

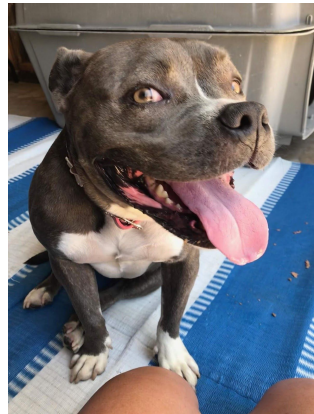
Fostering a Dog

Thinking about opening up your home to a foster dog? That's fantastic - thank you! Fostering is a great way to help a dog in need, and get to be around dogs / work with dogs without the commitment of having an own dog for the rest of its life.

That said, fostering is something to take seriously. It isn't to test-run a bunch of dogs until you find one you like. It also isn't something you can cancel on a whim because it is too much hard work - yes, having a foster dog is work! While it is a temporary arrangement, it is also a commitment that has to work for everyone involved.

People sometimes say "*I'd wanna keep them all*" or "*I'd get too attached.*" Well, ok, but that's really not a reason not to foster... Caring -- truly caring -- is precisely why you should! Caring deeply for each and every dog is part of providing the best foster care, staying committed when things don't go perfect, and finding the best possible home for each dog.

This document explains what fostering is all about, what to consider and expect, and where to go next.



1. What is Fostering?

Fosters are people who temporarily provide homes for rescue dogs that are in need of a permanent home. The dog belongs to the shelter or rescue organization, but lives in your home for a time, ideally until he/she is adopted. Costs for food and equipment, as well as vet bills, will be covered by the rescue.

2. Why is Fostering Important ?

By fostering, you free up shelter space and thereby save another dog from being euthanized to make room. You are essentially buying these dogs more time. With the dog in your house, you are also able to get to know them, learn their personality and reactions in different situations, and can teach the dog how to live in the real world -- socializing, riding in a car, house-training, going on walks etc. -- all of which makes the dog more adoptable than if they sit alone in a shelter kennel for weeks or months.

3. How Long Do I Need to be Available ?

Short answer: **the longer the better**. It is impossible to know exactly how long it will take to get a dog adopted out, and as much as possible, we would like you to foster the dog until he/she gets adopted. Realistically, the minimum would be about 3 or 4 weeks.

If you have a limited timeframe, we can try to find a dog for you to foster who is likely to be adopted fast. However, there are no guarantees, so the longer you can commit to, the better.

4. What is my Job as a Foster ?

Of course, you need to do **everything associated with caring for a dog**: walking, feeding, keeping them safe, socializing, administer flea meds, grooming (if applicable) and so on, and if they get sick or injured, you need to take them to a vet (if you're fostering for a rescue, they will pay for vet care. If you foster for the shelter, the you'd need to bring the dog back there).

In addition, here are some things you will be expected to do:

- **Taking photos and videos** for a nice online posting for the dog.
- **Answer adoption applications**, either positively and to arrange a meeting (see next point), or with a polite decline if it is not a suitable match for the dog. Some dogs get a lot of applications, so you might find yourself answering a lot of emails.
- **Meet with potential adopters**, so that they can see the dog and you can talk and figure out if this is a good match. You know the dog better than anyone, so you can explain any quirks or needs, and assess the adopters to see whether they can give this dog what he/she needs.
 - You need to be available to respond to and meet adopters within a reasonable timeframe, otherwise they move on to the next dog.
 - Be prepared to have them come to your home, where they can see the dog in a relaxed home environment.
- If the meeting is a success and everyone wants to go ahead, once paperwork is sorted (contract signed, adoption fee paid), you should **deliver the dog to the new home**, and do a quick **home check** (is everything as they described it? Is the house/yard safe for this dog, and escape-proof?), and go over final questions or instructions to ensure a smooth transition for the dog into their new home.

