

DOG FOSTER PROGRAM AGREEMENT

I, _____, have agreed to foster dogs with Austin Pets Alive!. I will carefully read each item below and abide by these rules and responsibilities.

KEY RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- I will carefully review all of APA!'s dog foster communications and resources, including the [Dog Foster Handbook](#), and abide by the rules and responsibilities set forth therein.
- I will not foster a dog unless my resident animals are fully vaccinated, including bordetella for dogs.
- If my foster dog is undervaccinated (typically puppies under 20 weeks), I will not allow my foster dog to touch the ground in any public area (e.g., sidewalks, parks, patios, stores, veterinary clinics or hospitals, play yards, running trails, at APA!). Undervaccinated dogs are at risk for serious illnesses like Parvo and Distemper. If my home does not have a private outside area where unknown/unvaccinated dogs cannot go, I will need to use potty pads in my home. There is an exception to this rule in that puppies who are under 20 weeks but 8 weeks or older and have at least 2 DAPP vaccinations can be walked in areas with limited pet traffic (e.g., no communal dog parks or dog walking areas). Potential adopters must thoroughly sanitize before touching my undervaccinated foster dog.
- I will keep my foster dog separated from my resident animal(s) for at least the first week. This can be done by crating my foster dog, keeping them in a separate room, or both. This is important to ensure the safety and health of my foster dog and my resident animal(s). One primary reason for this rule is that the stress and overstimulation that can come with a new dog's transition into the home can result in poor first introductions. If I want to introduce my foster dog to my resident dog(s) after the first week, I understand that APA! can provide more information on the "best practice" for introducing dogs upon request. See also this [Dog-Dog Introductions](#) document. I understand that in some cases, APA! may require a meet and greet between my foster dog and my resident dog(s). But even if I have done a meet and greet between my foster dog and my resident dog(s), APA! can't guarantee how they will interact in my home (APA! cannot guarantee the temperament or behavior of any animal). And even after I have successfully integrated my foster dog with my resident dog(s), I will not give them food, treats, or toys together, and I will not let them have unsupervised interactions.
- I will not introduce my foster dog to any other animal except my resident animal(s) and any potential adopter's animal(s) (unless APA! advises against any such introduction).
- I will not remove or loosen my foster dog's martingale collar or stop using any special handling equipment that APA! has assigned to my foster dog (e.g., a drag leash) unless I have received the Behavior Team's approval. I will not use advanced behavior modification tools like prong or remote collars. The use of these tools is at our Behavior Team's express discretion.
- I will not use a retractable leash. Retractable leashes are dangerous and can severely injure me, a bystander, my dog(s), or other dogs.
- I will maintain a 10-foot bubble between people and other animals when walking my foster dog.
- I will not take my foster dog to a dog park or any other off-leash area.
- I will not let my foster dog off leash outside of my home.
- I will not house my foster dog outside or leave my foster dog unattended outside. If I have a fenced yard, I will supervise my foster dog at all times when in that yard. If I have a doggy door, I will keep it closed or out of reach of my foster dog.
- I will not travel out of the area with my foster dog without express permission from APA!.
- I will not use boarding facilities, doggie daycares, groomers, or any other third-party care providers for my foster dog without express permission from APA!.
- I will return any crate, xpen, or other supplies that I borrow from APA! when I am no longer an active foster with APA!. The exception is dog-specific equipment like my foster dog's martingale collar that should stay with my foster dog through adoption.
- I will immediately notify the Dog Foster Manager (dog-foster-manager@austinpetsalive.org) if my foster dog is lost or stolen.
- By fostering, I am willingly offering to foster, and I do not expect any goods or services in return, including an adoption fee reduction or waiver should I decide to adopt my foster dog.

PLACEMENT

- I understand that the Dog Foster Placement Team (dog-foster-placement@austinpetsalive.org) is my primary contact via email for all placement-related matters.
- I understand that in most cases, APA! will not know any background information on how my foster dog does in a home or around other animals or children or any other background information. While not ideal, this is the reality of saving the lives of dogs most at risk of euthanasia in Texas. By fostering, I am agreeing to prepare myself for this reality.

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- I commit to foster my foster dog until they are adopted or another foster can be found.
- I understand that there is an adjustment period when a dog moves into a foster home that can cause a dog to be stressed or anxious or both, which can manifest itself in certain unwanted behaviors. In the first few hours and days, I will take it slow, be patient, and not panic. Dogs often just need time to settle in and get used to a new routine. Most adjustment issues usually resolve themselves within a few days to a week. I will review this [Bringing Home a New Dog](#) document for more information.

