returned and adopted out through the shelter.

Other (elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

**Adoption Fees**

- Adoption fees **will be** waived for foster caregivers adopting their foster animals.
- Adoption fees **will not be** waived for foster caregivers adopting their foster animals.

If a foster caregiver encounters an illness with the animals they are caring for (e.g., ringworm, parvovirus, panleukopenia, etc.), what are the waiting periods for fostering new animals after having such diseases in the foster home? (You may want to do online research and consult with your vet to make this decision.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Are there any restrictions for foster caregivers regarding:**

- Foster animals mingling with other pets
- Foster animals going outside
- Foster animals going to dog parks
- Foster animals being off leash
- Foster animals having pet sitters

Others? \_\_\_\_\_



## STEP 3: Record-Keeping

### Part 1: Tracking animals

#### You will need to identify or create a system to track:

- Animals, both those in need of foster homes and those currently in foster homes.
- Foster caregivers, both those who are currently active (with animals in their care) and those who have said they are willing to foster animals.

Most organizations already have a process for tracking animals as well as volunteers and supporters. In this case, it is possible that there will be ways to utilize these existing databases to track the animals and volunteers. However, if these systems do not exist or if it is initially too complicated to work within these existing systems, using Excel spreadsheets to track the information you need is a good and easy alternative.

#### Information that needs to be tracked:

##### Animals (check all that apply)

- Species
- Animal ID#
- Name
- Age
- Neuter status
- Health status
- Listing of other related animals (Is the animal 1 of a litter of 6? Is this a mom with a litter? The purpose is to connect animals that should go into a foster home together.)
- Date in need of foster home
- Date entering foster home
- Foster caregiver's name and contact information
- Follow-up status
- Return date
- Disposition
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### Foster Care Volunteers:

- Name
- Contact information
- Foster capabilities/preferences
- Current status (open, vacation, active)
- Animals in their home presently
- Past animal health issues
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are there software packages/systems currently available within the organization that will meet the tracking needs? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, will Excel meet your needs? \_\_\_\_\_.

If not, you can seek a volunteer with IT experience to assist you.

## **Part 2: Tracking statistics**

Documenting the number of animals that go through your foster care program is important and helpful in terms of sharing with the foster caregivers, the executive director, board members, your donors, and the public at large through the media. Be sure that your animal tracking system allows you to document this number.

You will also want to see the impact that your foster care program has on your organization (and the community's) save rate over time. Be sure to retain the data from the first step so that you can use it for comparisons in the future.



## STEP 4: Communications and Structure

### Part 1: Identifying leaders and coordinators

Select a coordinator (volunteer or staff) who will lead your Foster Care Program. The coordinator will be in charge of the program and ultimately, responsible for the achievement of goals. He/she will work in coordination with a staff supervisor, preferably a staff director or other high-level manager who can assist with making things happen and resolving problems and eliminating barriers quickly and effectively. The ideal situation is to bring the coordinator on board now, while you are still putting the program together, so that they can be part of the planning and development process.

#### **Recommendations for success in selecting a coordinator:**

- Select people who like people and have sound skills. A personal passion for the animals is important, but without people and business skills, it will not be possible to maximize the potential of a foster care program.
- If you are seeking a volunteer to fill this role, be sure it is someone who can be available at critical times.
- The person filling the position needs to have very good organizational skills, technical abilities, and interpersonal skills, as well as determination and the ability to separate emotions from the tasks.
- If you are unable to identify a single volunteer or staff member to take on the job, consider dividing it into parts assigned to different people OR creating co-managers to work with the program, each with distinct responsibilities or scheduled days.

#### **Check off each of these actions as you complete them:**

- Develop a Foster Program Coordinator job description (you can adapt the sample provided in the Appendices). A job description for this important role is needed whether the person is a staff member or a volunteer.
- Do you have funding for a staff position? Work with management to see if funding can be identified or if a current staff member can be assigned to this role. Longer term you can get the position into next year's budget and work on the recommendations in the Funding step.
- If funding is not available, you will need to recruit a volunteer. It is still best to treat it as an official position. You can post the opening on volunteer websites and listings in your community and send a notice out via e-mail and social media inviting people to apply for the volunteer position.

## Part 2: Establishing a communications system

You will need to devise a plan to ensure that you have good communications to support the program at critical points, both internally, within the organization, and externally with volunteers and the media.

### Recommendations for Communications Processes:

- Communication is the most critical function in almost any program and unfortunately, one of the most difficult to execute well. Be sure to include (or at least inform) key people from all parts of the organization when developing the Communication Plan so that everyone's needs are being met.
- Some team members are more technical than others so be sure you are using avenues that work well for all involved.  
For example, email may work well for senior staff, but posters and meetings may be more effective for staff members who do not have computer access throughout their workday.

In the Appendices, you will find sample documents that cover many aspects of communication.

### Internal communications will likely include:

- Getting information on a timely basis about the animals in need of foster homes.
- Ensuring that staff members who may interface with the foster caregivers have the information they need to assist them effectively. This will include both process and animal care information.
- Coordinating the care of sick foster animals with the clinic or a veterinarian.

### External communications include:

- Finding foster homes on a timely basis (usually done via phone, email, and social media).
- Ensuring a smooth foster animal pick-up process for the volunteers.
- Supporting volunteers throughout the time they have animals in their care, including medical emergencies that might occur in the middle of the night. (Check out the Emergency Phone support information in the Appendices.)

What other information needs to be communicated, to whom and when?

---

What avenues are already available within the organization for sharing information?

---

What avenues work best for internal communications?

---

What avenues work best for external communications?

---





### Recommendations for Communications and Developing Documents:

- Keep all documents short, simple, and to the point.
- In preparing recruitment materials, be sure that they are positive in tone. Trying to guilt people into volunteering by laying an emotional burden on them is not a fair or effective recruitment strategy. People will soon tune out and stop reading your messages.
- Specific tips for written communications.
  - Be polite and friendly.
  - People are busy so keep it brief. Write out your communication and then read it over, eliminating non-essential words. Get right to the point.
  - A picture paints a thousand words so be sure to use images.
  - Have a second person proofread—for grammar, clarity and tone—all messages before they are sent out to the public or posted online.

You will want to be sure to develop the following documents (you can use the editable samples of documents in the Appendices). You can use the checklist below to track your progress on creating them.

- Foster caregiver application
- Foster caregiver agreement
- Foster caregiver information packet, including:
  - Vet care follow-up for vaccines and spay/neuter return date information
  - Caring for orphaned kittens and other care information sheets related to:
    - Bottle feeding
    - Socializing feral kittens
    - Common health issues
    - Other information, as appropriate
  - Why you should keep pets separate
  - Common health issues
  - Emergency instructions and contact information
  - Adoption instructions and documents (what is needed will depend on whether foster caregivers will be processing adoptions independently)
  - Recruiting Information to attract volunteers and explain the program to the public at large and the media, including an FAQ sheet.
  - General staff training information so they know how to handle the aspects of the program for which they will be responsible.
  - Emergency help information for staff and volunteers, including infectious disease protocols.
  - Other documents needed include: \_\_\_\_\_

### Future Work:

While it is not needed to launch your program, you may want to set the goal of developing a Foster Care Program Training and Reference Manual to assist future Foster Program Coordinators and to help train assistants (both staff and volunteers) and fill-in staff in administering the program. (There is a sample handbook in the Appendices which you can adapt for your own use.)

## STEP 5: Logistics

You will want to define and plan each action, from determining which animals need foster care to getting the animals into adoptive homes. For each step, note any critical time or space factors and who specifically (by role) is responsible to ensure that it happens. Key logistical action points to cover within the foster care program include:

### **Recruiting foster homes**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Determining which animals in the shelter need foster care**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Lining up suitable foster homes for the specific animals that day**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Caring for animals until placed in foster home**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Getting animals into the foster homes—transportation or pick up**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Providing vet care and needed services, such as spay/neuter, vaccinations**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Handling animal health crises 24/7**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

### **Planning a live release/adoption outlet for all fostered cats and kittens (more details below)**

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_

**Other** \_\_\_\_\_

Considerations \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person \_\_\_\_\_



### **Planning Live Release for all Fostered Animals:**

You will need to develop an exit strategy that will determine how and when animals will leave the foster program and find adoptive homes.

It is critically important that a live outcome be guaranteed for foster animals. This is the only way to keep your trust with the volunteers who are giving their time and attention to these animals. It's also critical to achieving the goal of increasing the overall save rate. If this is going to be a challenge for your organization, you will want to spend time planning now.

### **Recommendations for Assuring Live Release:**

- In most cases, it will be necessary to increase the adoption capacity of the shelter or organization to meet the volume of cats and kitten going through foster care. This is an achievable challenge! For advice on how to do this, check out the list of resources for increasing pet adoptions in the Appendices.
- If you have a shelter/clinic, it is often easiest to have the animals come back to the shelter for remaining vaccinations, spay/neuter surgery, and adoption. However, if their return will displace animals causing others to be euthanized, you will need to seek alternatives, such as special adoption venues and events for fostered animals.
- Whether the animals are going back through the shelter or not, encourage the foster caregivers to find adoptive homes.
- Keep in regular contact to be sure that foster caregivers are following exit strategy processes so that animals are moving along and not tying up the foster home longer than necessary.
- Don't let current capacity challenges or limitations totally shut you down. With determination, you can likely find a way to create the capability within the organization, within the community, or by partnering with other organizations or businesses.

### **The current exit strategies for cats in the shelter/organization include:**

Adoptions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Is there sufficient capacity in these strategies/programs to accommodate the foster cats and kittens returning to the shelter/organization?**

- Yes
- No

**Would the foster animals displace others and result in euthanasia?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you have (or can you create) adoption venues or events where animals can be taken to for adoption by foster caregivers?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you have or could you recruit volunteers who are not foster caregivers but would take animals to adoption venues or events?**

- Yes
- No

**Will you allow and/or encourage foster caregivers to find their own adoptive homes?**

- Yes
- No

**Our plan to ensure live release for all fostered cats and kittens:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Future Work:**

Ideally, you will document the flow of the overall fostering process from an animal who needs fostering to an animal leaving the foster program and going into an adoptive home. (There is a sample foster care process flow document in the Appendices which you can edit and adapt.)

### **Recommendations for using your process flow document:**

- A process flow is a great training tool and also helps you identify inefficiencies in the process and make improvements.
- Be sure to share the flow with everyone in the organization so that all understand the process.



## STEP 6: Funding

It is possible that since a foster care program directly supports the mission of many animal welfare organizations and shelters, you may be able to find funding within your current organizational budget or get it added to the next budget. However, in some cases you may need to help identify other potential funding sources or even help raise funds. For this reason, it can be helpful to take a look at some of the potential cost-savings and income opportunities.

### Recommendations for cost-savings and income opportunities:

- Since the shelter has many fixed costs and since it will already be doing many of the things needed to support the foster care program, added costs will be minimal.
- The reduction in euthanasia, both in terms of staff time and the drug and disposal costs associated with it, will offset some expenses.
- Since more animals will be adopted out, this will create some increase in adoption-associated donations and fees.
- In-kind donations (needed items) and pro-bono services can be sought to keep costs down.

### Resources currently available for the foster care program include:

---

---

### Our other options to seek support include:

- News media
- Business sponsorships
- Individual donor sponsorships
- Existing volunteer base
- Existing donor base
- Foundation grants (Community Foundation Center, local family foundations, and national animal welfare grants)
- Social media outreach
- Third-party or volunteer-organized fundraising events
- In-kind donations (pet food and other items)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Of these possibilities, which would you see as most likely to be fruitful?

Select the top five fundraising strategies to be pursued:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Prepare a statement of expected expenses

Below is a list of common expenses and space for you to estimate minimal and optimal budget levels.

Expense Budget	Minimum	Optimal
Wages/payroll		
Benefits		
Other payroll/employee exp		
Outside veterinary services		
Medication		
Animal food and formula		
Animal care supplies		
Adoption Events		
Advertising		
Phone equipment/service		
Computer equip/software		
Printing		
Postage		
Office supplies		
Janitorial/cleaning supplies		
Vehicle maintenance		
Rent/Occupancy		
Travel local (gas)		
Refreshments for meetings		
Other		
<b>TOTAL</b>		

Additional Income Projection and Cost Savings	Minimum	Optimal
Increased adoption income/donations		
Reduced staff, drug and disposal costs for euthanasia		
Grant income		
Other cash donation income		
Other		
<b>TOTAL</b>		



After gathering the above information, consider how much, if any, additional fundraising is needed to support the program. If you need to raise additional funds, then return to the top five fundraising strategies you identified above and plan how they can be pursued.

## STEP 7: Volunteers

### Part 1: Marketing for successful volunteer recruitment

You will need to develop a marketing plan with clearly established timelines and text that effectively communicates your message. The recommendations and questions below will help you determine the best strategies and messages to support your program.

#### **Recommendations for successful marketing to support your program:**

- Recruiting foster homes should be the primary focus of your outreach and messaging, because they are the most critical element of your success.
- Search the internet to see what other organizations are doing to promote their foster care programs and borrow ideas from successful programs.
- Remember that you want the idea of becoming a foster caregiver to be inviting so emphasize that it's rewarding, fun, and saves lives. (Check out the marketing examples in the Appendices.)
- Use images of animals; adorable kitten images inspire many people to help. Facebook is an especially powerful asset—posting a photo of an animal who needs foster care today can be an effective recruiting tool since friends and fans can be asked to share the post, quickly expanding your reach.
- Be sure your messaging includes all pertinent information. Be as specific as possible in your request; the more specific the request for help, the better the result. If you need Kitten Milk Replacement, say so; if you need five foster homes today, tell people. Also, be clear about how people should respond.
- Be ready to reply promptly to the resulting offers of help and inquiries—both from the media and the public. There's no substitute for a prompt reply! You want to engage people while they are enthusiastic.
- People's lives change so folks who were unable to volunteer in the past may now be available. For this reason, it is important to periodically ask all donors, supporters, and past volunteers, as well as the public at large, if they can foster an animal.
- Successful marketing is an ongoing process. Remember that in general people need to see or hear a message six times before they respond.

## What is the desired outcome of your marketing plan?

What would you like your marketing efforts to produce?

- More foster caregivers
- Donated food and supplies
- Cash donations for the program
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel would be the most successful message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What funding do you have for marketing materials and advertising? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What free avenues are available?

- News stories
- Sponsored ads by local businesses or individuals
- Public service announcements
- Donated ad space
- Donated services such as graphic arts work
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are there particular target audiences? Who is most likely to become a foster caregiver or influence others to become a foster caregiver?

- Adults with children
- Retired individuals
- Any adult
- Young adults
- Other \_\_\_\_\_





Identify marketing methods based on resources available and what you think will be most effective in your community. Consider costs and potential results.

Possible methods are listed below. Select a minimum of eight, but preferably more:

- Recruiting from current volunteers and supporters
- Website
- E-newsletter
- Mailings (letters or postcards)
- Direct ask through phone calls
- Weekly newspaper column
- Magazine/newspaper articles
- News release
- Public Service Announcements (radio, TV, digital billboards)
- Social media
- Community volunteer postings (websites, newspapers, senior organizations)
- Posters (in shelter and community)—ask volunteers to print and distribute through churches, schools, jobs, neighborhoods
- Local companies/organizations—ask them to share with employees/members via email, bulletin boards, etc.
- Local TV/radio show appearances or mentions
- Informational/recruiting meeting in different parts of the community or at the shelter

What venues do you feel will give the biggest return with the least amount of time, effort and funds? Star these and start with them first.

Create a plan that defines the best venues for each message and different audiences.

Develop a schedule of when each venue will be used. See the sample marketing plan in the Appendices.

## Part 2: Training Volunteers

Establish a volunteer management and support system that will allow you to manage volunteer activities and needs.

### Recommendations for effective training:

- Assign someone to respond to all queries from potential volunteers. You want to be sure to make immediate contact and better yet, put them to work while they are enthusiastic.
- Keep in mind that the commitment of most volunteers averages only 90 days so volunteer recruitment is an ongoing task. Since fostering is seasonal, there tend to be more returning volunteers than with other opportunities. Giving them a break between fostering commitments can also help keep them engaged for the long run.
- Be sure that policies protect your agency and the animals, but also consider the feelings of volunteers. Some programs don't want to lose good foster homes so they forbid adoptions by foster caregivers or they want to overly control the adoption process by rigidly adhering to an in-adoption policy that forbids foster homes from placing the animals in their care. Before you adopt such policies, carefully consider the message they send to foster caregivers.
- Requiring too much training and lead time can greatly impact the effectiveness of a foster program that is dependent upon quick turnaround to save lives. It can also be difficult for people to retain information if there is a long period between training and using the information. On-the-spot training can be very effective; additional training can be provided real-time, on an as-needed basis so long as a knowledgeable staff member or volunteer is available by phone.
- Remind foster caregivers about basic care when they get a new fostered pet(s), especially litters of kittens. Create a checklist for staff and volunteers of what to review with each foster caregiver to make sure key items are covered. (There is a sample checklist in the Appendices) Provide written and illustrated materials for future reference.
- Keep different learning styles in mind as you plan your training. Most people learn well by observing and then performing a task themselves while you observe and coach. (In the case of fostering kittens, consider using a Beanie Baby kitten for an easy and memorable way to show people how to care for them.)
- In some cases, it may be helpful to use illustrations to show the correct way to do something with the incorrect way clearly marked as such and a brief explanation of why it is important to do it correctly. For example, demonstrate the proper way to bottle-feed a kitten with the kitten in an upright position; then explain, and demonstrate, that bottle-feeding a kitten on its back may cause fluid to flow into the lungs, causing aspiration pneumonia, which can be fatal.
- Having 24/7 on-call help available for foster caregivers is both critical to saving the lives of fostered animals, ensuring that medical bills are kept under control, and helps with recruiting and retaining foster caregivers. The knowledge that help is available at any hour allows many more people to feel comfortable taking on the job of providing foster care.
- While a good support system is critical for recruiting and retaining foster caregivers, many people are willing and able to pay for supplies so don't hesitate to take them up on this offer. (Recently, the IRS determined that foster-care expenses incurred by caregivers are tax-deductible. Eligible caregivers will need a letter from your organization verifying their status.)



