



## **Pets 4 Life Foster Care Program Guidelines**

Pets 4 Life Foster Care Program is developed to handle adoptable cats/kittens until such time as a shelter building is constructed. This program offers us the ability to take in animals in need and lessen the burden on Kitten Rescue. The Humane Society's goal is to provide the best care possible for every animal in our charge.

### **1. Who decides which animals go into foster homes?**

- The Foster Care Program Coordinator evaluates all animals for foster home placement.

**2. Criteria used in evaluation an animal for foster care:** All the following factors are considered before decision to foster an animal is made.

- Personality and disposition: friendly, sociable, likelihood of being a good family pet.
- Age: otherwise healthy kittens from 6 weeks to 6 months.
- Age: otherwise healthy kittens from birth to six weeks with mother cat.
- Healthy adult cats from 1 year to 4 years of age.
- Healthy cats over 4 years of age to be evaluated individually by Foster Care Program Coordinator
- Health: Animals need to be in a position to be adopted in the future. Animals with serious or life threatening illness and or disease will be evaluated case by case for special needs consideration.
- Do we have availability and appropriate foster homes for the animals in question?

**3. Guidelines for length of stay.** The Foster Care Coordinator uses these guidelines to determine the length of stay in foster homes.

- Kittens need to be adopted at the appropriate age, generally 8 to 12 weeks for kittens. Or when they have reached the desired weight for spay/neutering.
- After the animal's health has improved and is able to be placed up for adoption.
- Once the animal had been adopted the new owners must make arrangements with in an appropriate amount of time to take custody of the new pet. Generally no more than 5 days after adoption. We have limited foster homes so animals can not board for free in foster homes.

Individual cases may be re-evaluated by the Foster Care Program Coordinator.

### **4. How many animals can a foster home have?**

- Foster homes must follow county laws as to the number of animals allowed per residence. This also includes the licensing, if applicable, of animals. \* NO county laws exist in Mason County.

The Foster Care Coordinator may evaluate an individual situation if the proper care of the animal is in question.

## **5. Who can become a foster home?**

Person/s interested in become a foster home will need to fill out a foster care application and agreement. This agreement details what is expected of foster care families as well as what the HSMC provides in return for their assistance. All Foster Care Families are subject to approval and a home check before they can participate as a foster home.

## **6. What are the responsibilities of a foster home?**

Foster parents are responsible for the care of the foster animal, including providing quality food, shelter, grooming, and attention. A “rollaway kennel” will be provided to isolate the cat/kittens from areas of the home where the foster parent does not want the cat/kittens to roam. Foster parents are expected to bring the animal to adoption events. These events are scheduled at various pet stores around town. Visit our web site for a current list of locations and times. Foster parents are also responsible for transporting their foster animal to HSMC’s vet if needed. Foster parents are responsible for complying with all state and local laws regarding the keeping and care of the companion animal. Foster parents are required to sign a contract detailing responsibility and limiting HSMC’s liability while the animal is under their care.

## **7. What are HSMC’s responsibilities?**

- Veterinary services for foster animals are covered by HSMC at HSMC’s vet of choice.
- HSMC will make available its local and internet resources to increase the pet’s chances of adoption.
- HSMC Foster Care Coordinator is available (360) 509-1704 to assist the foster home in dealing with issues related to the foster care of the animal. HSMC is responsible for facilitating all adoptions.

## **8. How long does it take for an animal to get adopted?**

The answer varies widely. Kittens are usually placed in 2-7 days. Adult cats may take several weeks to adopt. Some cats are adopted within a week, while others can take 6 months, a year, or, rarely, even longer.

## **9. Can foster families choose which animal they wish to foster?**

Foster parents may request a certain color or breed of cat/kitten. If a specific age, gender, or trait (such as good with children) is required, the foster parent should notify HSMC. HSMC maintains a list of animals needing foster homes, and desires to place the neediest animals first. However, HSMC representatives will work with the foster parent to find an appropriate animal for his/her home.

## **10. What if a foster family can’t transport their foster pet to adoption events?**

Adoption events allow the public to meet the pets, and increase the opportunities for adoption. Foster parents are requested to contact HSMC as early as possible if the animal will not be at the scheduled adoption event.

## **11. What if a foster family wants to adopt their foster pet?**

It is very easy to fall in love with a companion animal that relies on you for all of his/ her care. While HSMC doesn’t like to lose a foster home, we are happy to see a pet find a loving, permanent home. Foster parents must complete the official adoption process, including payment of the full adoption fee, & completion of all adoption paperwork.

## **12. What if the foster family knows someone who wants to adopt thier foster pet?**

Any potential adopters should contact HSMC if they are interested in adopting an animal. *UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS A FOSTER PARENT TO GIVE ANYONE POSSESSION OF THEIR FOSTER ANIMAL.* HSMC requires a consultation and completion of adoption paperwork, including the fee and contract, before turning an animal over to the adopter. **Members of the HSMC Board of Directors and or Foster Care Coordinator are the only persons authorized to approve or deny an adoption.**

## **13. What if a foster pet requires medical attention while he/she is in foster care?**

HSMC takes measures to ensure that its animals receive veterinary exams and appropriate vaccinations while in foster care. Follow-up care, such as another round of shots or worming, neutering, etc. is necessary. Foster parents are responsible for transporting their foster animal to HSMC's vet, Northwest Spay Neuter Center in Tacoma or Dr. Jeff Irwin in Lake Kathryn Village. An effort is made to accommodate the foster parent's schedule. If a foster parent takes their animal to a different vet, or does not notify HSMC in advance of a vet visit, **the foster parent is responsible for any expense related to the visit or any treatment performed.** The foster parent is responsible for any medical expense necessary resulting from improper care or negligence while under the care of the foster home.

## **15. What if a foster provider needs to travel while a foster animal is in their care?**

Foster parents must arrange for the safe care of their foster animal if they must travel while the pet is in their care. Occasionally, kennel space is available at other Foster homes. If space is not available, the foster parent must make his/her own arrangements. All boarding is at the expense of the foster parent.

## **16. What if a foster family is having behavioral issues with their foster pet?**

Becoming a foster parent is a big responsibility, and you will likely not get the perfect pet. Many of the animals that HSMC rescues have been strays, or haven't received good treatment. Even the best-behaved animal can undergo stress adjusting to new people and a new environment. The animal may exhibit this stress through inappropriate behavior. In many cases, a little TLC goes a long way. However, many behavioral problems do require some additional effort and assistance, and the HSMC Foster Care Coordinator has attended an HSUS Certified Cat Behavior Consultant Class and is available to discuss ways to handle your foster pet.

## **17. What if my foster pet doesn't get along with my own animals?**

HSMC makes an effort to place animals that are likely to get along with a particular foster parent's pets. Proper introductions are crucial. It is also possible in some homes to manage a foster pet despite an animal-aggressive resident pet. Please contact HSMC for advice.

## **18. What if my foster pet damages my apartment or home?**

HSMC cannot be held liable for any damage caused by your foster pet. The foster parent is responsible for providing a safe environment for his/her foster animal. A large "rollaway" kennel is provided.

## **19. What if I can no longer foster the animal in my care?**

Fostering an animal is a large commitment. HSMC asks that foster parents make every effort possible to provide a caring, stable environment for the animal in their care. Transfers from place to place can stress the animal and utilize HSMC's limited resources. However, sometimes situations occur which necessitate the surrender of the foster animal. If this happens, the foster parent **MUST** return the animal to HSMC. Advance notice is requested, when possible, to allow HSMC to find an alternative foster home

