

FOSTER LONG TERM CARE MANUAL

Our Mission Statement:

The Humane Society of Cambria County aims to provide a second chance for the abandoned, surrendered, and stray animals of Cambria County through the means of a no-kill philosophy and quality of life policy, our volunteer and foster programs, animal control services, a spay and neuter requirement, our veterinarian relationships, animal training assistance, a vetted adoption process, responsible pet ownership, and, most importantly, the human-and-animal bond.

WELCOME!

The Humane Society of Cambria County (HSCC) recently changed its policy in May of 2017 and became a no-kill shelter. Because of this life saving measure, there are many more animals being cared for by the shelter and the resources have been stretched thin. HSCC manages a volunteer foster care program year round to care for animals with medical or behavioral issues in their homes or to take in animals when our shelter is full. We are excited to welcome volunteer foster parents into the program. The HSCC is in constant need of dedicated individuals or families willing to open their homes and lives to provide a safe, loving and nurturing temporary home environment for homeless animals. Nearly every shelter animal can benefit from foster care. With your help, many more shelter animals can be cared for, adopted and, ultimately, find their “forever” homes. Fostering is an extremely rewarding experience for you and the animal.

Foster parents provide care for cats, kittens, dogs and puppies in Cambria County. Some animals need as little as two weeks of care, while others may need care up to three months.

Animals that are in need of fostering include:

- Adult dogs – especially larger and older ones
- Adult Cats
- Animals nursing a litter of kittens or puppies
- Animals recovering or being treated for injuries or illness
- Animals too young to be spayed or neutered (earliest is 6 months)
- A dog or cat that may need socialization
- Special needs animals

HSCC provides

All necessary veterinary care and medicine for foster animals. The HSCC can provide a small bag of food as starter food, if needed. When applicable and able, the HSCC will provide further supplies, but are not required to. HSCC will also provide support to foster parents with training and education.

Foster parent volunteers provide

Parents should be able to fully provide supplies for the animal(s) including food, cat litter and litter box, baby gate or divider, carrier, bowls, crate, leash and collar. Some items might be available from HSCC when in stock at the shelter, and these items would need returned when your fostering period has ended. Inform staff if you will need any specific supplies in a timely fashion. Most importantly, parents should be prepared to provide a secure, safe home filled with lots of love and patience!

Foster Parent Expectations

- Attend a Volunteer Orientation and Dog Handling Course, if applicable, prior to fostering.
- Provide a safe, loving, warm and stable environment for the foster animal.
- Provide appropriate and sufficient food, water and shelter at all times. The HSCC may provide some supplies when available.
- Feed, groom, socialize, train and sometimes medicate an animal.
- Experience with animal behavioral or medical issues is a plus, but is not required.
- Take appropriate steps to ensure that the animal cannot escape from the house. Foster dogs must be on a leash, or enclosed within a fence adequate for the animal, or in a home at all times. The dog may not be left outside, on a porch, or in a garage for hours. Foster cats must be kept indoors at all times but not limited to a cage. Cats may never be left outside.
- Protect foster animals from extreme temperatures (either too hot or too cold). Young animals may require additional heat sources such as a heating pad. By law, animals may not be tethered any more than 9 consecutive hours. And, animals are not allowed outside for more than 30 minutes at a time when temps are lower than 32 degrees or higher than 90 degrees.
- All personal pets at home must be spayed or neutered and up to date on vaccinations. Dog pets must be licensed. Proof of updated records may be required. Total number of dogs and/or cats, including personal pets, permitted in foster's home will be determined, and, ultimately decided by HSCC Staff. Foster families should understand and consider the personalities of their current pets when selecting a foster animal.
- A HSCC representative may perform an inspection of the foster home to ensure safety of the animal and see where the animal will be spending their time.
- Foster parents are responsible for protecting the animals, yourself, and your belongings.
- Parents are required to promptly inform the HSCC of any veterinarian treatments needed including vaccinations, exams, or surgeries. HSCC staff will work with Foster Parents to schedule appointments with shelter Vet Tech and/or a local veterinarian.
- Foster parents will be informed of the anticipated return date of the animal prior to foster period. Ideally, foster parents are committed to providing care for 2-4 weeks. If the foster parent wants to continue after agreed upon timeframe, they may contact the HSCC to renew. Renewal timeframe will be decided at time of renewal. After 90 days, The HSCC reserves the right to identify a new foster family. At any point, the foster parent may decide to pursue adoption of the animal by notifying the HSCC and following the standard adoption procedure.
- During the foster period, animals remain the property of the HSCC and must be returned to the shelter to be considered for adoption both throughout the foster period and at the end of the foster period. Anyone interested in adopting a foster animal (including foster parents) must apply at the HSCC.
- The HSCC does not guarantee that all foster animals will be able to be adopted out. Despite the best efforts of foster families and the HSCC staff, some animals may still have to be humanely euthanized due to extreme medical or behavioral problems.