If you are new to fostering, **we will of course help with all of this** (especially deciding whether the adoption should go ahead). **We will also handle the paperwork** (contracts, medical records, adoption fees), but the practical stuff (like answering adoption applications and arranging meetings and delivery) should be handled by you.

See our handout: [10 Tips for Fosters to Get a Dog Adopted](#)

5. What Should I Expect ?

Unless the dog has lived in a different foster home before, there will be many things that we don't know about them: they may not be house-trained, they may cry at night, or bark when left alone, etc. If the dog has come straight out of the shelter, he is almost certainly going to be stressed, confused, and **you have to be prepared to work through some initial hiccups**, misunderstandings, and a chewed-up/peed-on blanket or shoe. If there are medical issues / the dog is recovering from surgery, you may be dealing with a cone, keeping an eagle-eye on stitches, administering medications etc. The occasional trip to the vet may also be necessary.

Don't get us wrong: some of our foster dogs have been super easy and have fit straight into our regular lives as if they'd always been part of it. However, others have had a harder time adjusting. **Depending on your level of experience (and time), we can select a dog that works for you, but be aware that it can be hard to know exactly what they will be like!**

- *Darling senior Chespita was a quiet, friendly, Chihuahua, walked like a dream on leash, and was a doll with everyone all round, but would literally break into cupboards to steal food if left unsupervised. Her foster had to reinforce all cupboards.*
- *Min-Pin Shadow came to us for leash-walking and general get-to-know-the-world training, but ended up having a super sensitive stomach, which led to several nights of diarrhea.*

That's just the reality of life with a dog!

6. What if it's Just Not Working Out ?

We will do our best to select a foster dog that appears to match your lifestyle and abilities / experience with dogs. It is in no one's interest if you end up "in over your head".

That said, **fosters need to be prepared to work through basics:**

- Almost all dogs will have pee/poop accidents in a new house in the first few days. We will show you how to give them a house-training refresher course.
- That dogs cry for a few nights in a new home is also normal - they need to learn to sleep quietly through the night, and adult dogs normally learn this very quickly.
- Most dogs that we have rescued needed to learn proper leash-walking. We will show you how to address pulling and how to teach the dog to walk nicely and not react.

- If you already have a dog (or cat), of course we'll make sure that all pets are social and can handle another dog in the mix, BUT - it's going to be new and weird for everyone involved, so expect an adjustment period for BOTH dogs.
- If the dog gets sick, that's just life - you have to be prepared to deal with it, clean up the mess and head to the vet if necessary.

We will support you and help you work through such things. We provide training to all our fosters and are always on hand with as much advice or tips as you need, or with additional resources to address specific problems (we'll help you with everything from reinforced crates to group-hikes and, of course, we cover all your costs).

Of course, if a **SERIOUS** issue comes up that you cannot work through, discuss it with us immediately. No one wants an unsafe or stressful situation for the foster or the dog, so another solution will have to be figured out.

7. So, What's in it for Me?

Aside from **saving a dog's life**? And **getting to spend time with dogs** (did we mention we love dogs?!)? The rewards of fostering are huge. Fostering with an experienced organization like ours that provides training and support makes **fostering is an excellent opportunity to learn about dog training**. Seeing a discarded dog blossom, firstly in your home, and then in their new forever-home, is immensely rewarding: you have saved that dog's life, more so: **your short-term hard work has set them up for long-term success**.

If you think you can foster, fill out a Foster Home Application on our website: bluemandog.org/foster-home-application/

If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact us.
info@bluemandog.org

Can't foster?

Sometimes it just isn't possible. If the landlord forbids it, for instance. More commonly: No time. Looking after a foster dog takes time (all the usual, plus promoting the dog on social media, answering adopter emails, and arranging adopter appointments, doing home-checks and driving dogs to their homes). Also, if you *really* worry about your stuff, or disturbing your neighbors for a few days, it might be problematic to foster dogs ---

[donate to a rescue instead.](#) ♥