- I understand that common adjustment issues include: separation anxiety, potty accidents, sleepiness, hyperactivity/overarousal, not eating, and gastrointestinal issues. In addition, I understand that because of the conditions from which most of our dogs come, it's very common for them to have worms, parasites, fleas, and/or upper respiratory infections (URIs).
- I understand that returning a foster dog puts a strain on shelter space and takes up a kennel that could be used for another dog at risk. I will try to work through issues with my foster dog as they arise so that I may honor my commitment and not return them to the shelter.
- I understand that if I absolutely need to return my foster dog, I will email our Dog Foster Placement Team and provide 7 days advance notice for a kennel to be reserved. I will not bring my foster dog to the shelter without confirmation. I understand that APA! generally cannot accept same day surrenders.
- I understand that if I need a sitter for my foster dog, I will email our Dog Foster Placement Team and provide 7 days advance notice for a sitter to be found. If my foster dog was available for adoption prior to the sitter period, they will remain available for adoption during the sitter period. If a sitter is not found, my foster dog will return to a kennel. I understand that whether they go to a sitter or return to a kennel, they could be adopted while I am away.
- I will not hand off my foster dog to a foster sitter, another foster, or any other person without first arranging it with the Dog Foster Placement Team. Sitters must be APA!-approved fosters.
- I understand that APA! may require me to return my foster dog in APA!'s sole discretion at any time, and I will comply with any such instruction.

CARE

General

- I understand that the Dog Foster Care Team (dog-foster-care@austinpetsalive.org) is my primary contact via email for all general care-related matters.
- I will provide a safe, clean, and caring environment; shelter, food, water, and toys/enrichment; and exercise and socialization as appropriate for my foster dog.
- I understand that if I am fostering a puppy they come with some extra considerations. I will review this [Puppy Basics Handout](#). Puppies should always be kept in a confined area unless the foster is providing direct supervision.
- I understand that we feed the dogs in our program Castor & Pollux/Merrick-branded food. However, any good quality food is sufficient. Puppies and nursing or pregnant moms should get puppy food or gruel (depending on their age). I will consult the Dog Foster Care Team if I am unsure about what to feed my foster dog.
- I will timely take my foster dog to APA! for required vaccinations, scheduled appointments, spay/neuter surgery or other surgery, and walk-in emergencies, as necessary.
- I will pick up and administer monthly preventatives, dewormer (as needed), and medications (as needed) per APA!'s instructions. I will not bathe my foster dog for 48 hours after being treated with a topical preventatives as the shampoo could negate the preventative. I will also notify APA! each time I administer monthly preventatives.
- I will immediately notify the Dog Foster Care Team if my foster dog is showing any sign of illness or injury.

Medical

- I understand that APA! rescues animals from other shelters and living situations all over Texas, which makes it impossible for APA! to guarantee that a dog will be healthy when they are placed in my care or to know if they have been in contact with a contagious disease. It is possible that my foster dog may be carrying a disease and be contagious or may have a medical issue not identified or otherwise known to APA!. A dog that appears healthy at the time of placement can sometimes show signs of illness several days later. By fostering, I am acknowledging that I understand this inherent risk in fostering any shelter animal. This is also why APA! requires that my resident animal(s) be fully vaccinated and that I separate my foster dog from my resident animal(s) for the first week.
- I understand that in most cases, my foster dog will be medically examined and vaccinated before I take them home. However, in limited cases, this is not possible, and I will be notified to schedule an intake exam at a later date.
- I understand that the Medical Team provides all medical care for my foster dog, and APA! will NOT reimburse me for the cost of ANY medical care outside of APA!.
- I will respect and defer to the APA! Medical Team's decisions regarding my foster dog's medical care.
- I understand that APA! is committed to providing their animals with the care they need to transition into their forever home. APA! has extensive expertise in treating shelter populations and in the kind of contagious diseases and medical conditions that affect shelter populations. To better understand the level of care that APA! provides, I will carefully read the APA!'s Medical Standard of Care section of this [Dog Foster Handbook](#).
- I will comply with the terms of my foster dog's Medical Consult, if applicable.