Foster Parent Guidelines

1. Adhere to all HSCC policies and procedures.
2. Respond within 24 hours to communications from HSCC staff or potential adopters.
3. Immediately report any aggressive behavior to HSCC staff.
4. If you choose, you can promote the animal on your personal social media outlets while in your care. This is optional, but will certainly help the animal find a permanent home. You are encouraged to email photos or behavior updates weekly to the HSCC Staff at cambriacountyhumanesociety@gmail.com.

Foster Requirements

To become an approved foster one must:

1. Be at least 18 years or older
2. Have a valid government issued photo ID
3. Provide proof that their landlord allows companion animals if renting
4. Submit a HSCC Foster Application
5. Be officially approved by HSCC staff
6. Understand and sign the HSCC Foster Agreement, adhering to all HSCC policies and procedures
7. Be able to safely transport the foster animal to and from the HSCC during normal business hours and approved Vet Clinics when applicable
8. Be available and open for a home visit conducted by a HSCC representative prior to approval and during fostering when applicable
9. Complete Volunteer Orientation, and Dog Handling class where applicable

Foster Parent Procedures

1. Potential foster animals will be processed according to normal intake procedures of the HSCC.
2. Before foster home placement, each cat will be tested for FELV/FIV and dogs may be tested for Heartworm, Lymes Disease, Ehrlichia, and/or Anaplasma if showing symptoms. All animals will be given vaccinations so that may be up to date.
3. If animal is eligible for spay/neutering defined by age, surgery will be scheduled by HSCC staff and Foster parent will be notified of surgery date. Foster parent will bring animal to the shelter for transport to surgery unless noted otherwise by an official HSCC Vet Release Form. Animal will be picked up from shelter post-surgery unless noted otherwise by an official HSCC Vet Release Form. Foster parent will be prepared to care for animal post-surgery.
4. Selection of animals – HSCC Staff may contact fosters by phone or e-mail when potential foster animals are identified. It is the responsibility of the foster parent to ensure their contact info is accurate and up to date with HSCC. Animals could be matched according to the preferences noted on foster's application.
5. Potential foster animals will be posted on HSCC website or Facebook page. Approved fosters may select from eligible foster animals. All foster animals must be approved by the HSCC staff prior to the placement in foster care.
6. Complete a successful meet & greet with any children and/or pets currently in the household prior to placement. The success of the meet & greet will be determined by HSCC Staff.

Insurance

If the foster animal inflicts injury on another animal, person, or object the HSCC is released of all responsibility. Your homeowner's insurance policy may cover you under the liability portion if you own your home. Check with your insurance company to find out how and when such protection can be extended. Your specific insurance company or policy might restrict certain breeds in your home. It is your responsibility to research this item in your policy. Any injury sustained to the foster animal will be covered under HSCC's policy.