What level of training is needed and how will that be provided to new foster caregivers?

- One-on-one when they pick up animals
- Group training sessions
- A combination of both
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Will a starter supply kit be provided?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what is in it? \_\_\_\_\_

Will food and supplies be made available on a need basis or will caregivers be required to provide it themselves?

- Food and Supplies provided
- Food and Supplies not provided

Will formula and bottles be provided for bottle babies?

- Yes
- No

How will you ensure that critical information, such as how to feed bottle babies and what to do in a health crisis will be conveyed to foster caregivers?

- Staff checklist
- Handouts with verbal review
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 3: Retaining Volunteers

Volunteer retention is very important to the long-term success of the program. It starts with the first day of their volunteer experience, actually, the very first day they reached out to you and offered to volunteer. The way volunteers are treated, if they feel welcomed and needed or not, how smoothly the process goes, and how organized and knowledgeable the staff members are all impact their experience. Volunteers that are treated well and feel useful, valued, and respected are the foundation of a good retention program.

### Recommendations for retaining foster caregivers:

- Having a strong support system that offers both practical and moral support is key to retaining foster caregivers.
- The personality of the Foster Coordinator is also critical. This person will be creating relationships with each foster caregiver and needs to be someone who can relate to and connect with different types of people in varied emotional states.
- Showing appreciation does not have to cost money. Remember that simple things like a sincere thank you and acknowledging people in a way that is meaningful to them are key to keeping volunteers engaged.

What mechanisms do you have to track foster caregiver preferences and make appropriate matches and accommodations? \_\_\_\_\_

How will it your organization manage when a foster caregiver needs to return the animal before anticipated? \_\_\_\_\_

How will volunteers be thanked? How will you show them that they are valued and appreciated? \_\_\_\_\_

## Launching Your Foster Care Program

The day is here to launch your foster care program! Here are a few tips to help you succeed:

- It doesn't have to be perfect to get started! Remember that your program will never be perfect—nothing is. It will always be a work in progress! In many cases, getting started and making adjustments as you go will net greater lifesaving results than waiting until you have honed every detail on paper.
- Creating and maintaining a sense of urgency and timeliness is critical to effective lifesaving.
- Remain flexible. While policies and rules are important, keep your eye on the mission of saving lives. Within reason, policies should be flexible enough to assure positive lifesaving results.
- Enlisting the help of interested people—the more, the better—is essential to the success of the program. Hence, understanding, empathy, and showing gratitude will be key to sustaining the program.



- Animal intake is cyclical in most parts of the country, with warmer weather bringing a dramatic increase in the number of cats and kittens in urgent need of help. Slower seasons present an opportunity to assess the program and make refinements.
- Following up to ensure that all foster animals are getting vaccines, are spayed/neutered, and have the opportunity for adoption at the optimal age will keep your program functioning at maximum lifesaving efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Future work to keep your program vital:**

- Increase your goals until you are providing care to all the animals in need in your community. Peak adoption periods and peak admissions periods are cyclical and usually do not coincide. Several communities have demonstrated that if you can keep cats and kittens arriving in the summer alive until December (by utilizing foster homes), permanent homes can be found for them, eliminating euthanasia for space in the shelter.
- Create/train groups of skilled foster parents who will specialize in working with certain kinds of animals. This is not to say that these animals cannot be accommodated sooner, but that you can increase the number of people involved by creating a special brigade of individuals to work with certain kinds of animal situations, such as people who love taming feral kittens or those who love helping special-needs animals. There are people who will provide care in their home to animals recuperating from surgery, living with chronic conditions, who are shy and need socialization, or having difficulty with the shelter environment. Some shelters have had success developing hospice foster homes for elderly pets that still have a good quality of life, but only a limited time left.
- Develop a plan to increase adult and geriatric cat foster homes.

## **Revitalizing an Existing Foster Care Program**

Do you have an existing foster care program that is not robust enough to save the number of cats in need in your community? If so, these same steps can help you revitalize and grow it into a vital program that will help you meet your lifesaving goals. Not sure where to start? Start by setting goals.

### **Recommendations for Revitalizing a Foster Care Program:**

- Establish goals for a dramatic increase in foster homes recruited and animals cared for. Make it something challenging and exciting, perhaps 100 new foster caregivers over the next four to six weeks and 500 animals fostered in the next three months.
- To help ensure that you and your team take action promptly, set short-term goals for the next three to six months.
- Set a date today for a foster care training meeting and begin getting the word out about it.

### **Create a benchmark to measure your progress going forward:**

Number of active foster homes today: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of inactive but willing foster homes today: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of cats/kittens that went through the foster care program in the last complete calendar or fiscal year: \_\_\_\_\_

## Troubleshooting Guide for Creating a Foster Care Program

Challenges and Roadblocks	Tips for Overcoming
Can't easily access statistics	Don't be afraid to ask. Public information is available through The Public Information Act which gives citizens the right to obtain state government records. This site provides links to laws for each state: <a href="http://www.nfoic.org/state-freedom-of-information-laws">www.nfoic.org/state-freedom-of-information-laws</a> . Alternatively, you can obtain information from talking with knowledgeable people.
No time to do a full needs assessment or detailed plan when faced with urgent needs every day	Forge ahead and do a more thorough assessment later. You can develop the program as you go and as time permits. It's more important to start saving lives than wait for the perfect plan.
Not sure of needs	Use other organization's programs as models. Commonly, underage kittens, those too young to be spayed or neutered and adopted out, including those that can eat on their own; neonatal kittens that require bottle-feeding; and mother cats with kittens are in need of foster homes in most communities.
Getting off track	Refocus on the mission of saving lives.
Defeatist attitude	Create goals for shorter periods of time and be sure to notice and celebrate when they are achieved. Create new goals after these have been accomplished.
Can't find a volunteer and do not have budget for staff position.	Consider looking into outside funding sources such as foundations and large animal welfare organizations to help fund a staff position.
Can't find someone with enough availability.	Consider breaking up the job description into several smaller positions—just be sure there is one overall lead coordinator.
Can't agree on policies	Prioritize and then limit to top 3 or 4 or use weighted voting with everyone getting three picks (first pick gets 3 points, second pick 2 points, and first pick 1 point) with the top 3 or 4 becoming policies.



Challenges and Roadblocks	Tips for Overcoming
Don't have enough veterinary knowledge	Use UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program's online resources and recommendations (or other similar programs).
Don't have a marketing budget	Reach out to the community for sponsorships, solicit donated services, public service announcements and other free media opportunities available to non profits, etc. Don't forget to send news releases and call reporters to ask them to help you get the word out.
Don't have graphic design skills, IT skills, or some other critically needed skill or talent	Ask volunteers if they have the skills you need or know someone who does. Contact local schools for interns or class projects.
Organization does not use a shelter software database	All the information can be tracked in a Microsoft Excel document or some type of spreadsheet that allows sorting of data.
Foster Coordinators and other team members are not co-located, work from different remote locations	Use Google Docs or other similar services where you can develop and share work online, accessing from anywhere there is an Internet connection.
Staff and/or volunteers are not following processes	Send periodic reminders and don't hesitate to manage both staff and volunteers to get the desired outcomes. Accountability and consequences are critical success factors. Periodically review the policies and monitor processes until they become institutionalized. If you keep having a problem in the same area, ask people specifically why they are not following the processes. Is there a better way? Don't hesitate to improve processes or to manage people to ensure compliance on critical processes.
No budget to pay staff to be on call	Use salaried staff on a rotation basis where they are only on call one week at a time (or for two weeks in the off season). The more people involved in the rotation, the less often a staff member's turn comes up. Seek skilled volunteers to cover the phone.

Challenges and Roadblocks	Tips for Overcoming
Organization does not have its own clinic	Contact and negotiate reduced-cost services with local veterinary clinics.
No budget for appreciation events	Have a potluck where staff or volunteers bring the food and put together videos or slide shows that highlight the foster caregivers at work and/or the animals they have helped.
Not sure what to do to show appreciation	Ask the volunteers. If you cannot reach out to people in person, use an online survey. Free services like Survey Monkey provide a way to ask foster caregivers what motivates them to foster and how they would like to be acknowledged for their service.
Foster caregivers don't want to give up the animals being fostered	Have them officially adopt the animal being fostered, waiving the adoption fee as a gesture of appreciation. If they don't want to adopt, review the policies and the reason they are in place. It helps people understand that more animals can be saved if the animals are adopted quickly.
Don't have a shelter to showcase the foster animals for adoption	Many pet supply stores will gladly allow you to feature cats for adoption. Some will even allow cats to be sheltered in the store until adoption. Reach out to a variety of businesses to find suitable locations. Host mini-adoption events on a regular basis, such as once a month. Consider obtaining empty storefront space, donated or rented at a reduced fee to showcase animals. Help the foster caregivers learn how to find and screen potential adoptive homes.
Don't know how to create a process flow	Record each step in the process, including every possible path.
Not sure what is needed as far as forms and policies go	Start out using forms and handouts from other organizations (such as those offered in the Appendices) and then tailor them to meet your program's needs.





## Conclusion

Implementing your Foster Care Program will be challenging at times, but also very rewarding. Your foster care program has the potential to dramatically improve your community-wide live release rate; your efforts will reap lifesaving rewards! Thank you for all your great work for the animals!

# Appendix Table of Contents

## Program Documents

- Appendix 1 Sample Frequently Asked Questions Document for Public
- Appendix 2 Sample Foster Care Volunteer Application
- Appendix 3 Sample Foster Care Agreement
- Appendix 4 Sample Talking Point Checklist for Staff/Caregivers
- Appendix 5 Sample Vet Care Follow-up Form

## Process Documents

- Appendix 6 Sample Foster Care Coordinator Job Description
- Appendix 7 Sample On-Call Foster Care List
- Appendix 8 Image of Sample Foster Care Tracking Board
- Appendix 9 Sample Foster Care Program Handbook
- Appendix 10 Sample Foster Care Process Flow Documentation
- Appendix 11 Sample Emergency Call Troubleshooting Guide
- Appendix 12 Sample Foster Care Emergency Checklist for Staff
- Appendix 13 Sample Emergency Foster Phone Schedule

## Volunteer Recruitment/Marketing Documents

- Appendix 14 Sample Marketing Plan
- Appendix 15 Sample PSA for Foster Care Volunteer Recruitment
- Appendix 16 Sample News Release for Foster Care Volunteer Recruitment
- Appendix 17 Sample TV Commercial Plan
- Appendix 18 Sample E-mail to Recruit Foster Care Volunteers
- Appendix 19 Article, Provides Language for Talking About Foster Care
- Appendix 20 Sample Adoption Promotion News Release

## Animal Care Instructional Documents

- Appendix 21 Caring for Orphaned Kittens Guide
- Appendix 22 Sample How to Feed a Bottle Baby Handout
- Appendix 23 Sample How to Prepare a Baby Bottle Nipple Properly Guide
- Appendix 24 Sample Handout – Keeping Pets Separate
- Appendix 25 Kitten Milestones in Development

## Increasing Pet Adoption Resources

- Appendix 26 Resources to Help You Increase Pet Adoptions

## Appendix Acknowledgments

# Appendix 1

## Sample Foster Care Program Frequently Asked Questions

### Foster Care Program Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. Why does [org. name] need a Foster Care Program?

The program was created for animals who are too young or need special care before they can be placed in permanent homes. It opens up space at the shelter for animals who are ready for adoption and allows more lives to be saved. Foster homes also give kittens a strong start in life, protecting their health and enhancing their development.

#### 2. How do I become involved?

It's easy! Go to the [org name] shelter or visit our website ([www.\\_\\_\\_\\_.org](http://www.____.org)) to fill out a foster care application. Bring or send your application to us and chances are you will soon be experiencing the joy of being a foster parent!

#### 3. What animals have the greatest foster need?

Kittens! We need people to foster kittens more than any other animals. Some need to be bottle fed while others are weaned and just need to reach two pounds so they can be spayed/neutered. We sometimes have mother cats with litters of kittens in need of foster care.

#### 4. What are the qualifications to be a foster parent?

Your pets should be current on their shots. You need to have a room (bathrooms and utility rooms work well) to keep your foster animals separate from your own animals. You do not need previous experience as we will provide training and ongoing consultation.

#### 5. What does it cost to be a foster parent?

The cost is minimal. We provide cages and starter supplies if needed. It helps us if you can provide ongoing food, supplies and lots of TLC! We cover any medical needs through our clinic. We will do our best to be sure providing foster care doesn't create a hardship for you.

#### 6. It's the middle of the night and my foster animal is sick, what can I do?

You can call our after-hours emergency number at [xxx-xxx-xxxx](tel:xxx-xxx-xxxx) if problems arise in the night.

#### 7. Can I adopt my foster animal?

Of course! But first, you'll need to bring your foster animal(s) back to us so they can be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped before adoption. After completing the adoption paperwork and process, you will be free to take your new pet home!

#### 8. Yikes! I don't know anything about kittens, how can I be a reliable foster parent?

It's easy! We provide free training, assistance, and vet care plus a 24-hour emergency phone number.

#### 9. I have other cats and dogs. Will they adjust to the new foster animals?

Your new foster animals must be kept separate from your own animals. It is likely your own pets will adjust quickly to the scents of your foster pets. The staff is here to advise you each step of the way.

#### 10. I work during the day, how can I be a foster parent?

You can foster weaned kittens or kittens with mothers and just be sure they have plenty of food and water before you leave for work. Oh, and don't forget a litter box!

# Appendix 2

## Sample Foster Care Volunteer Application

### Foster Care Application

This form is to help us help you find the best match for you and the animals in need of foster care.

#### To foster a pet you:

- Need to show current identification showing present address.
- Must be at least 18 years of age.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

#### Which pets are you willing to foster? (Please check all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult cat(s)                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Puppies who need bottle feeding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mom cat with litter             | <input type="checkbox"/> Special needs dog(s)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Birds                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens who need bottle feeding | <input type="checkbox"/> Small animals                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special needs cat(s)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Reptiles                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult dog(s)                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Horses                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mom dog with litter             | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm animals                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Puppies                         |  |

#### Home life

How many pets do you have presently? Dogs \_\_\_\_\_ Cats \_\_\_\_\_ Others, please list \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in:  Apartment  House  Mobile Home  Other \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been at your current address? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you rent or own your home?  Rent  Own

How would you describe your household?  Active  Quiet  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a room in your home where the animals can be kept isolated from family pets?

Yes  No If yes, please describe the location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of other adult(s) in the household \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any children living in your home?  Yes  No

If yes, please list their names and ages: \_\_\_\_\_

### Current pets

Name	type of animal	Age	Indoor/Outdoor?	Time in your care	Spayed/Neutered
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If you have more pets, please continue on the back.

**Do your pets have their vaccinations?**  Yes  No

**Are any of your cats declawed?**  Yes  No

If yes, please share the reasons you decided to declaw the cat(s)\_\_\_\_\_

### Past Pets

**If you ever lost pets due to accident or illness, please describe what happened:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever had a dog in your home that was diagnosed with Parvo?**

Yes  No If yes, when?\_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever had a cat in your home that was diagnosed with Panleukopenia?**

Yes  No If yes, when?\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you currently have a cat in your home that is diagnosed with FIV?**

Yes  No **or Feline Leukemia?**  Yes  No

### Veterinary care

**Name of your veterinarian**\_\_\_\_\_

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, I acknowledge that all information on this form is true and correct.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 3

## Sample Foster Care Agreement

### Sample Foster Care Agreement

Foster Care Contact Information:

To schedule clinic appointments, call: xxx-xxx-xxxx

For general assistance, call: xxx-xxx-xxxx

After-hour emergencies, call: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Foster Caregiver Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

As a volunteer foster caregiver for [Organization's Name] I agree to the following terms and conditions (please initial each):

#### Medical Needs

\_\_\_\_ If the foster animal is in need of veterinary attention, shows any signs of illness, or is lost or injured, I agree to immediately contact a representative at one of the phone numbers listed above.

\_\_\_\_ All medical treatments must be authorized by [Org. Name] in advance. I understand that NHS will make decisions about veterinary care to be provided to the animal based on the prognosis. I will be responsible for the cost of any unauthorized veterinary care.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to properly administer any required medications for each animal.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that [Org. Name] will inform me of any known medical conditions with the animal(s). However, [Org. Name] cannot be responsible or liable for any unforeseen health problems. I understand that I will be responsible for any veterinary treatment for my own pet that may result from exposure to foster animals.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to bring the animals back to the shelter for vaccinations, spay/neuter surgery, or other scheduled vet appointments.

#### In-home Care

\_\_\_\_ Everyone in the household knows about and agrees to have the animal(s) in the home.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to provide daily food, fresh water, and a litter box for cats at all times. I also agree to maintain a high level of cleanliness in their living environment.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to provide attention and affection to the animal(s). For dogs, I will provide a minimum of three daily walks or yard time.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to keep foster animals isolated from my own pets for the first 14 days unless specifically agreed to by an [Org. Name] manager. Before allowing contact with my pets I will review plans to introduce the animals with the [Org. Name] foster care coordinator to be sure that precautions will be taken to keep everyone safe and healthy.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to keep the animal(s) indoors. Dogs must be on a leash at all times when out of the house. Cats must be transported in a secure carrier. In the event that the animal(s) get loose, I will contact [Org. Name] at once.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to provide updates on how the animals are doing should an [Org. Name] representative contact me. I am also willing to allow an [Org. Name] representative to visit my home at a mutually convenient time.

\_\_\_\_ I assume full responsibility for any property damage the foster animal(s) may cause.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that if the care of the animal(s) is to be transferred to any other individual that I must contact [Org. Name] in advance for approval.

### Returning Animals to [Org. Name]

\_\_\_\_ If I am unable or no longer want to care for the animal(s), I agree to contact [Org. Name] immediately. [Org. Name] agrees to accept that animal(s) back upon request.