Behavior

- I understand that the Behavior Team (dogbehaviorfollowup@austinpetsalive.org) is my primary contact via email for all behavior-related matters.
- I understand that APA! cannot guarantee the temperament or behavior of any foster dog.
- I understand that there may be several unknowns when it comes to my foster dog's temperament or behavior. Environment and time can impact temperament and behavior, so certain behaviors may reveal themselves in the home of which APA! was not aware or further develop in the home in a manner that APA! could not have reasonably predicted.
- I understand that APA! relies on its fosters to learn more about their dogs and their in-home behaviors. I will regularly communicate and work with our Behavior Team on any behavior-related matters. I will notify APA! immediately if I am experiencing any issue with my foster dog so that APA! can provide help before it becomes a serious problem.
- I understand that APA! strongly encourages fosters to crate their foster dog (unless they have crating issues), especially when I am not home. I will review this [Crate Training](#) document for APA!'s advice on crating.

- If I am fostering a scared/flight risk dog, I will comply with the terms of this [Dog Foster Scared Dog Behavior Handout](#) and take all efforts to ensure the dog is secure at all times. These dogs have an uncanny ability to dart out a door, escape a yard, or chew through a leash.
- I will immediately report any foster dog bite (to human or other animal) pursuant to the [Dog Foster Bite Protocol](#).
- I will comply with the terms of my foster dog's Behavior Consult, if applicable.

ADOPTION

- I understand that the Dog Foster Adoption Team (dog-foster-adopt@austinpetsalive.org) is my primary contact via email for all adoption-related matters.
- I understand that APA! has an open, progressive, and first-come, first-served adoption policy. The first inquirer of which I am notified that submits the first acceptable application after the requisite meet and greet(s) has priority to adopt my foster dog.
- I will actively participate in marketing my foster dog.
- I will submit marketing materials (photos, videos, bio) to our Dog Marketing Team (dog-marketing@austinpetsalive.org) per the instructions in APA!'s materials.
- I will respond to adoption inquiries within 24 hours, screen potential adopters, and for potential adopters that seem like a good fit, set up meet and greets within 5 days of the inquiry.
- I will be responsive and courteous towards each potential adopter.
- I will not let a potential adopter take my foster dog on a trial basis, field trip, or sleepover. I understand that my foster dog must be in the custody of an APA!-approved foster at all times until officially adopted.
- I will notify APA! immediately if I would like to adopt my foster dog and not hold meet and greets or otherwise create false expectations with potential adopters if I am planning to adopt my foster dog.
- I understand that APA! has final say on who adopts my foster dog.

RESOURCES

- **Foster Dog Portal:** I understand that once I am placed with a dog, APA! will email me a link to my foster dog's online portal specific to them. This foster dog portal will provide me with real-time information regarding my foster dog and fostering in general. I understand that this is my #1 resource as a foster parent.
- **Dog Foster Orientation and Q&A Sessions:** I understand that these are held on the 10th of every month from 6PM-7PM. These *optional* sessions are an opportunity to meet members of APA!'s team, to learn the key rules and responsibilities of fostering, and to have a forum in which I can ask questions and get answers. I understand that every month APA! will send me a reminder and instructions on how to attend (whether virtually or in person).
- **APA! Dog Foster Resource Website:** I understand that this website includes all of APA!'s current resources to help me during my foster experience. I understand the following resources are particularly important for me to review: [Dog Foster Handbook](#), [Dog Foster Team Contact List](#), [Key Dos and Don'ts of Being an APA! Dog Foster Parent](#), [Dog Foster Bite Protocol](#).
- **Mentors:** I understand that there is a foster-to-foster support network called the Dog Foster Mentors. The Dog Foster Mentors are a group of experienced fosters who volunteer to help fellow fosters. If I need support or have any general questions or concerns, I understand that I can email them at dog-foster-mentors@austinpetsalive.org.
- **Other Resources:** I understand that there are more resources available to me as a foster, which are more specifically set forth in our [Dog Foster Handbook](#), like a private Facebook group for APA! fosters, the foster sharing shed, and a discount at APA!'s thrift stores.

COMMUNICATIONS

- I understand that as a foster parent, I have access to a number of teams to help me have a successful foster experience. I will refer to this [Dog Foster Team Contact List](#), which lists the most important APA! contacts for me as a foster parent, to determine the correct team to contact.
- I understand that APA! primarily communicates by email. I will make sure that APA! has the best mail address for me, and I will check my email daily. I understand that APA! will email me general and dog-specific information at different times to help me become and stay informed about fostering.

By signing below, I am agreeing to all of the rules and responsibilities set forth above. I understand that I am still responsible for carefully reading the [Dog Foster Handbook](#) and any other materials that the Dog Foster Team provides to me and abiding by the rules and responsibilities set forth in these materials.

Foster Print Name_____

Foster Sign Name_____

APA! Representative Print Name_____

APA! Representative Sign Name_____

Date_____