Veterinarian Care

The HSCC will cover the cost of veterinary care when Foster parents request HSCC Staff schedule vaccinations, exams, or surgeries with shelter Vet Tech or local veterinarian. However, if the foster parent chooses to schedule veterinary treatment on their own, HSCC **cannot** reimburse for any expenses. Unless instructed by the HSCC, do not administer any over the counter or other medication to the animal.

HSCC **is not** responsible for any illnesses your pet may contract during your foster period and **cannot** reimburse for any additional expenses incurred. HSCC strongly recommends consulting with your veterinarian prior to welcoming a foster animal into your home.

If there is a medical emergency during HSCC business hours contact the shelter immediately, then, if instructed, contact a local veterinarian. HSCC Staff may contact a veterinarian for you. If there is a medical emergency outside of business hours:

1. Restrain the animal to prevent it from hurting itself or anyone in the area
2. Evaluate the situation and need for assistance:
 - a. Is the animal's life in imminent danger? Is the animal's airway obstructed or is the animal having trouble breathing? Does the animal have any broken bones or open wounds?
 - b. Is the animal running a fever of 104 degrees or greater?
 - c. Are the animal's gums healthy pink or are they white? Is the animal eating or drinking?
 - d. Is the animal able to urinate and defecate? Is there blood in the feces or urine?
3. If emergency medical attention is needed, contact the Emergency On-Call Veterinarian, then immediately update the HSCC. You will need to leave a voicemail. From 8 A.M. until Midnight you may contact any local veterinarian office to be directed to the On-Call Veterinarian in Cambria and Somerset County. Outside of those hours contact Allegheny Veterinary Emergency Trauma & Specialty in Monroeville at 412-373-4200.

Request emergency medical treatment of the animal be billed to the shelter. However, in the case, payment must be remitted immediately, you **MUST** provide a receipt and/or proper documentation to be reimbursed from the HSCC. In the event you fail to provide proof of payment, you will not be reimbursed.

Tips for introducing your foster to your home

Care & Consideration of Foster Animals

- If you or someone in your household is immune compromised, consult the doctor before fostering. If you or someone in your household are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, talk to your doctor before fostering cats. You may need to take some special precautions during your pregnancy.
- Foster animals should be isolated from any other pets for at least 1 week due to the possibility that they may be carrying contagious diseases. Though the HSCC does not foster out animals that are known to be ill, it is still a possibility that they may become sick. Keeping your foster animals in a room with no carpet works best. HSCC recommends baby gates to keep animals in certain rooms.
- Think about your current pets and other household members. Are they all willing to participate to care for this animal? Does a member have severe allergies to a potential pet?
- Do you have the time to care for a new animal?
- Will you be able to keep a close watch on the animal's health and personality? Younger animals will require more medical care, house training, and attention.
- Your foster animal may not be house trained or may chew on furniture, clothing, or other objects. You are responsible for teaching the animal how to be a lovable, loyal, and well-behaved family pet. HSCC is not responsible for damage to personal property.
- The HSCC is a non-profit and all purchases made for foster care may be considered a donation to the shelter and would be tax-deductible.

The Initial Adjustment

- Prepare to crate train the foster dog. A few guidelines can be found here: http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/crate_training.html. The foster dog will need time to adjust to its new surroundings. Always potty after crating.