\_\_\_\_ I agree that [Org. Name] representatives may remove the animal(s) at any time for veterinary care or other purposes.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to return the animals to [Org. Name] upon completion of designated foster care term.  
Finding Homes for Animals

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I may adopt the animals or find suitable permanent adoptive homes for the animals, however;

- All animal adoptions must be processed through [Org. Name] .
- All animals must be spayed or neutered by [Org. Name] and before the adoption is finalized.

\_\_\_\_ If there is adoption interest in one of the fostered animals, I agree to either bring the animal into the shelter for a meeting with the potential adopting family or arrange for the family to come directly to the foster home.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that [Org. Name] does not adopt cats to individuals who intend to declaw them.

I understand the terms of this contract and agree that it is in the best interest of the animal(s). I will abide by all of the conditions stipulated, as indicated by my above initials.

I hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless [Org. Name], its employees, and its agents from any and all liability arising out of or in consequence of injury sustained as a result of any activity connected with fostering animals for [Org. Name].

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address where animal(s) will be kept: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: Days \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible for daily care \_\_\_\_\_ Where animal(s) will be kept in the home \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of [Org. Name] Representative \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

# Sample Talking Point Checklist for Staff/Caregivers

### Staff Member's Talking Points Checklist for Animal Hand-off to Foster Caregivers

Multiple categories may apply to the animals. Be sure to review each of the talking-point categories that applies with the foster caregiver.

Categories include: Weaned Kittens and Puppies, Gruel (3 to 5 weeks of age) Kittens and Puppies, Bottle-Fed Kittens and Puppies, Feral and Semi-Feral /Under-Socialized Kittens, Mom with kittens, Feral Mom with kittens, Fungus Kittens.

Foster Caregiver's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### All Foster Kittens and Puppies:

- PROPER DOSE AND HOW TO GIVE MEDICATION: If kittens/puppies are on medication or have any medical issues, go over the illness and medications. Show the caregiver how to properly dose and give the medications.
- PETS AT HOME NEED CURRENT VACCINES: Make sure the foster volunteer's personal pets are current on vaccinations. (If not, talk with the Operations Director about getting their pets vaccinated through the clinic).
- KEEP FOSTER ANIMALS AND PETS SEPARATE: It is important to keep foster pets and personal pets separate to minimize any chance of spreading illness. (Exceptions may be made by the Animal Care Managers or Operations Director.)
- NECKBANDS: Remove neck bands as soon the kittens are settled in at home. It is important that they not become too tight as kittens grow. (You can remove them by pulling on the loose end of the collar while holding the other side of the sealed sticky area OR by using rounded-tipped safety scissors to carefully cut collar.)
- KEEP BABIES WARM AND DRY: Keep kittens/puppies warm, dry, and in a safe area free of drafts. If you need to clean them, use a warm, damp cloth and dry them immediately with a soft towel.
- BARE FLOOR IS BETTER THAN CARPETING: It is best to keep them in a room without carpet if this is an option, as it is easier to keep clean.
- NON-CLUMPING CLAY LITTER ONLY: Use regular clay litter for kittens; avoid clumping litter as kittens can ingest it and become very ill.
- SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO BRING FOSTER BABIES BACK WHEN THEY WEIGH 2 LBS: Kittens need to stay in foster homes until they reach 2 lbs., which is generally around the 9 week mark. Puppies are kept in foster homes until they are 8 weeks old. Once kittens reach 2 lbs. and puppies are 8 weeks, call the NHS Clinic at 775-856-2000 ext. 311 to schedule a date and time to bring them back in for spay/neuter and adoption.
- VET CARE FOLLOW-UP FORM: The vet care follow-up form provides additional information on when to bring animals in for vaccinations, spay/neuter, etc. Show this form to the foster caregiver.



- ADOPTING FOSTER PETS:** If you wish to adopt a kitten or have arranged homes, be sure to let staff know when you drop them off for their spay or neuter appointment so they can put red collars put on at that time to indicate they have an adopter and add a note to their record in the database. It is important that the adoption be finalized through Nevada Humane Society and you will be given adoption paperwork to sign when you come in to pick up the kitten.
- PHONE NUMBERS:** Below is the Foster Emergency Phone Number and other numbers to call during shelter hours for questions, problems, etc.  
Foster Emergency: 775-000-0000; Clinic: 775-856-2000 x311; General: 775-856-2000 x321

### **Puppies only:**

- ADOPTION OF PUPPIES:** Dogs are different than cats. While it is fine to adopt feline siblings, puppies adopted from the same litter often bond so strongly that they do not develop full and healthy relationships with people. If you want two dogs, it is best to select one puppy now, bond with that puppy and later add a second dog or puppy.

### **Weaned kittens/puppies:**

- WHAT TO FEED:** Kittens should be eating kitten food. Puppies should be eating puppy food.
- IF THEY STOP EATING:** If kittens/puppies stop eating for more than 12 hours, have problems going to the bathroom, become lethargic, are sneezing, or show signs of any illness, please let us know right away. Babies can become critically ill quickly, so do not delay.
- INDOORS ONLY:** Kittens/puppies should not be allowed outside (except for older puppies to go potty). This is important as their immune systems are not fully developed.
- LETHARGY:** If kittens/puppies go too long without eating or play too hard and have not had sufficient food, they can become lethargic. Karo syrup or maple syrup are good remedies to have on hand. A kitten or puppy that has become lethargic or stopped eating can be given a little bit of Karo syrup on their gums. This immediately introduces sugar into the system, raising the blood sugar level. If this situation arises, please contact the emergency foster phone before giving syrup.
- SOCIALIZATION:** While playtime with siblings is very important to their development, time spent with people—especially a variety of different people who show affection, talk with them, cuddle and play, is the very best preparation for adoption.

### **Gruel kittens/puppies (3-5 weeks of age):**

- HOW TO MAKE GRUEL:** Gruel is a mixture of pate style wet kitten or puppy food and milk replacer/formula. Avoid fish flavored food as it can upset their stomachs and cause diarrhea. Sometimes if gruel is too thick, the kittens/puppies may become constipated. If this happens, add more water to the formula. A little canned pumpkin can also relieve constipation.
- NO COW'S MILK:** Do not feed kittens/puppies regular milk, it can upset their stomachs. Please use kitten or puppy milk replacement. NHS will provide this for you.
- FREQUENCY:** Even though the kittens/puppies are older and starting to eat more solid food, they must still be fed every 3 hours or so. This is a very vulnerable stage for them as many people think they do not need to eat as often, but in fact they need to be fed frequently during this stage of rapid body growth. It is very important that they get enough to eat so that they stay healthy and grow strong. (Review feeding chart.)

- ❑ **SHOW THEM HOW TO EAT:** Sometimes kittens/puppies will need encouragement to eat by placing a bit of food from the tip of your finger on their lips so they lick it off and taste it.
- ❑ **OVER ENTHUSIASM:** Kittens/puppies in this stage are still learning how to eat. It is not uncommon for them to bury their faces in the food and come up coughing. If this happens, quickly clean food way from their nose.
- ❑ **DIARRHEA:** It is not uncommon for kittens/puppies to experience diarrhea when making the switch from gruel to regular food. However, if it lasts for more than a few days or is watery, call the shelter or foster emergency number. Watch for signs of dehydration, such as listlessness. Kittens and puppies can go downhill quickly and need prompt veterinary care.
- ❑ **CHANGING OVER TO DRY FOOD:** Generally, around the 5-week mark, kittens/puppies should be ready and able to eat dry kitten or puppy food and water. You may begin to introduce them to dry food by first mixing the wet and dry together, lessening the wet food gradually until you are eventually feeding unadulterated dry.

### **Feral, Semi-feral, Under-socialized Kittens:**

- ❑ **WHAT IS A FERAL KITTEN?** Kittens are considered feral or semi-feral because they did not have socialization with humans during the first few weeks of their lives.
- ❑ **CRITICAL SOCIALIZATION PERIOD:** If we are able to socialize kittens before they are 8-weeks old, it is very likely the kittens will become friendly and adoptable house cats.
- ❑ **CHOOSE A QUIET, SECURE ROOM:** When you first bring the kittens home, it is best to keep them in a small room where there are very few places to hide (like a bathroom or laundry room) or in a suitable cage. If you place them in a bedroom, they will hide under the bed, dresser, or other location that will make it very difficult to reach them.
- ❑ **HANDLE CAREFULLY AT FIRST:** Be careful when you initially pick up the kittens. They will probably hiss, spit, and/or swat at you. If they are aggressive, put a towel over them and then pick them up.
- ❑ **HOW TO SOCIALIZE KITTENS:** The more you are able to handle the kittens, the better. Here are a few things to try:
  - The burrito technique (wrap kitten in a towel so that only the head is visible) to hold and gently pet their head until they relax.
  - Provide a tasty treat, like human baby food chicken or turkey. Feeding a little on a spoon or tip of your finger to the kitten reinforces that people provide tasty treats.
  - Play with them using toys on string to lure them near you. (Kittens should only be allowed to play with string toys under supervision so as not to be ingested.)
  - Involve other people. The more people handling the kittens, the more social and well-adjusted they become.
  - Spend as much time as you can with the kittens—talking to them, handling them, giving them treats. Soon they will begin to associate people and voices with love and food.
- ❑ **INFO SHEETS ON SOCIALIZING KITTENS:** Read the article, How to Socialize Feral Kittens, in the foster packet.
- ❑ **EXPANDING THEIR TURF:** When you feel like the kittens will not hide, it is ok to introduce them slowly to other parts of the house.

### **Bottle-fed Kittens/Puppies:**

- KEEP BABIES WARM:** Bottle-fed kittens/puppies need to be kept warm. Use a heating pad on low or a microwavable heat source designed for pets. The animals should not come into direct contact with pad; use a towel or blanket. There also must be space for kittens or puppies to crawl off the heat pad should they become too warm.
- FEED AT AN APPROPRIATE FREQUENCY FOR THEIR AGE:** Depending on their age, bottle-fed kittens/puppies may need to be fed as frequently as every 2-3 hours, even through the night. Be sure you know how often they need to eat before leaving the shelter and as they grow, refer to the feeding chart. Set an alarm clock as you most likely will not wake up to them crying.
- HOW TO MAKE FORMULA:** To make formula, mix 1 part powdered formula with 2 parts warm water.
- KEEP FORMULA REFRIGERATED:** Refrigerate powdered and liquid formula.
- MIX ONLY ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY:** Only mix enough formula for 24 hours as it will spoil.
- FORMULA MUST BE WARM, BUT NOT HOT:** Warm the milk before feeding, test it on your wrist; it should feel warm but not hot.
- BOTTLE NIPPLE MILK FLOW:** Nipples need a hole cut before feeding. It is very important that the hole is the correct size. Hold the bottle with formula inside, upside-down. The formula should drip slowly from the nipple hole. If the formula doesn't drip, enlarge the nipple hole slightly. If the formula comes out in a steady stream, the hole is too large. If the hole is too large, the kitten will inhale the formula rather than ingest it causing aspiration pneumonia and likely death. If the hole is too small they will not get enough nutrition.
- FEED BABIES UPRIGHT:** Feed kittens/puppies upright at a 45° angle (belly/feet down)—never feed them belly-up, on their backs. While human babies eat on their backs, kittens and puppies can get formula in their lungs and become sick or die. (BE SURE PROPER FEEDING IS DEMONSTRATED USING the Toy Kitten provided at the adoption desk).
- HOW TO KNOW WHEN THEY ARE FULL:** Kittens/puppies may turn their heads away from nipple when full. You may also gently feel their tummy to see if it is full (like a full water balloon).
- STIMULATE URINATION/DEFECATION:** Immediately after feeding, the kittens/puppies must be stimulated to eliminate. Use a soft, warm, damp cloth, such as the corner of a face cloth. Using a front to back motions, rub their rectal area, the idea is to simulate the mother animal's tongue which will enable them to urinate and defecate.
- STAY ALERT FOR HEALTH PROBLEMS, BABIES CAN BECOME VERY SICK SUDDENLY:** Kittens/puppies this young go downhill very quickly. Please call the emergency foster phone (available nights and weekends) or the clinic (during clinic hours) if anything seems out of the ordinary. Common problems include: not eating, not eating enough, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, or lethargy.
- Very young kittens /puppies without the benefit of their mother's milk and care have a lower survival rate than those with their mom. Because they are so small and susceptible to illness, it is

not uncommon for bottle-fed kittens/puppies to not survive. You are giving them their best chance at life with your TLC. Thank you for your kindness!

### **Mom with kittens:**

- MOM DOES A LOT OF THE WORK:** Many foster caregivers consider mom and litters to be one of the easiest foster situations as mom will do most of the work (i.e., feeding, cleaning, keeping warm, training).
- KEEP AN EYE ON THE SITUATION:** If for some reason, mom is not doing these things, please let us know right away, especially if fostering newborns. Tiny babies are very fragile and can go downhill quickly, so your monitoring is important. Contact the shelter if you notice any problems.
- MONITORING THE HEALTH OF MOM:** It is not unusual for moms to experience diarrhea while nursing. Feeding the mom canned pumpkin mixed with her canned food can help. If the diarrhea lasts for more than a few days, please let us know.
- HOUSING:** It is wise to keep mom and babies in a single, small room like an extra bedroom. Mom cats like to move their kittens. Keeping them in one, smaller room will minimize the hiding places so you can keep an eye on them. Providing two appealing boxes or beds for mom gives her an alternative place to move the babies.
- FEEDING MOM:** The mother animal needs extra nutrition to feed the babies. She should be eating kitten or puppy food the entire time she is nursing.
- SOCIALIZING THE KITTENS AND PUPPIES:** Spending time touching, handling, cuddling, talking to, and playing with kittens and puppies is important for them. It makes them friendlier and well adjusted, preparing them for adoption.
- HOW LONG DO THEY NEED TO BE WITH MOM?** While kittens/puppies physically only NEED to stay with mom until they are fully weaned (eating solid food on their own), there are many important developmental reasons to keep them with mom for 8 or 9 weeks. Mom teaches the babies many important life skills. The best adjusted kittens and puppies get plenty of time with their mom and plenty of attention, handling and affection from people.
- AS TIME PASSES:** It is not unusual for mom to become grumpy towards, or even hiss/growl at the kittens/puppies once they are old enough to be on their own. This is mom's way of helping the weaning process along. If mom becomes aggressive towards them or is too much to handle, please contact us right away so we can assess the situation and provide assistance.

### **Feral mom and kittens:**

- FOSTER HOME NEEDS A LARGE CAGE:** NHS will provide a cage large enough to hold the cat carrier, mom cat, kittens, litter box, food, etc.
- CHOOSE A QUIET PLACE:** Cage should be set up in a quiet place with little traffic and no open doors/windows. Mom will feel less stressed and therefore continue making milk.
- SET CARRIER INSIDE OF CAGE AS HIDING PLACE FOR MOM WITH DOOR PROPPED OPEN:** The cage should be set up with the carrier (door propped open) inside the cage at the back (mom will want to hide in the carrier). Litter box and food should be placed close to the opening of the cage so they may be reached without placing arm too far into the cage. You can use a stick to

close the door to the carrier so you can safely reach in to clean the cage. Then re-open the carrier door once the cleaning is done.

- KEEP MOM IN CAGE:** Feral mom should be kept in the cage at all times. Do NOT attempt to socialize the mom.
- COVER THE CAGE:** Keeping cage covered with a sheet or blanket will decrease the mom's stress.
- SOCIALIZING THE KITTENS IS IMPORTANT:** Once kittens are mobile, they will move in and out of the carrier and around the cage. Feral kittens will need to be socialized. They need to be handled during their early weeks of life in order to learn to trust people. Be careful of mom when reaching in to pick up kittens. If mom is hiding in the carrier, you can use a stick to close the door to the carrier so you can safely reach in to get kittens. (See tips on handling feral kittens.)
- ONCE KITTENS EAT ON THEIR OWN, IT IS TIME TO SEPARATE THEM FROM MOM:** Once kittens are eating food on their own, they may be separated from mom. Mom should be brought back to NHS for spaying. Kittens will remain in foster home until they weigh 2 lbs.
- CONTINUE SOCIALIZING KITTENS:** It is important to expose the kittens to different people so they will learn to trust people. The more outgoing and friendly they are the easier time they have finding new homes.

### **Fungus Kittens:**

- WHERE DOES FUNGUS COME FROM:** The skin fungus these kittens have is one that occurs naturally in the environment and could be picked up by anyone at any time, people or animals. The fungus is very similar to the skin fungus called Athlete's Foot in humans and the kittens are treated with a similar anti-fungal cream that will be provided by NHS.
- MEDICATION FOR THE KITTENS:** Nevada Humane Society will provide all the necessary medications and supplies. Medicated shampoos or sulfur dips are available from NHS for kittens if you are willing to use them. If interested, please ask the foster care coordinator or contact the NHS clinic. Once a kitten is 2 lbs., he or she will be eligible for an oral medication that speeds healing.
- HOW DOES IT SPREAD:** All fungus spreads with spores; it can spread from animal to animal as well as animal to person and person to person. Spores can also be in the environment.
- CHOOSING A ROOM TO HOUSE THE KITTENS:** While not required, it is best if the kittens are kept in a bathroom or some room without carpet or fabric. A bathroom is easy to bleach, which kills fungus, where it is not as easy to completely clean rooms with carpet. While carpet and fabric can be steam cleaned, there is no guarantee this will kill the fungus. NHS will provide a cage where the kittens can be housed while being treated.
- WEAR GLOVES AND A GOWN:** We encourage foster caregivers to wear gloves and gowns and NHS is happy to provide these. Wearing gloves and/or long sleeves allows a person to handle and play with the kittens without fear of the fungus being spread to the individual. Keep the gloves and gowns in the room where you are housing the kittens.
- CLEANING:** Hands need to be cleaned well with soap and water after handling the kittens. Hand sanitizer will not eliminate the spores. It is important that used gloves and clothing be handled carefully so as not to spread spores.

