

# **Fawster DAWG Manual**

**The Dallas Animal Welfare Group (DAWG) Project**  
in conjunction with **Dallas Animal Services**



## **Welcome to The DAWG Project's Fawster DAWG program!**

Fosters are truly the first responders in the fight to save a dog. Without an available foster, foster groups can't pull dogs from the shelter. And without fosters to help relieve shelter overpopulation, shelters are often forced to euthanize dogs who would make great pets.

Because fosters move pets out of the shelter, not one but two lives are saved through each foster experience - each dog placed in foster care opens up a spot in the shelter for another homeless pet.

Thank you for saving lives by choosing to foster!



## Your foster parent job description:

- Provide a temporary home for a dog in need. This involves giving food and water and a safe home environment.
- Provide safe, loving leadership for your foster. Often dogs come into foster care after experiencing trauma and living in dangerous situations. You might just be the first safe human they've known. Please be patient with them as they learn to adjust.
- Administer basic medical care (heartworm treatment, gels, oral medicine, etc.) and monitor any changes in your foster dog's health.
- Provide short-term pet parenthood. Foster dogs often need to be taught to be members of the family.
- Help your foster dog become socialized, learn basic obedience skills, and practice their manners. Some have never lived indoors, eaten out of a bowl, or slept in a bed that was just for them.
- Network your foster dog on social media platforms. You are your foster dog's best advocate! Tell your foster dog's story and show his or her progress. This will greatly increase the chances for adoption.
- Provide transportation to and from adoption events.
- Enjoy the wonderful benefits of having pets in your home without the lifetime commitment of pet ownership.

## **What are the benefits of fostering?**

Fostering allows you to enjoy the fun of having a pet in your home without making a lifetime commitment to pet ownership. Fostering is an inexpensive way to enjoy having a pet in your life and in your family. **Since the pet's expenses are covered by The DAWG Project, the cost to you is free.**

## **How long will I keep my foster dog?**

Foster commitments vary widely. Some dogs are in foster care for a few weeks. Some harder-to-adopt dogs may remain in foster care for months. However, a good foster home GREATLY improves a dog's chances of getting adopted! Your dog just may surprise you and end up finding a forever home in no time! In which case - we hope you'll foster again.

## **Do I need to have any training to be foster parent?**

Your foster dog needs for you to be a kind, patient pack leader. Basic dog training or handling skills are a plus. Teaching your foster dog to walk politely on a leash and to sit and stay will make for a happier dog and also improve the chances of successful adoption.

Your foster dog will often come to you after a series of difficult and often unknown events. Foster dogs are stressed and trying to adjust to a new environment.

Foster dogs make mistakes. Foster families should be loving and patient. It's up to foster parents to provide a home in which foster pets can feel safe, learn their manners and grow into wonderful pets and family members.

You will be informed of your foster dog's known history and any medical or behavioral health before the dog is placed in your care. Our foster coordinator will help answer questions and provide resources and information.

## **How much time do foster parents have to devote to the animal(s) in their care?**

Foster animals need all of the same things that owned animals do, and may even need extra attention if they are recovering from illness/injury or have specialized care and training needs.

## **What are the requirements to foster?**

### **Fosters must:**

- Be willing to abide by The DAWG Project policies and procedures in the foster manual
- Be able to access email/cell regularly
- Be able to provide transport to and from adoption events and veterinary visits
- Provide some supplies and food for foster animals (with the ability for The DAWG project to reimburse)
- Spend time with foster pets and treat them like your own animals while they're in your care
- Have up-to-date rabies vaccinations for all animals in the home

## **What types of animals need foster care?**

- Puppies who need extra care before they are ready for adoption
- Dogs rescued from the street who would not do well in a shelter environment
- Dogs recovering from illness or injury
- Dogs with behavioral challenges

## **Getting Started: Picking out a new foster animal**

If you are interested in fostering a particular animal or litter from Dallas Animal Services, please contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible. You can find available dogs on the shelter Facebook page or website.

Once we receive your request, we will verify that the animal is still available, answer any questions that you may have, and confirm a pick up date and time. All questions regarding an animal's history, behavior, medical needs, special care instructions, etc. should be directed to the foster coordinator prior to pick up.

In most cases, The DAWG Project will recommend a dog based on your preferences, and you will always have the opportunity to accept or decline the opportunity.

## **Getting Started: Supplies**

**The DAWG Project will provide fosters with:**

- Food
- Crate
- Medications supplements or prescription diets

**You may need to provide:**

- Leash and collar
- Any extra training aids you deem necessary (puppy pads, clickers)
- Extra toys
- Extra treats
- Socialization opportunities and basic at-home training

Please contact the foster coordinator if you need something for your foster dog. We will do our best to help you!