- Crating the dog when you leave the home is a requirement. It will ensure the dog's safety, give your dogs a break, and also protect your home from accidents and/or destructiveness. At night, the dog should be crated or kept in a secure place.
- If you decide not to crate, HSCC is not responsible for damage to property, animals or self.
- Be very cautious when taking the dog off of your property. Until the dog has bonded with you, it can make outings difficult. Provide a secure collar that the dog cannot slip out of. If the dog does happen to break free, try to approach it as calmly and nonchalantly as possible. Rushing up to the dog will only make it run away. **LET HSCC KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU LOSE POSSESSION OF THE DOG.**
- Be cautious when exposing the foster animals to unfamiliar children and to strangers. In most cases, HSCC does not fully know the animal's history, and we cannot predict how it will react in all situations. Be aware that, if the dog bites, even if through fear, it may have to be considered for euthanasia. Don't put your foster dog in a situation that will cost his/her life.
- **Give your foster animal plenty of affection and care.** Animals are fostered because they need extra attention, beyond what the shelter environment can provide. Please remember that foster animals are usually not the "easiest" animals to care for. Fostering these special needs animals requires extra time and energy!
- In addition to basic care, the most helpful thing you can do for these animals is shower them with positive attention. Animals that return happy and well socialized are generally more appealing to adopters.
- Young kittens and puppies are often in foster care during the most formative weeks of their lives. To socialize them properly, treat the animals with the utmost kindness, and try to expose them to different experiences that they may encounter in life. Please try to balance the animal's physical health & disease control with the emotional benefits that they receive from lots of human interaction.

Introducing Foster Dog to Other Dogs

- We REQUIRE a meet & greet prior to fostering at the shelter with all members of the household including children and pets. The HSCC is aware that a single impression may not be enough, and allows multiple meet & greets to create the best judgement. HSCC warns of possible illnesses in the shelter environment.
- Take precautions while you are getting to know the dog's personality, especially when he/she is around other animals and children. Introduce them to one another slowly, ALWAYS using a leash. Never leave the foster dog alone with children, cats, small pets, or other dogs during this time.
- Introduce your dog(s) to the foster dog on neutral territory, not in your home. If possible, walk them together before bringing the foster dog into the home. Otherwise, let them meet through a screen door, baby gate, or something similar. Keep the foster dog on a short leash close to your side. Bring your dogs out on leashes one at a time.
- Keep the atmosphere calm and do not let your pets rush up to the new dog.
- Observe the reaction of the new dog and of your own dogs. Watch for signs of aggression and/or dominance.
- Once they have sniffed and greeted each other, take them around your property and into the house. If all pets are behaving well with each other, you may remove the leashes, but continue to monitor and supervise. DO NOT leave dogs unattended together until you are 100% confident that they are getting along well.

Introducing Foster Dog to Cats

- Introduce the foster dog to your cat indoors with the dog leashed.
- Place the cat on the floor and approach with the dog. Keep the dog on a shorter leash that you are able to control him/her.

- If the dog pulls or lunges, give a sharp pull on the leash and firmly say, “NO!” Correct the foster dog every time it shows interest in the cat. If you observe any signs you may feel are a threat to either animal, please inform the HSCC Staff immediately.
- Slowly continue with introduction and DO NOT leave either animal unattended together until you are 100% confident that that they are getting along well. Good signs include disinterest in one another or a submissive dog to a dominant cat.

Introducing Foster Cat to Cats

- We STRONGLY SUGGEST a meet and greet in our Cat Cuddle Room prior to fostering. The HSCC is aware that a single impression may not be enough, and allows multiple meet & greets to create the best judgement. HSCC warns of possible illnesses in the shelter environment.
- Each cat needs to feel safe while introducing. It is important to go slow with the introduction and watch both cats for aggression. The foster cat is coming into your cat's territory.
- Place the foster cat in a room with a closed door. Make sure it has everything it needs: litter pan, food, water, and toys. Let the cats sniff each other under the door at first.
- Next, you can use a baby gate between rooms which will help them to smell and see each other. If this goes well, you can introduce the cats to each other for short periods of time (10-15 min). Then, you may increase the time of each meeting.
- After multiple introductions, you may feel comfortable to allow cats to interact on a regular basis. DO NOT leave cats unattended together until you are 100% confident that they are getting along well.
- Be aware of territorial issues. You should have one more litter pan than the number of cats. So if you have two cats, then you need three litter pans. By doing this you will avoid either cat becoming territorial of their litter pan.