- **KEEP PETS SEPARATE:** It is important for fostered kittens be kept separate from any of your personal pets. This will keep your pets safe from being exposed.
- **CHECKING THEIR PROGRESS:** The kittens will need to be brought into the NHS clinic periodically for a black light test. Call **xxx-xxx-xxxx** to make an appointment. The skin fungus glows under a black light. Once there are no signs of glowing patches on the kitten, the kitten will then have a simple test called a DTM to be sure that the fungus is cleared.
- **ESTIMATED TIME FRAME:** The kittens must stay in foster care and continue treatment until the DTM test comes back negative. Each DTM test requires 10 days for results. Please note, if at any time you are no longer able to foster these kittens, please contact us and we will place them in a new foster home.
- **THANK YOU!** We appreciate your compassion for these kittens! **THANK YOU!**

# Appendix 5

## Sample Talking Point Checklist for Staff/Caregivers

### Sample Vet Care Follow-up

Your foster pet's name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Identification number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Important dates for your foster pets:

Thank you so much for taking these animals into your care! You are truly making a life-saving difference for them! These animals are completely dependent upon you, their foster parent, for their well-being. Below are key dates for the animals in your care. Please call us if you have any concerns or questions.

#### Kittens need their first vaccinations at four weeks of age.

For your foster kitten(s), this falls on: \_\_\_\_\_  
Their second round of shots will be on: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Puppies need their first vaccinations at six weeks of age

For your foster puppies, this falls on: \_\_\_\_\_  
Their second round of shots will be on: \_\_\_\_\_

Kittens or puppies need to be spayed or neutered when they weigh two pounds and are 8 weeks old.

#### For most puppies, we schedule the surgery when they are 8 weeks old. For most kittens, when they are 9 weeks old.

For your litter, this will fall during the week of: \_\_\_\_\_  
The mother cat or dog should be spayed at this same time: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Special Needs or Geriatric Foster Pet needs to see the vet as follows:

On this date: \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

#### Scheduling an appointment:

Please call the clinic one week ahead of time to schedule an appointment for vaccinations, spay/neuter surgeries, or other follow-up care. Be sure to tell the receptionist that these are foster animals, providing the due dates and needed care listed on this sheet.

If you wish to adopt your foster pet, please let the staff know when you bring the animal to the clinic for their spay/neuter surgery so this can be noted in their record.

Thank you!

#### Contact information:

To schedule clinic appointments, call xxx-xxx-xxxx (Monday – Friday, 7am – 4pm).  
For general assistance and after-hour emergencies with foster animals, call xxx-xxx-xxxx .

# Appendix 6

## Sample Foster Care Coordinator Job Description

### Foster Care Coordinator (Part-time OR Full-time)

Reports to [Job Title of Supervisor]

#### Job Description

The Foster Coordinator will be responsible for recruiting new foster homes in the community, coordinating the placement of animals from [organization's name] into the care of foster families, providing ongoing support to these foster caregivers, tracking information and ensuring the animals are returned as scheduled. The Foster Coordinator also assists in general clerical tasks to support the overall program, including routine office duties as well as special projects.

#### Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating the volunteer foster program, including recruitment, placement, and documentation.
- Calling potential foster families in a timely fashion to support the needs of the organization and the animals.
- Coordinating the pickup and transfer of animals between partner organizations, as needed and processing and preparation for foster pickup.
- Ensuring that animal awaiting foster care are cared for, safe and secure for the night, whether in shelter setting, regular foster home, or temporary foster home with a staff member or volunteer for the night, before going home for the day.
- Maintaining the foster care disposition board in Adoption Manager's office so that staff has an up-to-date status on every animal awaiting foster care pickup.
- Maintaining an organized list of foster family requirements and availability.
- Providing ongoing assistance, coaching, and moral support to current foster families.
- Staying in contact with foster families to ensure that animals are brought back to the shelter at the appropriate time.
- Overseeing the input and maintenance of foster animal and volunteer data in appropriate databases.
- Thanking foster caregivers and show appreciation as appropriate.
- Recruiting new foster caregivers as needed to ensure an adequate number of homes to meet the need.
- Assisting with animal care, adoptions, projects and events as needed, always in a manner which demonstrates the organization's interest, care and concern for the public and the animals we serve.
- Promoting a humane and caring attitude toward all animals and treating all animals with respect and compassion at all times.
- Working courteously and cooperatively with staff, rescue groups, and volunteers to ensure that all established procedures and policies of the shelter are followed.
- Treating people with respect; contributing to effective teamwork; fostering good public relations beneficial to the shelter and its programs.
- Performing other duties as assigned.

#### Required skills and experience:

- Attention to detail.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills—outgoing, patient, professional, and able to get along well with variety of people. Ability to show compassion and empathize with people.
- Very strong written and verbal skills, including the ability to communicate skillfully and effectively



with a culturally diverse staff, volunteers and community in a professional, pleasant, respectful, courteous and tactful manner at all times.

- Ability to handle multiple tasks and work in a fast paced environment under tight deadlines.
- Ability to consistently meet deadlines.
- Strong problem solving skills—focusing on finding solutions to problems and challenges.
- Proficient in Microsoft Windows and Office (especially Word, Excel & Outlook). Comfortable learning and using online information systems.
- Affection for animals, concern for their welfare and a willingness to accommodate animals in the work place.
- Enthusiastic support of the no-kill philosophy.
- Ability and initiative, work with minimal supervision and direction.
- Maturity, good judgment and a professional personal appearance.
- Ability to read, write and understand English.
- Familiarity with animals, knowledge of animal care and behavior, including the care of neonatal kittens and other special needs animals. Experience working with animal welfare organizations is preferred.
- Comfort and ability to work with animals of unknown disposition and those who may exhibit medical and other problems, as well as aggressive tendencies.
- Valid [state] drivers license with no record of convictions.

**Physical Requirements:** Physical ability to walk and/or stand on your feet throughout a normal workday required. Physical ability to engage in repetitive motions of legs, arms, and hands, to hear, to see, to move animals and goods. Allergic conditions, which would be aggravated when handling or working with animals, may be a disqualification.

**Educational Requirements:** High school graduation minimum, plus three years of public contact work or volunteer experience, preferably working with animals.

**Non-Exempt Position:** Non-exempt, part-time (or full-time) position, temporary position—must be at least 18 years of age and have a valid driver's license. If hired, able to present a clean driving report from the Department of Motor Vehicles. There is no minimum period of employment guaranteed or implied by acceptance of an employment offer. A 90-day probation period is implemented for all staff.

**Availability:**

[Org name] is open seven days a week. Ability and willingness to work a flexible schedule.

**Department:** Community Programs

**Immediate Supervisor:** [Title]

**Job Scope:** This position performs duties independently with minimal supervision, operating from specific and definite directions and instructions. Decisions are of a routine nature made within prescribed operating guidelines, policies, and procedures. Mistakes or errors may result in work stoppage, loss of business, poor customer relations, and or damage to property or harm to the animals, all of which can have negative implications for the organization.

**Note:** We want to make employees aware that from time to time we euthanize animals who are sick or injured. Also, from time to time we need to end the life of a dog who has displayed aggressive tendencies and who poses a risk to public safety or to the safety of other animals.

# Appendix 7 Sample On-Call Foster Care List

## Foster On-Call List

First Name	Last Name	Phone	Email	Cat Mom & Litter	Kittens (weaned kittens)	Bottle Fed Litter	Older Cats, special needs, etc	Pets Children, Home	Comments	Status	Current Status	Avail-ability
Charles		555-555-5555	email@email.com	x	x		Adult Cats	no pets, no kids, rent apt.		11/18/11 not for 2 weeks, 10/11/11 works 11:30 am to 9:30 pm - can pick up next day new foster		Green
Diana		555-555-5555	email@email.com		x	x		1 cat, 1 kid, own home	Max. 2 kits if bottles 5/7/11: teacher and is available for foster June-August only.	8/27 contact at Christ-mas break;		Green
Fergie		555-555-5555	email@email.com	x	x		Adult Cats, Special Needs	2 dogs, 2 kids, own home	Has a good room for mom and kits. Call in emergency situation. NO ring-worm or sick kits	11/10/11 Dec. 15 9/2/10 Can't foster now, Will call back when ready		Dec 15th
Oliver		555-555-5555	email@email.com		x			1 dog, no kids, rent apt.	2 only...no more, no less; Previous Foster	08/14 Taking season off, can foster in spring 2012.		March 2012
Julie		555-555-5555	email@email.com		x	x	Special Needs	2 dogs, 3 cats, 5 other, No kids, own home	Small Animals 12/1/11 RINGWORM	11/22/11 took 2 more rw 9/22/11-took 2 more rw. 9/21/11 Taking 3-4week olds POSSIBLY w/ring-worm 9/13/11- taking 3 RW kittens.	yes 9/13/11	Foster
Frank		555-555-5555	email@email.com		x		Adult Cats	3 cats, 1 teen, own home	DECLAWED CATS - if we call, must understand that kittens are not declawed.	7/6/11-took single	yes 7/6/11	Foster
Victoria		555-555-5555	email@email.com	x	x			1 dog, 1 cat, no kids, rent home	Previous Foster; Can do feral but check on how feral	7/23/11- have Chu through recovery. 4/22/11 LM no more yet 11/9/10-has Timmy til May '11	Yes	Foster
Sean		555-555-5555	email@email.com		x		Adult Cats, Special Needs	many pets no kids, own home	former Employee, Has lots of animals all types	2/10/11 Has Mo	yes	Foster

# Appendix 8

## Image of Sample Foster Care Tracking Board

ANIMAL ID/A#	PERSON	DATE T/D	SPEC. NEEDS	LOCATION
ERASE BOARD WHEN DONE				
any kittens under 2lbs talk Rhonda!				
187222-24	Kim Berg	6:00	(3) 2# fungus	Clinic Ba
187111-12	Barb Bowles	5:30	(2) bottles	FC
186999-187002	Elise Riser	5:13	(4) weaned URI	Clinic
187201	Sarah Smith	5:00	(1) weaned healthy	FC
187225	Jane Jury	4:00	(1) Semi-Feral	FC

# Appendix 9

## Sample Foster Care Program Handbook

### Nevada Humane Society Foster Handbook

(by Nikole Nichols and Diane Blankenburg)

#### Introduction

This Foster Handbook is designed for those who are working directly with the foster program. This handbook lays out the processes, procedures and best practices used to manage the foster program. It should be used as a tool to better understand the foster program and how it currently functions.

#### Where do Foster Requests Originate?

Foster requests will come from one of these three sources:

- 1) Nevada Humane Society (NHS) Admissions Room (kittens or puppies)
- 2) Washoe County Regional Animal Services (WCRAS) (stray kittens or puppies that will be transferred to NHS)
- 3) NHS managers or leads (normally animal care)

##### 1) NHS Admissions Room (puppies or kittens)

People will often find kittens in their yard or their own pets will have kittens or puppies. In those cases and when they don't want to keep them, they surrender them to NHS. All surrenders go through the admissions process which includes a Parvo/Panleukapenia test, weighing, deworming, vaccinations, and basic exam. Vaccinating, deworming, and sometimes Parvo/ Panleukapenia testing cannot be done on kittens or puppies that are not weaned as they are too young. If a candidate for fostering shows any sign of illness or injury, they will be taken to the clinic before they are available for fostering.

Usually a staff person from the front desk or from the Admission room will come tell you there are kittens/puppies being surrendered even before they are processed. This is nice as it does give you a head start on making phone calls. Otherwise, once they have been processed, the Admission person will print you cage cards and bring them to you. Once a foster animal is processed, it will go to either the foster corner to await pick up, or to the clinic as needed.

##### 2) WCRAS (strays that will be transferred to NHS)

People may find kittens or puppies in various places. Since they are considered stray or unowned, they must be surrendered to WCRAS. If kittens are under two pounds or puppies are under eight weeks old (the weight/age they must be to undergo spay/neuter surgery), WC will process them through their database system and send us an email that they need to be fostered (see sample email). Based on the size, age, and health of the kittens or puppies, we will need to pick them up and place into foster that same day (see section on foster priorities).

Once the WC email request is received, we must respond to it immediately. When it's very busy, it is best to forward the WC email to the staff person working in the Back NHS Admissions Room. This gives him/her the chance to start entering the information into our database system. Print the the description of the kittens or puppies and their A#s. Based on the priority, you will either go get the foster right away or wait until you have located a foster and then go get them. The goal for NHS is to pick up from WCRAS and foster out healthy kittens within 24 hours. While this is the NHS goal, WCRAS agrees to hold kittens that can eat on their own for the normal stray hold period.

Picking up fosters from WC. Make sure to bring the email request with you. You will need to grab a carrier with a towel in it. Make sure the carrier is big enough for what you are getting (i.e. use a bigger carrier for a mom with kittens). Walk over to WC shelter with the email and carrier. A staff person will take you back to where the kittens are. Put kittens in the carrier. Make sure to take the cage cards with the kittens. Stop at the WC front desk and ask the staff to change the kittens' status to "Transferred to NHS." Bring the carrier with kittens and the cage card into the Admission Room to be processed. Once processed, they will need to go to the kitten corner to await pick up, or to the clinic as needed.

### 3) **Direct Manager or lead request**

This most often happens with adult or special needs animals. If there is an animal that needs foster for medical reasons, or an adult cat that is not thriving, the Dog Care, Cat Care Managers or their leads might request that we find a foster. These requests usually come in the form of email. (See sample email). Sometimes they are done verbally. It is important to find a method to keep track of the adult/special needs fosters. In these cases, the animals are already here at the shelter and we only need to find a foster to come pick them up.

## **Types of Foster Situations**

There are several types of foster situations with which you may have to deal. Each situation has a specific set of guidelines to follow. More will be discussed about each situation later. However, the most common foster situations you will encounter include:

- Weaned Kittens (including sick)
- Gruel kittens (including sick)
- Semi-Feral kittens
- Bottle-fed kittens
- Mom and kittens
- Feral mom and kittens
- Kittens with ringworm

About 85% of the foster situations we have involve kittens (so most of this handbook will focus on kittens). However, we need foster homes for weaned puppies, mom and puppies, and bottle-fed puppies. We also sometimes need foster homes for adult dogs and cats that are special needs or just need a break from the shelter. Finally, we occasionally need foster homes for small animals.

## **Fostering Priorities**

There will come a time when there are multiple sets of foster animals that need to be handled. When this happens, there is a set of priorities we follow as best we can.

Animals that are currently in our Admissions Room are a higher priority than those at WC. The reason for this is because animals are already set up in a kennel at WC, while animals in our Admissions Room do not have a space yet. When necessary and possible, leave kittens at WC overnight and focus on the animals in our Admissions Room. Adult animals are already in a kennel or cage in our shelter and do not have the same urgency either.

Bottle-fed or sick kittens are the exception to this rule. Regardless if they are at WC or NHS, bottle-fed kittens (or kittens that cannot eat on their own) and sick kittens that need to be seen by the vet are always a higher priority than any other.

### **This is the basic priority list we follow (Highest priority to lowest):**

1. Bottle-fed
2. Sick
3. Semi-weaned with no mom
4. Mom with litter
5. Ferals

### **The following conditions override the above the prioritization:**

Animals that are still in the NHS Admissions Room are a higher priority than animals that are already set up in a kennel at WC.

Larger litters should be fostered before singles as this allows the appropriate manager time to assess whether or not we can combine the singles into one foster home.

## **Agreement and Procedures for Foster Animals at WCRAS**

At the beginning of each foster season, it is very helpful to set up a meeting with Key WC and NHS staff to review the communication and processes between the two groups. (See Appendix A for the most recent agreed upon procedures.)

## **How Does Someone Become a Foster Caregiver?**

To become a foster caregiver, a person must fill out the Foster Application (see Appendix B) and turn it in. Once the application is received, it is up to the foster coordinator to review the application and determine if the person is a good candidate for fostering.

### **Things to review on the application:**

**Do they have any current pets?** This is important to know to help determine the type of animal they can foster. For example, you would not send a cat that doesn't get along with other cats to a home with four cats.

**Do they live in a house or apartment?** This is especially important when fostering dogs. We may not want a person living in a small apartment to foster a large, high energy dog.

**Are their pets' spayed/neutered and up to date on vaccinations?** We do not want to send foster animals home with someone if their pets are not fixed or up to date on vaccinations. The potential for spreading disease is too great, especially with neonatal kittens and puppies. In addition, we want to encourage people to spay or neuter their pets.

**Have they ever had Parvo or Panleukopenia in their home?** This is very important. These two viruses can live for years in carpeting, fabric, or grass. If they've had it, we do not want to send foster animals with them for a specified amount of time. (1-year for Panleuk and 1.5 years for Ringworm).

*If anything about the application raises a flag for you, ask the applicant about it. Make sure you feel comfortable and don't hesitate to review with a manager before making a final decision.*

Once you've reviewed the application, look the person up in Adopt-a-Friend. We want to see if a potential foster caregiver has ever surrendered an animal, been denied an adoption, or has any negative notes. These things do not necessarily mean they won't make a good foster home, but they are things we want to further discuss to determine the circumstances surrounding them. This is where you must make a judgment call. Finally, enter the information from the new application into the foster

database. If the person is not approved to foster, please enter the information in the RED tab of the foster database. Make sure to clearly note the reason the person has been placed in the RED.

## Foster Database

All foster caregiver information is stored in this foster database which is an Excel document. You will see that the document has four tabs: Cats, Dogs Only, Small Animals Only, and Red.

Everyone that applies to be a foster caregiver and indicates interest in fostering cats or kittens is listed under the “Cat” tab. We indicate if they are also willing to foster dogs and/or small animals. However, people that are interested in only fostering dogs only are listed under the “Dogs Only” tab. The same is true for “Small Animals Only;” only those that indicate an interest in only fostering small animals are listed there. The reason for this is if we have a dog that needs to go to foster, we call all the “dog only” people first. If we cannot find a foster in that group, we can move into the “cats” group as many of them have also indicated an interest in fostering dogs. Since most of the fostered animals are cats or kittens, we don’t want to use up a cat foster home with a dog one when there are people that will only foster dogs.

When a new approved applicant is entered into the database, please make sure to enter all the information required. Especially important is to mark what the person is willing to foster based on the application. If the applicant is not approved, enter the information in the RED tab of the Foster Database.

### Comments:

Under the Comments column, enter any information that will help us match the person to foster animals. Examples of this might be “Bottles,” “Will foster ferals,” “No ferals,” etc. It is also useful to put information that might disqualify them from fostering (e.g. RINGWORM, PANLUK, etc.).

### Status:

Every time a foster home is called, it is very important to put the date (month/day/year) and what occurred in the call in the Status column. For example, if a message is left, a note would be written such as this, “3/1/11-lm” (lm is an abbreviation for left message). These notes help us determine when a person was last contacted and what their availability is to foster.

### Availability:

Each person is color coded by availability.

**Foster** means the home already has foster animals in it

**Green** means the foster is ready and willing to take foster animals.

**Yellow** means there is a reason to pause before you call. In the case of yellow, make sure to read the comments before you call. A person could be marked yellow because something made us question if the foster home is appropriate, or a person could be marked yellow because she told us she won’t be available this year but wants to stay on the list. The notes are key.

### Application Date:

Please make sure to fill this in as it is important. The application date helps us track when the person began fostering for us. It is useful for statistical purposes.

### Home, Pets, Children:

This is where we add information about type of home (own home, rent home, apartment, etc.), how many animals are in the home and what type, as well as if children are in the home. This additional information is useful to have at your fingertips when looking for a specific type of foster.

## RED

There is a tab of the database called “Red”. These people, for one reason or another, should not be asked or allowed to foster. Some people are on the Red list because they requested to no longer be asked to foster. Others are because they moved or failed to return many, many messages about fostering. Still, others are in the Red list because of a specific incident that led us to believe this is no longer an appropriate foster home. When looking at a new potential foster caregiver, always check the Red tab first. If the person is on the red list for a negative reason, we want to make sure that we don’t accidentally send foster animals to their home.

## Making Calls to Find Foster Matches

This is the most time consuming and sometimes frustrating part of the whole process. Persistence is the key. When a foster need arises, start going down the list of foster caregivers in the database that are marked **Green**. As described above, the green foster caregivers are the ones that currently don’t have foster animals and should be available. Ideally, if you have a mom and babies, you only call the Green fosters that have marked they would foster that situation. However, once you’ve called all of those and you still do not have a foster home, start calling ALL of the Green foster caregivers. If I’ve called all the Green ones and still have not found a match, start selectively calling the **Yellow** foster caregivers (depending on why they are yellow). The reality is that you never know who will be able to take what and when. They might say no, but they might say yes. We have to keep trying.

Another frustrating part is that you might start calling in the early afternoon and leave message after message. There are days that you might leave 15-20 messages and just have to wait for someone to call back. This is why it is very important to get cell phone numbers and always call them first. If you call the home number, the person might be at work and will not get your message until they get home that evening. This can often be too late to pick up animals that night and leaves you scrambling to quickly find someone else. When really desperate, call all numbers available (cell, home, and work) hoping to reach someone.

It is important to make notes for each call you make. Generally, the notation might look like this “3/7/11-lm,” meaning this person was called on 3/7/11 and a message was left. Sometimes you might speak with someone and have more information to include in the notes, for example, “3/7/11-on vacation until 3/21/11. Call after that.” When there is a specific date attached to when they will next be available, put that information in the Availability column, highlighted **Pink**. For example, I would put **March 21** under Availability for that person. This becomes extremely helpful later in the season when you have many foster caregivers on vacation, etc.

## What to Say When You Call

Most of the people we are calling know why someone from NHS is calling them. You will also get to know most of the regular foster caregivers rather well. But until then, this is the general script to follow:

### When someone answers:

“Hi, this is (your name) from Nevada Humane Society. I’m calling because you are on our list of possible foster homes for kittens and puppies. Are you still interested or available to foster for us this season? I currently have a foster situation and hoped you could help. I have (animals needing fostering). Do you think you can help us out?” At this point, you will need to describe the foster situation as well as counsel the potential foster about what the foster requirements are for this situation. (Counseling will be discussed in a separate section.)



**When you leave a message:**

“Hi, this is (your name) from Nevada Humane Society. I’m calling to see if you might be able to foster for us. I currently have (animals needing fostering) that I need to put into a foster home by the end of day and was hoping you might be able to help us. I’d greatly appreciate it if you would please give me a call when you get this message and let me know either way. You can reach me at 856-2000 (your extension). Thank you so much.”

**If you’re calling a new foster applicant:**

“Hi this is (your name) from Nevada Humane Society. I just received your application to be a foster caregiver for us and wanted to speak with you further. In addition, I currently have a foster situation that you might be interested in and wanted to talk with you about it. Please give me a call back at 856-2000 (your extension).”

**What Happens if You Cannot Find a Foster Home Before the Shelter Closes?**

We are tasked with making sure all kittens/puppies are secure and safe before we leave for the evening. This can become a little challenging when there are multiple litters coming in the same day. Obviously, the ideal situation is to find a foster caregiver than can pick up the animals before we close. However, if that is not possible, here are a few options. Please note, animals not eating on their own **MUST** go home with **SOMEONE** for the night. However, kittens eating on their own or kittens with moms are ok to be left at the shelter overnight.

First, it is important to put a backup plan into play by 5:45 pm. If you haven’t found a foster caregiver to pick up the kittens by 5:45 pm, start looking for the next best option. If a foster home is found before closing, great; if not, then you are ready with a plan.

1. Sometimes there are extra cages in one of the cat hold rooms or in the clinic. The clinic isn’t ideal as the kittens could be exposed to something. Vonice usually leaves around 4:00 pm so if you have a lot of animals to be fostered, it’s a good idea to chat with her in the afternoon to find out if there will be any empty cages if needed. I wouldn’t count on this, though, as the shelter is usually very full and space is a premium, but still worth checking. If Vonice isn’t available, you can speak with one of the cat leads or clinic staffers. If space exists, the kittens would be set up in one of the kennels just for overnight so you can have time the next day to find a foster home.
2. Many of our staff members are willing to take a litter of kittens home overnight or for a few days. Start asking! Don’t forget to ask clinic staff, cat staff, dog staff, office staff, and adoption staff. If they know it’s just for one night and the kittens are eating on their own, many are willing to help. There are a few staff willing to take bottle babies if needed.....but not as many. (Please note that managers must approve their staff fostering so be sure to check this out first.)
3. We have a few foster homes that are willing to take fostered animals for just one night and on short notice like this. (See the Foster Database for people that are willing to do this.)
4. If the kittens are eating on their own and there is no other place to put them, you can set them up in a large kennel or cage in the foster corner for the night. Make sure they have a litter box, food, water and a bed. It’s best to put them on a table or even a blanket, to keep them off the floor. If it is a single kitten, you might want to include a heating pad.
5. Last resort, take the kitten(s) home with you. This is not expected. Don’t feel pressured to do it, but at the same time, do it if it is needed and there truly is no other choice.

## Maintaining the Foster Board

The foster board is a very important tool for communication between the foster staff and the adoptions staff. Every time there is a new foster situation it should be written on the white board in the Adoption Manager's Office. It is ok if you only have partial information; the board should be updated with whatever you know. This is helpful for adoption staff who often are on the front lines for questions.

### The information that should be recorded on the board is:

- Animal ID # (use the county A# if a NHS number is still being created)
- Type of foster (weaned kittens, bottle-fed, gruel, mom and kitten(s), sick, semi-feral, etc.)
- Name of foster caregiver picking up animals
- Date and time foster caregiver is picking up animals
- Special needs—include things like “on medication,” “semi-feral,” and “bottle-fed”. Also indicate any special information about the foster home. If this is a brand new foster caregiver, indicate that so the adoption staff knows to be very thorough with them.
- Location of animals—make sure to be very specific. Typical locations might be Foster Corner, Admissions, or Clinic.

It is absolutely critical to keep the foster board accurate and up to date, ensuring that the flow of animals happens efficiently and smoothly.

## Counseling Foster Caregivers

Foster caregivers will receive counseling from the adoption counselors when they pick up the foster animals, going over a variety of topics. However, foster caregivers should also be counseled up front by the foster coordinator. It is important that the foster caregiver knows and feels comfortable with what he/she is doing before they agree to do it. It is therefore critical that we give them all the necessary information on the phone when we first call them and before they agree to foster.

Each foster situation has specific information that must be communicated to the foster caregiver. To help with this, Foster Care Talking Points (see Appendix D) has been created for the most common situations:

- Weaned (including sick)
- gruel (including)
- Bottle-fed
- Mom and kittens
- Feral mom and kittens
- Feral or Semi-feral kittens (including sick)
- Kittens with ringworm

For each situation, chose the appropriate talking points document. Make sure to cover this information with the potential foster before he/she signs the foster agreement. Please note: there are several foster homes that have been working with us for years. Chances are they know this information inside and out. However, never assume.

## What Happens When a Foster Caregiver Arrives to Pick-up Animals?

When the foster caregiver arrives to pick-up the animal(s), he/she will go to the front desk. Many times, as long as the foster board is up to date and accurate, the adoption staff can check the foster out and never need to call on you. Other times, especially if it's a new foster home, the front desk will come get you to talk with the foster caregiver. It is preferred that you meet every new foster caregiver

and personally go over review information with them.

First, review the same points covered on the phone. If the animals have medication, get it and go over directions for each medication and show them how to administer as needed.

Ask if the foster needs supplies. Our standard line is that we are happy to provide any supplies the foster caregiver cannot provide. Often, fosters are willing to provide all the supplies (which saves us money) but just need some to get through the night until they can get to the store. In this case, provide them with a small starter kit (see below Starter Kit section for details).

Finally, make sure to tell them about the foster business card with contact phone numbers. Clarify that the “General” number is Nikole Nichols’ direct line and she is available Monday through Friday during normal business hours. Then tell them about the emergency foster phone number and that it is primarily for after hours during the week and on weekends but OK to use anytime if in doubt. We want them to be comfortable calling—better safe than sorry.

After the foster caregiver is set and comfortable, take him/her to the front desk where she will go through the checkout process, completing all relevant paperwork. Once the paperwork is completed, the adoption staff will retrieve the foster animals. We don’t want to give the animals to the person first as they will pay more attention to the kittens and not the counseling.

## **Checkout Process/Foster Packets**

During the height of kitten season, it can become very, very busy. Sometimes there may be several foster caregivers waiting to be checked out by the front desk. If appropriate and when possible, do the checkout yourself so that you can minimize the wait time. (Be sure that you are trained in using Adopt-a-Friend.)

## **Starter Kits**

As described earlier, we do provide starter kits for foster caregivers if they need them. Generally, a starter kit for kittens includes pre-littered disposable litter boxes, dry food, and wet food (enough to get them through a few days). However, we will also provide bedding, litter boxes and toys, etc. if the foster caregiver really needs them. Basically, we want to be as accommodating to our foster homes as possible since they do such an important job for us and yet, we cannot afford to provide everything for all foster homes. All items for a starter kit can be found in the Foster Corner. Fosters who cannot afford to provide supplies will sometimes come in to get more supplies. No questions asked. We will provide them with what they need within reason and normally, no one takes advantage of this service.

## **Foster Corner**

The foster corner can be found in the area next to the administrative offices and just outside the reception window. This area exists for two reasons:

1. To provide an area where all needed supplies needed to work with fosters may be kept and easily accessed.
2. To provide a clean, disease-free area where animals to be fostered can be kept until the foster caregiver picks them up. Since many of these animals are very young and have not yet had their vaccinations, it is important to keep them someplace where they will not come in contact with other animals and possibly diseases.

For these reasons, the foster corner should be off limits to everyone except for staff who needs to be there. You'll find that staff and customers alike will come out of the woodwork to look at cute, tiny kittens or puppies. However, it is important that we keep people away from this area. We want the animals to have as little contact with people as possible in order to minimize exposure and contamination.

It is also very important to keep the foster corner Clean and Stocked at all times. It will get very busy and if the corner is dirty or out of supplies it will make your job very difficult. When possible, take the first 5-10 minutes of each day to stock the foster corner with any needed supplies. Also, take 5-10 minutes at the end of each day to make sure everything is cleaned and ready for the next day.

### **Standard Items in Foster Corner:**

- Dry kitten Food
- Wet kitten Food
- Kitty litter
- Wet puppy food
- Dry puppy food
- Heat pads/rocks
- Towels and wash clothes
- KMR and PMR (Kitten Milk Replacement/Puppy Milk Replacement)
- Cardboard litter boxes and scissors to cut them to make smaller versions
- Bottles/nipples/syringes for feeding kittens and puppies
- Bowls for food and water
- Utensils/paper towels
- Gloves
- Plastic baggies for KMR/PMR and sharpie pen to write them
- Bags for starter kits
- Nutra-quat for cleaning

### **Keeping the Corner Clean**

As already stated, one of the reasons for the foster corner is for disease control. As such, it is very important to keep it clean. At the end of the day all dirty linens, bowls, and utensils should be taken to the proper location for cleaning. The desk counter should be cleaned with bleach/water mix or Nutra-quat after EACH LITTER of kittens or puppies is on it. Sweep up any food or litter that has fallen on the ground. Make sure the lids are on the food and litter buckets. All food, KMR, etc. should be put away. Mop the floor of the foster corner with bleach and water every morning.

### **Disease Control**

We must also follow proper protocol to ensure disease control.

- You must wash your hands between handling each litter. This especially becomes important when dealing with sick or bottle-fed kittens or puppies.
- Gloves must be worn at all time when handling animals. This is to protect the animals from what you might have picked up from other shelter animals as well as protecting the other shelter animals from anything to which these animals have been exposed.
- It is important to not place an animal carrier on the desk or other surface with which the animals may come in contact. If this does happen, please make sure to clean the surface with Nutra-quat before using again.
- It is best to not allow kittens or puppies to touch the floor
- Always place a towel on the desk for the animals to lie on when feeding them. Even though you

- used a towel, make sure to clean the surface before using the area for another litter.
- Use different towels, utensils, bowls, bottles, nipples, etc. for each litter to avoid cross contamination.
  - Make other people do not enter the Foster Corner area or handle the animals.
  - To further manage the potential spread of any diseases, the staff who are allowed to feed kittens or puppies is limited. Those people include the Community Programs Manager, Foster Coordinator, and any backup Foster Coordinators. Other staff will ask but only under special circumstances should they be allowed.

## How Do We Communicate with Our Foster Homes?

As discussed in a previous section, generally we communicate with our foster caregivers via phone. When we have a need, we start calling foster homes until we find a caregiver that can pick up the animals that evening.

On days when we have multiple litters that need to go into foster homes, we found sending an email to all active (non-red) fosters is a quick and simple way to communicate with many at one time. (See Appendix E for Sample Email.)

The key to these emails is that you date it and indicate the day and time by which these particular animals must be picked-up. This helps create the sense of urgency. It is also very important to list each foster situation individually. People will see this, be surprised at the number, understand our urgency, and be more likely to agree to help. As a rule, do not send out more than one of these in one week so we don't inundate them and they get ignored. Timing is critical.

## Emergency Foster Phone

One of the ways we support our foster caregivers is via the emergency foster phone. This is also a key issue when encouraging someone to foster for the first time. The knowledge that they have access to someone 7/24 is very comforting. Each season the emergency foster phone team is made up of various staff willing to be on call (see Appendix F for current phone schedule).

Each staff person on the phone list receives some basic training on how to handle the most common problems. This includes things the foster caregiver can do in each situation and when the animal needs to be brought to the clinic. Each person is also given a key to the building in case he/she needs to meet the foster parent at the clinic in the middle of the night and information on what to do when she gets there.

The foster phone is rotated to a different person every week so no one is on call for more than a week at a time. (This is sometimes extended to two weeks in the off season.) When it is your turn to have the foster phone, it must be with you at all times. Sometimes the calls are minor and sometimes these calls could mean life or death. If a call is missed, it should be returned within an hour. If you cannot fulfill your shift, you must find someone to cover for you.

Emergency Foster Phone Number is xxx-xxx-xxxx and voicemail password is xxxxx. Weekly coverage goes from Friday to Friday. All staff on the phone list are responsible for trading with another approved staff person should he/she be unable to manage the phone for the assigned times.

## Emergency Foster Phone Checklist

When a foster caregiver calls the emergency foster phone, it is important to immediately determine how sick a fostered animal is by asking a series of simple questions. Generally the foster will be reporting diarrhea, vomiting, or Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) symptoms. (See Appendix G for a list of questions to ask and Appendix H for a checklist on what to do in common situations.)

## Out-to-Foster List

Every week, the Out-To-Foster list should be updated. This is a list that is pulled directly from Adopt-a-Friend showing which animals are currently in foster and with whom. This is useful for many reasons. First, going through this list and comparing it to the foster database helps you keep up to date on which people are now available for new fosters.

Second, this list is to be used to make foster follow-up calls. Most of our foster caregivers are really good about bringing their fostered animals in to be spayed or neutered at the appropriate time. Other caregivers need to be reminded. Whenever time allows, the Out-to-Foster list should be checked to see which animals are due back or past due. Reminder calls should be made to those foster homes. Every time a follow-up call is made, a note should be written in the “Memo Pad” section of the animal’s record in Adopt-a-Friend. A sample note might be “3/14/11 – called foster home to remind for Spay/Neuter nn.” Please always put your initials next to any notation you make so if there are questions, we know who to ask.

The Out-to-Foster list also shows all the adult fosters. Adult fosters require less follow up. Maybe once or twice a year we will follow up to see how it’s going and if they have any questions or concerns about the animals. Some adult animals have been placed into foster for a specific time period and they should be called if that period is up.