Accidents or Injury Reporting

- All accidents or injuries sustained by you must be reported immediately to the HSCC.
- You are required to fill out an accident or injury report for every incident for both animal and human. The shelter will have sole discretion to determine if that accident requires animal removal from your home.
- In the event that a dog bite were to occur, please notify the HSCC immediately. Proper documentation such as photos and a doctor's report will be required.
- Foster should notify the HSCC immediately if the animal dies or becomes severely sick while in the foster's care.

Return of Foster Animal

- If the foster parent will be on vacation, the animal will need to be returned to the shelter until home from vacation. Do not let anyone else care or foster for the animal. You were specially selected for that animal!
- If a foster can no longer provide care for the foster animal, the foster should notify the HSCC to find a replacement with another foster, rescue group, or adopter. If a replacement cannot be found, the animal must be returned to the HSCC.

Foster Adoptions

Animals in foster care are available to the public for adoption at any time unless they are underage, receiving treatment for an illness, or have behavior issues that are being addressed.

- Foster parents are encouraged to bring their fostered animals to the HSCC for adoption visits and off-site adoption events when the animal is healthy, has been spayed/neutered, and has been cleared by vet staff.

- If an adopter is interested, the foster will be notified and required to return the animal to the HSCC within 24-48 hours.
- Foster parents will only meet with potential adopters if requested. Foster input will be encouraged and influential to the adoption counselors; however, HSCC Staff retains the final decision regarding approval or denial for all prospective adopters.
- Fosters are permitted to adopt animals in their care for themselves if they qualify under normal HSCC adoption guidelines. You will need to complete an adoption application and complete HSCC adoption process.
- While we certainly love foster parents becoming permanent parents, remember that the more animals you successfully foster, the more animals you help place into new homes.

Privacy

- Any information pertaining to HSCC records and cases which you may become privileged to (e.g. names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) as a result of your affiliation with the HSCC is confidential and may not be discussed with others, except as may be required by law.
- Under certain circumstances, HSCC may be prohibited from discussing with you certain specific details regarding cases that are under investigation or pending criminal court action.
- Your residential address and residential phone number will not be disclosed or provided to any adopter.

Resignations and Terminations

- If you have any issues or concerns to report concerning the Foster Program please contact the shelter for the HSCC Staff to assist you. The HSCC Staff will work diligently to address all issues and concerns in a timely fashion.
- If you choose to leave the foster program or need to temporarily stop, please notify the HSCC to be removed from the approved foster list.
- The HSCC can elect to terminate or suspend your participation in the foster program for the following reasons (not all inclusive):
 - Failure to follow the HSCC foster agreement
 - Inhumane treatment or mistreatment of animals
 - Misconduct or abuse of staff
 - Falsification of HSCC records
 - Theft
 - Possession of illegal drugs
 - Failure to return animals as requested by HSCC
 - Any other justifiable reason deemed appropriate by the HSCC staff.

Potential Foster parents understand that the Humane Society of Cambria County, Inc. reserves the right to refuse the application of any animal or foster parent.

How do I get started?

You need to complete a foster application available on the HSCC website or at the shelter located at 743 Galleria Drive Extension, Johnstown, PA 15904. Return your application to the shelter in person. E-mailed, faxed, and mailed applications may be missed.

Office hours are **Tuesday – Friday, 1:00 – 7:00 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday, 12:00 – 5:00 p.m.**
Contact info is 814-535-6116 or cambriacountyhumanesociety@gmail.com

If you are approved, the HSCC Staff will contact you with upcoming Volunteer Orientation dates and times as well as Dog Handling Course dates and times. Attending an orientation and course is free and does not obligate you to become a foster parent, but it is required if you qualify and decide to become one.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for considering fostering an animal! We are very grateful for your interest. Fosters are a valuable asset to our organization and to the many animals that need loving homes.

This manual has been prepared as a reference guide. We can't cover every situation with a possible standard outcome, so please ask us questions at any time. We understand your concerns and want to help you succeed. You will have a huge impact on the lives of homeless animals in our county. We look forward to collaborating with you!