### The Out-to-Foster list contains the following fields:

- ID#
- Date (date animal went to foster)
- Name (of animal)
- Type (cat, dog, small animal)
- Date of birth
- Name (first and last name of foster caregiver)
- Home phone/Business phone
- Memo Pad
- RUserField1 – this is where “Adult Foster” is indicated.

The list can be sorted by any of the above fields to help you obtain whatever information you need. Please make sure to add comments to the Memo Field every time you make a call.

## Conclusion

Nevada Humane Society created the Foster Program for animals that are too young or need special care before they can be placed in forever homes. The program gives these special needs pets a better chance of healthy survival, and a better chance at adoption, while opening up space at the shelter so more lives can be saved. Every animal sent to foster allows another animal to be brought into the shelter. If foster care volunteers can open their homes for a few weeks, we can find the animals homes forever.

## WCRAS and NHS Communication Procedure for Fostered Animals

Healthy kittens that weigh at least two pounds and puppies that are at least eight weeks old are processed as strays and made available by WCRAS after the standard five-day hold period. They are not in need of foster care. If there are sick kittens or puppies in need of foster care or additional vet care, contact NHS for foster care as outlined below. NHS understands that kittens or puppies still within the five-day stray hold period remain under the ownership of WCRAS.

### Healthy Kittens

Kittens under two pounds who are eating on their own (usually between three to nine weeks of age) and test negative for panleukopenia. WCRAS staff will contact NHS:

- A WCRAS representative will e-mail [foster@nevadahumanesociety.org](mailto:foster@nevadahumanesociety.org) and the message will automatically be distributed to the following NHS representatives: [list of names]
- If there is urgency, WCRAS staff placing a call to a key contact at NHS that day would be helpful, but e-mail notification is still preferable. If it is late in the day, WCRAS staff will either call or walk the animals over to NHS.
- WCRAS will provide ID numbers, age of animals and health status in the email communications.
- The NHS goal is to pick kittens and puppies up from WCRAS and foster out healthy ones in this category within 24 hours. While this is the goal, WCRAS agrees to hold healthy kittens or puppies that can eat on their own for the normal stray-hold period if NHS needs more time to find fosters.
- If NHS staff does not come within the allotted time, please call [names] (cell phone #s provided at the end of this document) and they will ensure prompt attention.

### Kittens under four weeks or not eating independently and testing negative for panleukopenia

If animals arrive before 4:30 pm, WCRAS staff will contact NHS:

- A WCRAS representative will e-mail and the message will automatically be distributed to the list.
- If there is urgency, WCRAS staff placing a call to a key contact at NHS that day would be helpful, but e-mail notification is still preferable. If it is 4:30 pm or later, WCRAS staff will either call or walk the animals over to NHS.
- WCRAS will provide ID numbers, age of animals and health status in the email communications
- NHS will pick up these animals within two hours or if notified after 3:00 pm, will pick up by 5:00 pm. WCRAS staff will make every effort to give NHS as much advance notice as possible.
- If NHS has not picked up the kittens or puppies within the agreed upon time frame, WCRAS will call NHS again to for a status update. Feel free to call the contacts listed below for assistance.

### Panleukopenia and Parvo Testing

- One kitten or puppy from each litter or any single kittens or puppies will be tested by WCRAS.
- When selecting a kitten from a litter to test, the smallest and weakest animal, will be tested.
- If the kittens or puppies are positive and there is a mother, she will also be tested, as sometimes the mother may be negative. A non-symptomatic adult animal that is testing positive may not manifest the virus. Please call [names] before euthanasia. If we take an adult, we will isolate them.
- The test results and any vaccinations given will be recorded in the animal's health record.
- NHS will not take any kittens less than nine weeks old testing positive for panleukopenia. NHS may take puppies testing positive for Parvo on a case-by-case basis.
- NHS understands that it is not always possible to test feral mother cats. NHS will take feral moms and their litters without testing. At times, NHS may ask WCRAS to hold these animals, as has been done in the past.

### Vaccinations

Before requesting foster from NHS, WCRAS will vaccinate all healthy kittens under two pounds and all healthy puppies under eight weeks old with a killed vaccine if four to six weeks old or a modified live vaccine if over six weeks.

# Appendix 10

## Foster Care Process Flow Documentation

### Phase I: Prep

Coordinator	Receive request to be foster home
Coordinator	Make sure part of general volunteer system
Foster caregiver	Complete foster application
Coordinator	Review and accept application
Coordinator	Check Adopt-a-Friend
Coordinator	If not in volunteer list, give to volunteer data base coordinator for updating
Coordinator	File paperwork

### Phase II: Outgoing

Manager	Make request for foster care
Coordinator	Receive request from managers
Coordinator	Contact potential foster homes
Coordinator	Make match and put on Foster Board
Coordinator	Make appointment to pick up foster animals same, if possible (encourage caregivers to help find homes rather than bringing animals back to the shelter)
Coordinator	Enter all info on foster board
Foster caregiver	Pick up animals
Front desk staff	Give them foster folder
Foster caregiver	Complete contract
Front desk staff	Update website and print contract for foster caregiver and coordinator
Front desk staff	Give caregiver starter kit (kits provided with food, litter, etc.)
Front desk staff	Give caregiver information packet (includes adoption contract and documents)
Coordinator	Respond to calls for help: Provide advice/assistance with medical or behavioral situations and if animal passes away for any reason, send sympathy card
Coordinator	Call periodically to check on status (if kittens, schedule neuter when two lbs. – usually at eight weeks)
Foster caregiver	Schedule vaccination & spay/neuter appointments with clinic

### Phase III: Incoming

Coordinator	Call when time to return
Foster caregiver	If want to adopt, follow adoption process (waive adoption fee for foster caregivers)
Coordinator	Facilitate adoption process if foster family able to find homes for animals
Coordinator	Check if wants to foster again or needs a break
Foster Caregiver	Return animals
Desk/clinic staff	Admit animals and update Adopt-a-Friend
Coordinator	Notify caregiver if animal must be euthanized & send sympathy card
Coordinator	Send thank you signed by director

### Ongoing:

Coordinator	Recruit new foster homes
Coordinator	Communicate with foster caregivers periodically to keep up interest
Coordinator	Provide monthly report to management with number of new animals entering foster system and number of active/reserve foster homes
Coordinator	Print report and check due dates, making reminder calls as needed
Coordinator	Document success stories for NHS to help promote foster program



# Appendix 11

## Sample Emergency Call Troubleshooting Guide

### Emergency Contact Numbers for the staff member covering the Emergency Phone ONLY.

DO NOT give these numbers out to anyone else. Follow instructions below first. Make these calls only if you still have questions or if additional help is still needed: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Identifying an Urgent Situation: Have foster caregiver bring animal to the clinic immediately if the following symptoms list below exist, unless otherwise stated.

Symptom	Treatment Options
<p><b>Respiratory distress</b>            Panting            Open mouth breathing            Gums pale or blue            Breathing quickly            Chest is moving deeply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give oxygen treatment (attached to incubator)</li> <li>Check for dehydration and give fluids as appropriate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wobbly</b>            Disoriented            Lethargic            Sick kitten stare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give 1/4 tsp. of Karo syrup and wait 15 minutes. If no change, repeat. After the second 15 minutes, the syrup will not help.</li> <li>Take temperature (normal temperature for a kitten is 100-100.2 ). Insert thermometer 1/2 in into butt. If less than 99 degrees, put in incubator at 12 o'clock position (temperature)</li> <li>Check for dehydration and if needed, give fluids (30 mls per # - see chart).</li> <li>Place in incubator</li> <li>Low blood sugar, which results in the same symptoms, can also mean kitten needs food</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agonal (on side)</b>            Eyes are looking straight ahead and are dilated.            Take an intake of breath (gasp).            Throw their head back and their body is stiffened.            Minimal chest movement</p> <p><b>Collapsed and/or seizing</b>            Dazed eyes and thrashing followed by quiet and calm period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count how long seizure last and how long between seizures if there are multiple.</li> <li>Usually not going to make it and mentally gone so they are not suffering.</li> <li>Call for possible euthanasia authorization</li> </ul>

Symptom	Treatment Options
<p><b>Animal is cold</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In shelter, use incubator per instructions below.</li> <li>• At home:</li> <li>• Heating pad on low; cover heating pad with a towel and place in carrier; give the animal room to move off the heating pad if they get too hot.</li> <li>• A blow dryer to warm up; on low.</li> <li>• Fill glove with warm water.</li> <li>• Wrap the kitten in a towel heated up in the dryer.</li> <li>• Place kitten directly on your skin and cover with warm towel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dehydrated</b>  Test by lifting skin on the back of the neck (tenting):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If normally hydrated, the skin will snap back.</li> <li>• If dehydrated, skin will stay “tented.”</li> </ul> <p>Eyes sunken or dry.  Tacky or dry gums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give fluids</li> <li>• Use Lactate Ringers (found in the box). See chart in box for amount of fluids to give. 30 mls per #. You can use a 20 gauge needle to draw up the fluids (it’s larger). Use a 25 gauge needle to give the fluids.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vomiting and diarrhea</b>  Was there any change in diet?  Is diarrhea watery or pudding like?  Is there any blood in stool or vomit (dark – not bright red)? A streak or drop of blood is not an emergency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For kittens, any change in diet can cause diarrhea. Need to determine if it is unusual diarrhea (pudding is normal, watery and/or bloody is not).</li> <li>• If very sick or bloody, watery diarrhea, do Panleukopenia test (see below). Stool will be very bloody, dark, runny, rust colored with a very foul smell.</li> <li>• If positive, call for possible euthanasia authorization.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extreme pain/crying out</b>  Did kitten fall from something?  Any open sores or injuries?  Is stool normal?  Is kitten constipated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have foster caregiver confine kitten to a kennel so cannot run around until a vet apt. is made—this can wait until morning.</li> <li>• Do NOT give aspirin or other pain reliever.</li> <li>• Check to see if stomach is hard and distended. If yes, bring in next day.</li> <li>• If straining and stool trying to come out for 72 hours, bring in to clinic.</li> <li>• If any open sores or blood, bring kitten in</li> </ul>

Symptom	Treatment Options
<p><b>Kitty colds with dehydration</b>            Not eating because stuffed up (kittens won't eat if they can't smell).</p>	<p>In home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have foster caregiver keep nose clear of all crusty or wet mucus.</li> <li>• Encourage caregiver to humidify (turn on hot shower and put kitten in bathroom).</li> <li>• Tell foster to use extra stinky food.</li> <li>• If kitten is lethargic, bring kitten in immediately.</li> <li>• If not emergency, tell foster volunteer to bring kittens in the next day.</li> </ul> <p>In shelter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If kitten is dehydrated, give fluids.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lethargic/sick kitten stance</b>            Kitten will be hunched over            Withdrawn            Blank stare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring to clinic</li> <li>• Take temperature. Normal temperature for a kitten is 100-100.2).</li> <li>• Try Karo syrup (see instructions above).</li> <li>• Give fluids, especially if they have a fever (follow instructions).</li> <li>• Put in incubator if they do not have a temperature (see instructions below).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Not eating for 8 hours; force feeding and none of the below are working:</b>            Warm food            Adding warm water to food, like a gruel            Baby food (chicken, turkey)            Chum the animal using finger (place food on your finger and rub it on their mouth or tongue).            Force feeding with syringe (need to provide instructions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take temperature (normal temperature for a kitten is 100-100.2).</li> <li>• Try Karo syrup, only if lethargic (see instructions above)</li> <li>• Check for dehydration and give fluids if needed</li> <li>• Put in incubator (see instructions below).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Blood in stool or urine</b>  <b>Males unable to pee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small amount of blood in stool is not life threatening (if it is dark, not bright red).</li> <li>• Blocked adult males need immediate attention</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bleeding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If no gushing, gums pink, then confine animals and wait to bring in next day.</li> <li>• Determine if there is an injury causing the bleeding.</li> <li>• Sometimes kittens have nosebleeds that can be easily wiped clean.</li> <li>• Wrap wound with gauze or bandage.</li> <li>• If gums pale, bring in to clinic.</li> <li>• Call for serious bleeding.</li> </ul>

Symptom	Treatment Options
<p><b>Mom with babies, but babies not eating</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try sitting with mom and pet while kittens nurse.</li> <li>• Place mom and kittens together in a kennel.</li> <li>• Get authorized formula and bottle (caregivers can get after hours at Scolari's or Walmart and begin bottle feeding kittens).</li> <li>• If mom is feral and hasn't fed kittens in 4-6 hours, kittens will need to be separated and bottle fed.</li> <li>• With other symptoms, could possibly be Panleukopenia or other problems. Bring mom and kittens into clinic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suspected panleukopenia</b>  Ask caregiver to keep the animal in a carrier and do not set carrier down.</p> <p>Signs are:  Lethargy  Diarrhea  Dehydration  Vomiting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask caregiver how long they have had foster animals? Panleukopenia virus can shed up to six weeks.</li> <li>• Test for panleukopenia</li> <li>• The caregiver can sometimes get a fecal sample sample and bring it in (need to stimulate an animal to get a sample).</li> <li>• Panleukopenia test (each test comes with instructions):</li> <li>• Don't go too deep into anus</li> <li>• Swirl around</li> <li>• Put Q-tip end back in tube</li> <li>• Bend end with blue liquid until liquid is free</li> <li>• Move back and forth five times</li> <li>• Squeeze five drops onto the deep well side of the test; watch it migrate across the middle and to the end of the test</li> <li>• Snap the test shut</li> <li>• Let it sit for 8 minutes</li> <li>• If you see one dot, the test has worked</li> <li>• Two dots means positive for panleukopenia</li> <li>• Call for possible euthanasia authorization.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kittens sucking on each other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate the kittens.</li> <li>• Use bitter apple, lemon juice or vinegar or other deterrent on the area being sucked. Make sure it is safe to use on the area in question.</li> </ul>

PLEASE SEE THE VETERINARIAN IF YOU NEED ANY ADDITIONAL TRAINING (BEYOND YOUR ORIENTATION) ON THE ABOVE TREATMENT INSTRUCTIONS.

## Helpful Points to Review:

- Err on the side of caution for kittens—they can go downhill quickly.
- Sometimes the decision to bring the kitten into the clinic is simply for the benefit of the foster caregiver. We prefer to spare the caregiver the experience of the kitten dying in their care.
- If you have a sick animal coming into the clinic, please bring the animal directly to the exam room. Don't set the carrier down outside of the exam room.
- Always use gloves when examining an animal.
- Get whatever details you can from a foster caregiver regarding an animal's condition. Assure them that you will do everything you can for the animal and encourage them to go home as some of the procedures you might have to perform may be upsetting.
- When the caregiver arrives, please be sure to get their name and contact number as well as the animal ID. At a minimum, get the animal's color and name so Adopt-a-Friend can be updated.
- A small amount of Karo syrup (see instructions above) is a good place to start if you have a kitten where you are not sure what is wrong with it.
- Canned pumpkin can be used for both constipation and diarrhea.
  - You can ask foster: what does the anus look like?
  - Constipation can be from the formula being too thick.
- Popcorn sound with stethoscope can mean pneumonia.
- If an animal has died while in the care of a Foster parent or while being treated in the clinic, please leave the animal in a carrier in the exam room. Please leave a note on the carrier describing the animal and what happened. Before you leave (if possible), please send an email to [clinicinfo@nevadahumanesociety.org](mailto:clinicinfo@nevadahumanesociety.org) describing what occurred and identifying the animal and caregiver.
- If a kitten has died in a caregiver's home, please ask them to place the body in the carrier for transportation back to the clinic. They can also refrigerate the body to preserve it but should not freeze it (in case we need to do a necropsy).
- If you believe an animal that has died in the clinic (or in a caregiver's home) may have panleukopenia, please email [clinicinfo@nevadahumanesociety.org](mailto:clinicinfo@nevadahumanesociety.org) and leave notes on both doors of the exam room.

## Items in Emergency Foster Box (stored on shelves in room behind clinic reception desk):

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Karo syrup                    | 6. Needles and syringes |
| 2. Gloves                        | 7. Panleukopenia tests  |
| 3. Thermometer with probe covers | 8. Baby food            |
| 4. Lubricant                     | 9. Antibiotics          |
| 5. Bag of fluids                 | 10. Stethoscope         |

## Non-Emergency Situations

The situations below may not be an emergency but might still require medical attention. In these cases, have the foster caregiver bring the kitten to the clinic the next day. If you instruct a caregiver to bring an animal to the clinic first thing in the morning, please send an email so everyone is aware. The foster caregiver can arrive at the clinic at 7:00 a.m. or call to make an afternoon appointment (age is a factor—older animals may be more easily able to wait for an appointment). These are common situations that can wait for the next day.

- Sneezing
- Still eating but has other symptoms like upper respiratory problems, etc.
- Limping
- Blood in urine but able to pee. If cat is male, he should come in immediately as it could be crystals in the urine which can cause serious problems.
- Light bleeding/swollen rectum
- Kitty cold without dehydration

## Appendix 12

# Sample Foster Care Emergency Checklist for Staff

When a foster parent calls, it is important to determine how sick the foster animal is by asking a series of simple questions. Generally the foster caregiver will be reporting diarrhea, vomiting or URI symptoms.

### Questions to Ask:

1. Are there other kittens and/or a mom? If so, are they exhibiting the same symptoms?
2. Have they been vaccinated, and if so, when?
  - After two weeks you can usually rule out panleukopenia.
3. Is there any weight loss?
4. Is the kitten eating, drinking, or playing at all?
5. Is the kitten lethargic? If so, for how long?
  - Sometimes some corn syrup can help listless, failing kittens.
6. Is there diarrhea or vomiting? How long? If there is diarrhea, what is the consistency? Is it like water or pudding?
  - Diarrhea consistency like water is more serious.
  - Dehydration can happen very quickly in kittens.
  - Kittens usually get diarrhea at about 7 or 8 weeks.
  - If the kitten has not eaten in 8 hours or is lethargic, vomiting and/or has diarrhea and is dehydrated, the kitten will need to be tested for panleukopenia
  - Ask the caregiver to bring a stool sample with them.
7. Is the kitten hydrated?
  - Ask the foster parent to pull the skin up at the back of the neck and see if it quickly goes back in place or if the skin stays “tented”. If the skin does not snap back quickly, the animal needs sub-Q fluids.
8. Is the kitten breathing normally or breathing through its mouth?
  - Can be a stuffed nose or respiratory distress.
  - Popcorn sound with stethoscope can mean pneumonia.
9. Is there discharge from the eyes or nose, and if so, what color?
  - If the kitten is having trouble breathing and has a cold, ask the foster if the nose is plugged. The foster should clean the nose with a soft, warm, wet cloth to see if this helps.
  - If the eyes are glued with mucus, ask the foster parent to get the eyes open by cleaning them with a soft, warm, damp cloth. Cotton balls should never be used to clean a kitten’s eyes, as the fibers can scratch a kitten’s eyes.
10. Is the kitten constipated and hasn’t gone to the bathroom in 24 hours?
  - For young kittens be sure the caregiver is stimulating the kittens properly so they will eliminate.
  - Mix in more water with formula; call the next morning if it didn’t help.
11. Take notes to put into system! Meet them at the clinic and/or call emergency numbers provided for you to obtain more advice if needed.

# Appendix 13

## Sample Emergency Foster Phone Schedule

### Emergency Foster Phone Schedule

Name	Work Schedule	Responsible for Emergency Foster Phone starting (Friday to Friday)						
		1/6	3/30	5/18	8/3	8/24	10/12	11/30
Kim M	Tu-Sa	1/6	3/30	5/18	8/3	8/24	10/12	11/30
Debbie	M-F	1/20	4/6	5/25	7/13	8/31	10/19	12/7
Vanessa	M-F	2/3	4/13	6/1	7/20	9/7	10/26	12/14
Art	W-Su	2/17	4/20	6/8	7/27	9/14	11/2	12/21
Diane	M-F	3/2	4/27	6/15	7/6	9/28	11/9	12/28
Kim	M-F	3/9	5/4	6/22	8/17	9/21	11/16	1/11/13
Nikole	M-F	3/23	5/11	6/29	8/10	10/5	11/23	1/24/12

# Appendix 14

## Sample Marketing Plan

### March:

- Early March – Begin Facebook posts for foster home recruitment
- Early March – Begin contacting companies and churches to post info
- Late March – Send out post card for recruiting and announcing foster care info session

### April:

- April 4 – E-mail to all past foster caregivers to start year.
- April 11 – All online volunteer listings up to date and maintain monthly.
- April 11 – Recruitment e-mail to all volunteers/supporters (announce info session)
- April 16 - Foster Care Info Session and Kitten Shower - Schedule second one as needed.
- April 18 - News Release: Then 1x/month through season (each with a different twist).
- April 18 - PSA completed in Early April. Send to TV and Radio stations
- Mid-April – Complete contacting companies and churches

### May:

- May 2 - Begin regular and consistent FB posting (1x/week) photos of kittens in need of fosterhomes
- May 4 - Begin Craig's List and other online community forums - foster recruitment posting (weekly)
- May 5 - City Critters (TV show, will air mid may)
- May 18 - Send 2nd News Release, seek out TV and radio appearances to recruit foster homes

### June:

- June 1 - Petfolio article or ad
- June 1 – guest column in local paper to recruit foster homes
- June 15 - News release
- June 27 - Follow up/reminder of PSA
- Weekly - Craig's List and other online community forums recruitment
- Weekly - Continue regular and consistent FB posting (1x/week)
- Late June - Corporate e-newsletters

### July:

- July 18 - News release
- Weekly - Craig's List and other online community forums
- Weekly - Continue regular and consistent FB posting (1x/week)
- Mid July Reconnect with companies/churches/service groups

### August

- August 15 - Mid-season email to all supporters
- August 17 - News release
- August 25 - City Critters (will air in early September)
- August 29 - Follow up/reminder of PSA
- Weekly - Craig's List and other online community forums
- Weekly Continue regular and consistent FB posting (1x/week) Kimberly and Nikole
- Aug 30 - Petfolio ad/article

### Other Ideas:

- Gazette Journal Newspaper Ads
- Newspaper Animal Files Column
- Tribune Newspaper Ads
- Mostly Dogs Blog
- Movie Theater Ads
- TV/Radio Ads



# Appendix 15

## Sample PSA for Foster Care Volunteer Recruitment

PSA – 30 seconds

To air: May 1 - August 31

For more information contact:

[Name]

xxx-xxx-xxxx

Urgently Seeks Foster Care Volunteers

---Text ---

Help [Org. Name] save the lives of orphaned kittens by becoming a Foster Care Volunteer. Over two-thousand kittens a year require loving care in foster homes until they are old enough for adoption. Foster care is fun, rewarding, and truly saves lives! If you can foster kittens for a few weeks, [Org. Name] can find them homes for life. Experience is not required. To learn how to become a Foster Care Volunteer, please call xxx-xxx-xxxx or visit online at \_\_\_\_\_.

---End –

# Appendix 16

## Sample News Release for Foster Care Volunteer Recruitment

News Release

For Immediate Release: April 21, 2011

For more information contact:

[Name]

xxx-xxx-xxxx

### Nevada Humane Society Urgently Seeks Foster Care Volunteers

If You Can Foster Kittens for a Few Weeks,  
NHS Can Find Them Homes for Life

Spring is here and that means kitten season is well underway. Each day, dozens of orphaned kittens come into the Nevada Humane Society shelter in desperate need of foster care volunteers to provide them with temporary homes.

Nevada Humane Society created the Volunteer Foster Program for animals that are too young or need special care before they can be placed in adoptive homes. The program gives neonatal kittens and puppies, as well as other special-needs pets, the best opportunity in life while opening up space at the shelter so more lives can be saved.

“We have many dedicated families that open their homes during kitten season, but they can only take one litter at a time so we urgently need more volunteers for this important program. At the height of kitten season, we see an average of 20 kittens come into the shelter each day, all in need of placement in a temporary home the same day they arrive,” said Nikole Nichols, Community Programs Manager for Nevada Humane Society.

“It is probably one of the most rewarding things I have ever done,” said Roslyn Zimmerman, a longtime foster care volunteer. “I feel like I am making a small dent with all the kittens coming in to Nevada Humane Society, but together we are making a huge difference.”

Foster care volunteers can choose which kind of animals to foster—whether they would like to provide a temporary home for kittens, a mom and kittens or puppies, or adult dogs and cats with special needs. The greatest need, however, is for young kittens. Some need to be bottle fed while others are already eating on their own and just need to reach two pounds in size so they can be spayed or neutered and adopted.

“Experience is not required and we provide on-the-job training,” added Nichols. “Foster care volunteers receive a kit of starter supplies and access to a 24-hour help line for the animals in their care.”

Please consider becoming a foster care volunteer for Nevada Humane Society today and experience the fulfillment of helping save precious little lives. Applications are available online at [www.nevadahumanesociety.org](http://www.nevadahumanesociety.org) or at the NHS shelter on Longley Lane.

# Appendix 17

## Sample TV Commercial Plan

Client: [Org name]  
 Title: **Foster Appeal**  
 Length: :30

Video	Audio
<p>Slow zoom of exterior as people exit with animal...</p> <p>Show litter of cute fuzzy kittens in a cage (not through bars). Maybe someone bottle feeding one but also need to show some older kittens.</p> <p>Show spokesperson...            Key: (name) (title)</p> <p>Dissolve back to litter scene.            (Show different kittens – variety is good)</p> <p>Show kittens in home setting.</p> <p>Show current foster parent.            Key: (name) Foster Parent</p> <p>Show interaction with child or adult.</p> <p>Transition to full-screen graphic...            (logo)            [Org name]            xxx-xxx-xxxx</p>	<p>You can help [Org name] save orphaned kittens by becoming a foster care volunteer today.</p> <p>“Many adorable kittens need love and care until they’re old enough for adoption.</p> <p>Foster care is fun, rewarding, and truly saves lives.”</p> <p>“I’ve fostered over fifty kittens over the past several years and really enjoy giving these precious babies a healthy start.”</p> <p>If you can foster kittens for a few weeks, [Org name] can find them homes for life.</p> <p>To learn how you can become a foster care volunteer today, call or visit the [Org name].</p>

## Appendix 18

# Sample E-mail to Recruit Foster Care Volunteers

Dear [member\_name\_first],

As the snow flies, we should be seeing the last of the kittens for awhile. Today, however, we have the last few sets that need temporary foster homes as well as a few other animals that need a place to be. Can you help out for a few more weeks?

**Before the end of the day today, Tuesday, November 22, 6:30 pm**, we must have each animal into a foster home. We're hoping we can recruit many of you to help.

The litters we need to place by today are:

1. A single 7-week old kitten who is just a little shy of weight. A good Thanksgiving meal and she should be good to go. :)
2. A litter of two 6-week old kittens. Kittens are friendly, healthy and eating on their own. However, they do have a skin fungus that must be treated with a topical cream.
3. A single 6-week old kitten. This kitten has had a rough go. She was attacked by a dog and her face was torn up. She is on antibiotics to avoid infection but is healing nicely. She also has a skin fungus that must be treated with a topical cream.

We also still have many adult kitties who would love a foster home for the holidays.

Please note: [Org name] will provide all medical care and any supplies the foster volunteer cannot provide. In addition, all fosters are given a starter kit of supplies. Finally, there is a 24/7 emergency hotline for any emergencies that might arise.

If you are able to foster now or in the future, please call xxx-xxx-xxxx. You can also reply to this email. Please consider becoming a foster parent for [Org name] today and experience the fulfillment of helping save precious little lives.

[Name]  
[Title]  
[Org name]  
xxx-xxx-xxxx

## Appendix 19

# Sample News Release for Foster Care Volunteer Recruitment

Furry Foster Care

By Bonney Brown\* (Seek permission before re-printing.)

You cannot beat watching kittens or puppies at play. Their antics bring a smile to all but the hardest heart. As every good pet person knows, it's best to have your pets spayed or neutered to avoid adding to the population of pets in need of homes, but, there is a way that you can enjoy puppies and kittens in your home for a few weeks without long-term obligation. Not only is it guilt free, but you will be a true hero.

It's called foster care. Just like children, kittens and puppies do not have fully developed immune systems and they can easily pick up a virus in a shelter. Foster parents are truly saving precious little lives by taking them in temporarily.

During the summer months it is not unusual for over 35 kittens a day to arrive at our local animal shelters. It would be impossible to save them all without foster caregivers.

Foster care not only has health benefits for the babies, but it gives them the valuable experience of living in a home environment for their most critical stage of development. During the first eight weeks of life, they are growing extremely rapidly and their personalities take shape. They are also learning how to get along with others of their species, as well as people. Play is more than just fun; it's a learning experience as they develop essential skills for their adulthood. As a foster parent, you are preparing them for adoption and life as a companion animal.

Some dedicated foster parents are willing to take on neonatal kitten or pups, those that need bottle feeding. Caring for a mom cat and kittens is generally easier, as mom does most of the work. Some people prefer the shorter term foster experience of older kittens or pups. For example, six-week-olds are adorable and only need another three weeks to be ready for adoption.

You don't have to be an expert. The shelter you work with will show you what you need to do and will provide support until the little ones are old enough for adoption.

One of our dedicated foster volunteers, Rene Barnard said it best, "What a treat to be able to save these precious lives and have so much fun at the same time."

Want to foster kittens or puppies?

Contact one of the local humane groups:

- Nevada Humane Society – 775-856-2000 ext. 320 or [info@nevadahumanesociety.org](mailto:info@nevadahumanesociety.org)
- SPCA of Northern Nevada – 775-324-7773 or [info@spcanevada.org](mailto:info@spcanevada.org)
- Pet Network, Incline Village – 775-832-4404 or [info@petnetwork.org](mailto:info@petnetwork.org)

\* For permission to reprint all or part of this article contact the author at [info@humanenetwork.org](mailto:info@humanenetwork.org).

## Appendix 20

# Sample Adoption Promotion News Release

### News Release

For Immediate Release: July 12, 2013

For more information contact:

[Name]

xxx-xxx-xxxx

## Over 100 Kittens in Need of Loving Homes at Nevada Humane Society—Adoption Fees Reduced

There are over 100 kittens in need of loving homes at Nevada Humane Society today. Now, more than ever, Nevada Humane Society is asking the community to open their heart and home to an adorable kitten, or two.

“We’re offering special reduced adoption fees to help these kittens find loving homes,” said Kimberly Chandler, Communications Manager for Nevada Humane Society. “You can adopt two kittens for the price of one—for just \$60—or a single kitten for \$35.”

The kittens are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. These services would normally cost over \$250.

“As the height of summer approaches, we’re seeing a high number of kittens arriving at our shelter. They need loving homes and we are hoping that anyone out there who has been thinking about adding a kitten to their family will come in this weekend to adopt, “ said Vonice Reed, Cat Care Manager for Nevada Humane Society. “By adopting a pair of kittens you will give the kittens a playmate which keeps them happy and occupied when you’re not home. Or perhaps you have a cat at home who would enjoy a feline friend! Our staff is here to help you make the perfect match for your situation.”

Two kittens can be adopted for \$60 and single kittens are available for \$35. Cats over three years of age can be adopted for free, while other cats can be adopted for \$25. Adult dogs are available for adoption for just \$45. All pets are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped.

Please visit Nevada Humane Society located at 2825 Longley Lane in Reno. The shelter is open Sunday through Friday from 11:00 am until 6:30 pm and on Saturday from 10:00 am until 6:30 pm. For more information on pet adoptions, please call xxx-xxx-xxxx.

# Appendix 21

## Caring for Orphaned Kittens Guide

### Caring for Orphaned Kittens

#### Do They Need to be Bottle Fed?

First, determine the age of the kitten to see if he or she needs to be bottle-fed or can start immediately on soft food:

- Eyes closed, ears folded over: kitten is 1 – 14 days old.
- Eyes open, kitten moves around but is wobbly: 2 - 3 weeks old.
- Eyes open, ears up, can walk around: 3 – 4 weeks old.
- Running around and difficult to catch: 4 - 8 weeks old or older.

If the kittens are under 4 weeks of age, they will need to be bottle fed. Kittens 4 weeks and older can be offered soft food, but may also need to be bottle-fed.

#### Keeping the Kittens Warm

Kittens need warmth because they cannot regulate their own body temperature yet. Because they are not able to generate their own heat, wrapping the kittens in a blanket or towel may not be sufficient.

Put a heating pad in a large cardboard box. It must be large enough to accommodate the heating pad and an area that is not covered by the heating pad. Kittens will crawl toward the heat when they are cold and away from the heat if they are getting too warm. If they do not have an area where they can get away from the heat, they can become dehydrated and die. Turn the heating pad on LOW and cover with a towel. Never let the kitten lie directly on pad. Place the box in a warm and draft-free area.

Do not bathe the kitten unless absolutely necessary. If the kitten appears to need a bath, her body temperature must be normal, 90+ degrees Fahrenheit.

Flea combing is best if the kitten has fleas. (If the kitten must be bathed, use small amount of Lemon Joy. Be sure to use warm water and rinse the kitten thoroughly. The citrus kills fleas and is safe for kittens. Flea shampoos are too harsh for kittens.) After towel drying the kitten as much as possible, return the kitten to the heating pad. NEVER use a hair dryer.

#### Feeding the Kittens

You can purchase milk for kittens from pet supply stores and from some vet clinics, but NHS will normally provide kitten milk. KMR (Kitten Milk Replacer) or Just Born are the best formulas to feed a neonatal kitten. Follow the directions on the package for mixing the formula. Please refrigerate the KMR powder once it is opened. Do not give a kitten cow's milk as it is not easy for them digest.

Warm the formula in a nursing bottle or medicine dropper/syringe by placing the bottle or dropper into a cup or bowl of hot water. Test the formula on the underside of your wrist to check the temperature. If it feels too warm or too cold on your wrist, it will feel the same for the kitten. If the formula is too hot, wait until the formula cools down. If the formula is too cold, continue soaking the bottle or dropper/syringe in hot water. Always be sure to test the formula again before giving it to the kitten.

Newly purchased kitten nursing bottled need a hole made in the nipple. It can be carefully cut with scissors or made with a large hot needle (may require repeated heating to make hole large enough). Check that the hole in the nipple is the correct size by holding the bottle with formula inside, upside-

down. The formula should drip slowly from the nipple hole. If the formula doesn't drip, enlarge the nipple hole slightly. If the formula comes out in a steady stream, the hole is too large. **If the hole is too large, the kitten will inhale the formula rather than ingest it causing aspiration pneumonia and possibly death.** If the hole is too small the kittens will not get enough nourishment.

Place the kitten on her stomach at a 45-degree angle (just as a kitten would nurse from the mother) and let her nurse until she turns her head. Do not hold the kitten's head back and do not hold her on her back as you would a human baby. The kitten's swallow reflex is poorly developed and tilting the kitten's head back can result in milk running into the lungs which can result in pneumonia.

Avoid getting air into the kitten's tummy by holding the bottle at an angle to keep liquid toward the nipple. Pulling back slightly on the bottle will help trigger the kitten's sucking reflex. Never squeeze the bottle to force milk to come out.

Do not panic if the kitten does not immediately eat. She may be more accustomed to her mothers' milk which is quite rich and can sustain her for a longer time than replacement formulas. If she is still not eating after 8 hours, please call NHS. She may need to be force fed through a tube. Never attempt tube feeding yourself if you are unfamiliar with this procedure.

### **Critical Follow-Up to Feeding**

After the kitten's stomach is full, it is necessary to stimulate her to help her eliminate. A kitten does not have the ability to urinate or defecate on their own until they are three weeks old. The mother cat would usually wash the kitten with her tongue to stimulate elimination.

Take a wet lukewarm, but not hot, washcloth or paper towel and gently massage the anal region in a small circular or front-to-back motion. Remember you are simulating the mother cat's tongue. You may want to hold kitten over a towel or sink while stimulating her.

### **Feeding: How Much and How Often?**

This is a general guideline; individual kittens may eat more often or less often.

- 1 and 2 week old kittens = 6 feedings per day
- 3 weeks old = 4 feedings
- 4 weeks old = 3 feedings

The label on the container of kitten formula should indicate the recommended amount to feed a kitten according to body weight. Remember, this is a recommended amount and the kitten might eat more or less, depending on how hungry he or she is.

If a kitten cries, she is either cold or hungry. A contented kitten sleeps quietly.

### **Learning to Eat on their Own**

When the kitten 4-5 weeks old, you can begin weaning with wet kitten food or Friskies Turkey/Chicken Pate mixed with KMR to make a consistency similar to oatmeal. You might need to help kittens learn to eat the mixture. If you offer some of the mixture on a spoon and bring the spoon down to the bowl as they eat, eventually the kittens will eat out of the bowl. Be patient, as this may take several tries.

If you have any fostering questions, please do not hesitate to call us at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you!



## Appendix 22

# Sample How to Feed a Bottle Baby Handout

### How to Feed a Bottle Baby

Kittens under 2 weeks old require feeding every 2-3 hours (every 4-6 hours is sufficient after 2 weeks of age, and every 6-8 hours after 3 weeks, until weaning).

#### General guidelines for bottle feeding young kittens are as follows:

- Sterilize the bottle (5-15 minutes in boiling water) and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before feeding the kitten to avoid transferring harmful bacteria and viruses. Changing into clean clothing is also recommended, especially if you have interacted with other animals.
- Let the bottle cool down and then add enough formula for one feeding.
- Hold the bottle upside-down to check that the hole is the right size. The formula should drip slowly from the nipple hole. If the formula doesn't drip, enlarge the nipple hole slightly.
- Warm the formula to about 100°F (38°C) by placing the bottle in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes (don't use a microwave). The formula should be warm but not hot when given to the kitten.
- Feed kittens on their stomachs (rather than on their backs like human babies), as this is the way they would feed from their mother. Place a clean towel on your lap or the floor and place the kitten face-down on it for feeding.
- Use the tip of your finger to gently open the kitten's mouth and slip the nipple in. Most kittens will quickly get the hang of it and start seeking out the nipple at feeding time. If the kitten doesn't suckle, try stroking its back or forehead – this can stimulate nursing behaviour. Rubbing a little Karo syrup on its lips may also help.
- Don't squeeze the bottle, forcing milk replacer into the kitten's mouth (this can cause aspiration pneumonia). Hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle and let the kitten suck the formula from the nipple on its own. Pulling very slightly on the bottle can encourage the kitten to suck.
- If feeding with a syringe or eye dropper, inject one drop of formula into the kitten's mouth at a time, leaving enough time for the kitten to swallow before adding the next drop.
- When the kitten has had enough food, bubbles will usually appear around its mouth. Older kittens that have become accustomed to bottle feeding will turn their heads away from the nipple to signal fullness.
- At the end of the feeding, the kitten should be burped like a human baby, holding it upright against your shoulder and gently patting its back.
- Clean any spilled formula from the kitten's fur using a warm, damp washcloth or first-aid gauze pad.
- After each feeding, discard any remaining milk replacer and wash the bottle and nipple.
- Stimulate urination and defecation before and after each feeding by gently massaging the kitten's genitals with a washcloth or cotton ball moistened with warm water. Some kittens eliminate more easily before a feeding and some do better afterward, so try both times. By 3-5 weeks of age, kittens should be able to eliminate without assistance.

## **Common Kitten Feeding Problems**

Problems that often occur during feeding include:

### **Formula coming out of the kitten's mouth or nose**

This is caused by the kitten being fed too quickly, usually because the feeder squeezes the bottle or uses a bottle with an overly large nipple hole.

### **Underfeeding**

An underfed kitten fails to gain weight, cries excessively, shivers, and is listless.

### **Overfeeding**

Overfeeding is a common cause of gas, bloating, vomiting, and/or diarrhea in kittens, though runny stools may also indicate other medical problems. Dehydration can quickly become life-threatening in kittens with diarrhea, so a trip to the veterinarian is necessary.

### **Choking**

This usually indicates that the kitten has inhaled some of the formula. Hold her upside down until the choking ceases.

### **Extreme weakness**

If the kitten is too weak to feed, it may be ill or require tube feeding, though this should be a last resort. Try stroking its forehead and back, and rubbing a little Karo syrup on its lips. If you can't get the kitten to nurse, take it to a veterinarian for evaluation and treatment.

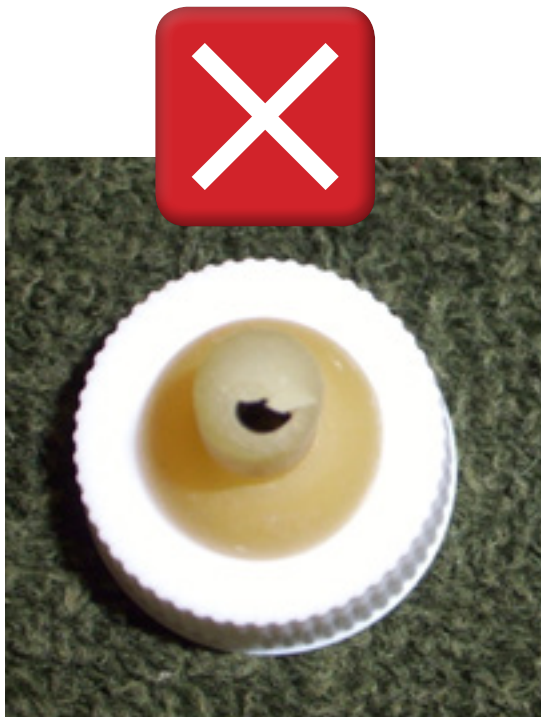
## Appendix 23

# Sample How to Prepare a Baby Bottle Nipple Properly Guide

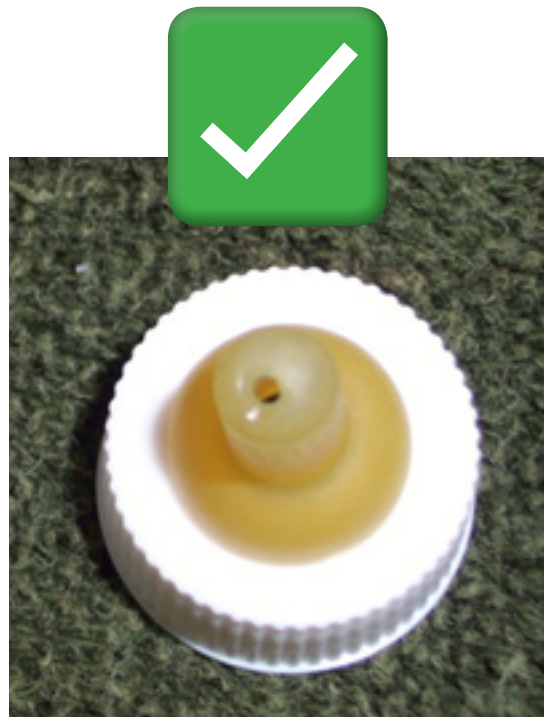
### How to Cut a Baby Bottle Nipple Properly

1. Check that the hole in the nipple is the correct size.
2. Hold the bottle with formula inside, upside-down.
3. The formula should drip slowly from the nipple hole.
4. If the formula doesn't drip slowly, enlarge the nipple hole slightly.
5. If the formula streams out, the hole is too large.
6. If the hole is too large, the kitten will inhale the formula rather than ingest it causing aspiration pneumonia.

**DO NOT** give out or use a bottle that is improperly cut. Doing so can cause aspiration pneumonia which could be fatal



**INCORRECT**



**CORRECT**

# Appendix 24

## Sample Handout – Keeping Pets Separate

### Why keep the foster cats separate from

For their protection, keep your foster cats and kittens separate from your pets. It is possible for an animal to appear to be very healthy while incubating an illness.

- Keep foster cats and kittens in a separate room from your own cats and dogs.
- The best room would have linoleum or tile flooring for easy cleaning. Wall-to-wall carpeting is not optimal as it is almost impossible to fully clean it.
- Be sure that all of your cats are current on their vaccinations. Vaccines offer your pet protection against a host of viral diseases.
- Most illnesses will become apparent within two weeks though the panleukopenia virus can incubate for up to three weeks.

### Call us if your foster pet becomes ill.

Cats and kittens can get colds just as we do. In many cases, they have been exposed to something before arriving at the shelter and the stress of change can bring on a cold. (Most kitties are not big fans of change.)

It's never fun to have a cold, but just like with us, a cold will usually pass for a kitty within a few days. Colds are caused by a virus, and they do not respond to antibiotics. Occasionally, cats or kittens will develop secondary complications from a cold that will require prompt treatment. The list of symptoms below will help you decide what to do.

### Symptoms and what to do

#### Clear discharge:

If a kitty has clear discharge when they sneeze, it is a cold and you should keep an eye on them. They do not usually require treatment. If cat is not eating, try running the shower in the bathroom, with the door closed to create a steam room. Bringing the cat in to breathe the warm humid air may help to help clear congestion.

#### Yellow or green discharge:

If the discharge becomes yellow or green, the kitty may have developed an infection that will respond to antibiotics. If you notice yellow or green discharge from the nose or eyes, please call us.

#### Not eating:

Sometimes if a kitty is congested and cannot smell the food, he may not eat. If a kitty has not eaten in an 8-hour period, please call us.

#### Watch for other serious symptoms:

Symptoms of panleukopenia include loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy. Diarrhea in an otherwise bright, alert, eating, and drinking kitten is more likely due to diet change, stress, or dietary indiscretions.

To schedule clinic appointments, call **xxx-xxx-xxxx** (Monday – Friday, 7am – 4pm).

Not sure if your foster pet needs to see a Vet or after-hour emergencies, call **xxx-xxx-xxxx**.

## Appendix 25

# Kitten Milestones in Development

### Birth-7 days (week 1)

- Birth weight: 90-120 grams
- Ideally will nurse on mother cat for 1st 24-48 hours in order to receive colostrum for a stronger immune system (if kittens did not have access to mom during their first 1-2 days then it is imperative to keep everything extra clean in their environment. Also, bottles and nipples will need to be boiled for 5 minutes daily. Formula should be discarded if not refrigerated for over 1 hour.)
- Eyes and ears closed
- No teeth
- Forelimbs start to support weight 1-10 days
- Ability to stand 5-25 days
- Require stimulation to urinate and defecate
- Environmental temperature requirements: 89.5-93 F
- Food requirements: 380 kcal/kg
- Weight gain: 10-13 g/day

Age	Food intake daily (feedings every 2-3 hours)	Weight in grams
1 day	3-5 tsp/day (15-25 mls)	90-120 grams
2 days	3.5-5.25 tsp/day (17.5-26.25 mls)	100-130 grams
3 days	4-5.75 tsp/day (20-28.75 mls)	110-140 grams
4 days	4.25-6 tsp/day (21.25-30 mls)	120-150 grams
5 days	4.5-6.5 tsp/day (22.5-32.5 mls)	130-160 grams
6 days	5-7 tsp/day (25-35 mls)	140-170 grams
7 days	6-7.25 tsp/day (30-36.25 mls)	150-180 grams

## 8-14 days (week 2)

- Shivering reflex develops
- Eyes open at 5-14 days
- Ears open at 6-14 days
- No teeth
- Ability to stand 5-25 days
- Require stimulation to urinate and defecate
- Environmental temperature requirements: 81-84 F
- Food requirements: 380 kcal/kg
- Weight gain: 10-13 g/day

Age	Food intake daily (feedings every 2-4 hours)	Weight in grams
8 days	6.5-10.25 tsp/day (32.5-51.25 mls)	160-190 grams
9 days	7-11 tsp/day (35-55 mls)	170-200 grams
10 days	7.5-11.5 tsp/day (37.5-57.5 mls)	180-210 grams
11 days	7.75-12 tsp/day (38.75-60 mls)	190-220 grams
12 days	8.25-12.5 tsp/day (41.25-62.5 mls)	200-230 grams
13 days	8.5-13 tsp/day (42.5-65 mls)	210-240 grams
14 days	9-13.5 tsp/day (45-67.5 mls)	220-250 grams

## 15-21 days (week 3)

- Functional hearing develops at 21 days
- Teeth: incisors will start to appear
- Voluntary urination and defecation begins (will still need occasional stimulation)
- Ability to stand 5-25 days
- Sitting 20 days
- Environmental temperature: 75-81 F
- Food requirements: 380 kcal/kg
- Weight gain: 10-13 g/day

Age	Food intake daily (feedings every 3-5 hours)	Weight in grams
15 days	4-4.75 tbsp/day (60-71.25 mls)	230-260 grams
16 days	4.5-5 tbsp/day (67.5-75 mls)	240-270 grams
17 days	4.5-5 tbsp/day (67.5-75 mls)	250-280 grams
18 days	4.75-5.25 tbsp/day (71.25-78.75 mls)	260-290 grams
19 days	5-5.5 tbsp/day (75-82.5 mls)	270-300 grams
20 days	5-5.75 tbsp/day (75-86.25 mls)	280-310 grams
21 days	5.25-6 tbsp/day (78.75-90 mls)	290-320 grams

## 22-28 days (week 4)

- Voluntary control of urination and defecation
- Teeth: canine teeth and premolars start to appear
- Ability to stand 5-25 days
- Walking unsteadily at 21-22 days
- Start climbing 22-40 days
- Environmental temperature 75 F
- Food requirements: 380 kcal/kg
- Start lapping milk replacer from a bowl
- Weight gain: 10-13 g/day (should be triple their birth weight by 28 days)

Age	Food intake daily (feedings every 2-4 hours)	Weight in grams
22 days	5.5-6 tbsp/day (82.5-90 mls)	300-330 grams
23 days	5.75-6 tbsp/day (86.25-90 mls)	310-340 grams
24 days	5.75-6.5 tbsp/day (86.25-97.5 mls)	320-350 grams
25 days	6-6.5 tbsp/day (90-97.5 mls)	330-360 grams
26 days	6-6.75 tbsp/day (90-101.25 mls)	340-370 grams
27 days	6.5-7 tbsp/day (97.5-105 mls)	350-380 grams
28 days	6.5-7 tbsp/day (97.5-105 mls)	360-390 grams

## Weeks 5-8

- Start climbing 22-40 days
- Environmental temperature 75 F
- Eating solid food at 28-50 days, mix milk replacer with canned pate style kitten food to make a gruel for easier adjustment to a solid diet.
- Food requirements: 250 kcal/kg
- Ready for spay/neuter when 2 pounds

Age	Weight in pounds
5 weeks	1 pound
6 weeks	1.3 pounds
7 weeks	1.6 pounds
8 weeks	2 pounds

## Appendix 26

# Resources to Help You Increase Pet Adoptions

Mythbusters - Finding the Perfect Home HSUS Expo video 2014

<http://www.animalsheltering.org/training-events/expo/expo-2014/expo-2014-mythbusters-video.html>

Marketing to Dramatically Increase and Sustain Adoptions, by Bonney Brown

<http://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/2013-05-22-190000/marketing-dramatically-increase-and-sustain-adoptions>

Listen to audio recording of webinar, view slides

Creating Adoption Processes that Truly Support Saving Lives, by Bonney Brown

<http://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/2013-05-16-190000/creating-adoption-processes-truly-support-saving-lives>

Listen to audio recording of webinar, view slides

Open Adoptions and Beyond: Strategic Pet Placement

<http://www.sheltermedicine.com/documents/strategic-adoptions>

Dr. Kate Hurley, UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

Progressive Adoptions Serving Pets and People ASPCA Pro:

<http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-programs/progressive-adoptions-serving-pets-and-people>

The Placement Conundrum: Or, how I learned to stop worrying and love potential adopters Animal Sheltering magazine May/June 2013:

[http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/may\\_jun\\_2013/asm-may-jun-2013/the-placement-conundrum.html](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/may_jun_2013/asm-may-jun-2013/the-placement-conundrum.html)

Tips: Getting Creative to Increase Adoptions ASPCA Pro:

<http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-marketing/tips-getting-creative-increase-adoptions>

The True Cost and Value of Pet Adoptions, by Bonney Brown:

<http://www.aspcapro.org/node/73108>

Listen to audio recording of webinar, view slides

From Shelter-ers to Rehomers: Presentation by Dr. Emily Weiss:

<http://www.arf.net/pdf/bosl2014/Rehomers.pdf>

Free Pet Adoptions: Study Results, November 2012

[http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies\\_Institute/Articles/Free\\_Pet\\_Adoptions\\_Study\\_Results.html](http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Articles/Free_Pet_Adoptions_Study_Results.html)

The Truth About Free Cat Adoptions, August 2012

[http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies\\_Institute/Articles/The\\_Truth\\_About\\_Free\\_Cat\\_Adoptions.html](http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Articles/The_Truth_About_Free_Cat_Adoptions.html)

Free Cat Adoptions, ASPCA Pro, link to study and resources:

<http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-programs-adoption-marketing/free-adult-cat-adoptions>



Research on Fee-Waived Adoptions ASPCA Pro:

<http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-marketing-research-data/research-fee-waived-adoptions>

Free to Good Home: It's a phrase that used to scare shelters, but now many are waiving adoption fees to help cats Animal Sheltering magazine, Sep/Oct 2013

[http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/sep\\_oct\\_2013/asm-sep-oct-2013/free-to-good-home.html](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/sep_oct_2013/asm-sep-oct-2013/free-to-good-home.html)

Case Study: Free Cat Adoptions at Edmonton Humane Society June 4 2014 | ASPCApro Blog

<http://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2014/06/04/case-study-free-cat-adoptions-edmonton-humane-society>

Partnering To Make Off-Site Adoptions a Success! Petfinder article:

<https://www.petfinder.com/pro/for-shelters/partnering-offsite-adoptions/>



**These appendices are provided by  
Nevada Humane Society.**