## **Basic vetting for fosters**

Every foster dog will need to be up-to-date on vaccinations, spayed or neutered, and will need heartworm treatment or preventative meds.

Most dogs arrive at the shelter with some of these basic health requirements already met, but occasionally fosters will need to take their dogs to the necessary vet appointments to finish this basic care. *The DAWG Project will provide funding and resources to complete any basic medical care.* This is done on a case by case basis. Some examples of this include:

### **Spay/Neuter Surgery, Vaccinations, and Microchipping**

The DAWG Project will arrange for and pay for spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations, and chipping if necessary. It will be up to you to transport your foster dog to and from the vet and to provide after-care for recovery.

### **Booster Shots**

All foster animals under four months of age should have their weight checked and be given booster shots every 3-4 weeks. This means that very young puppies may receive as many as four boosters. Foster animals over four months of age when they go into foster care should receive booster shots just once, 3-4 weeks after their initial shot. It is up to you, the foster care provider, to keep track of their foster's booster shot and prevention schedule and stay in contact with your foster coordinator.

### **Flea/Tick and Heartworm Prevention**

All foster animals over eight weeks of age should be given flea/tick and heartworm prevention monthly. Since these medications are based on the weight of the animal, if your foster is still growing, you will need to follow the same protocol given above for booster shots. It is up to the foster care provider to keep track of their foster's booster shot and heartworm prevention schedule and stay in contact with your foster coordinator.

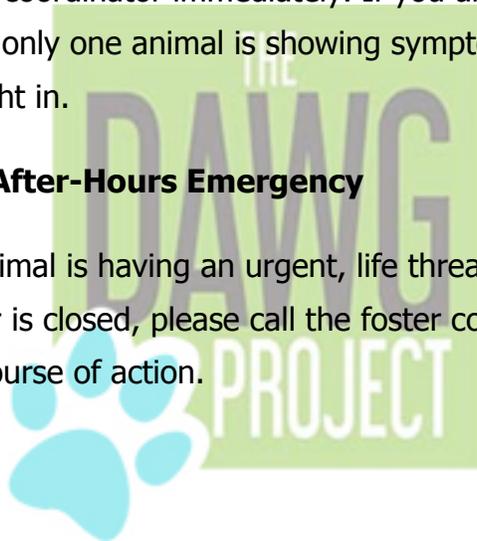
## **Sick or Injured Fosters**

If you notice that your foster animal has mild, cold-like symptoms (sneezing or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), diarrhea, or has vomited, but is otherwise alert, active, eating and drinking well, please notify the foster coordinator so that it can be determined how best to proceed.

If your foster animal has more severe symptoms, such as frequent vomiting, lethargy, yellow/green ocular or nasal discharge, previously undocumented hair loss, straining to urinate or defecate, etc., please notify the foster coordinator immediately. If you are fostering a litter of puppies, even if only one animal is showing symptoms, the entire litter should be brought in.

## **In Case of an After-Hours Emergency**

If your foster animal is having an urgent, life threatening medical issue while the shelter is closed, please call the foster coordinator, who will recommend a course of action.



## **How can I help my foster animal find a forever home?**

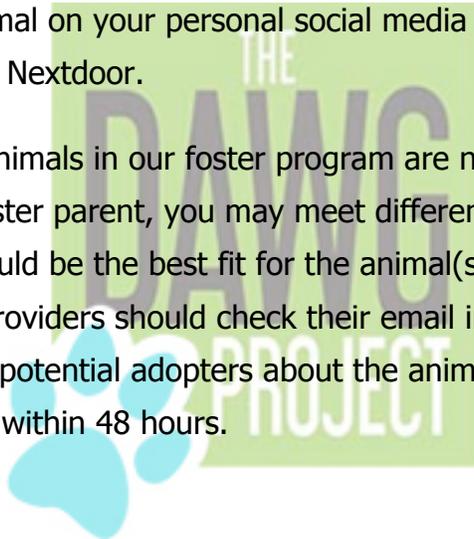
When fostering an animal for The DAWG Project, you can be the animal's number one advocate! By acting as an adoption ambassador, you won't just be a foster parent. You will be a photographer, videographer, biographer, a marketing specialist, and an adoption counselor! You are your foster's BIGGEST FAN!

Take a series of photos/short videos of the foster animal and email it to the [woof@thedawgproject.com](mailto:woof@thedawgproject.com) to be added to The DAWG Project website and social media sites.

Promote the foster animal on your personal social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor.

Please be aware that animals in our foster program are not on a first come, first served basis. As the foster parent, you may meet different potential adopters before deciding which would be the best fit for the animal(s) in your care.

However, foster care providers should check their email inbox, and spam folder daily for inquiries from potential adopters about the animal(s) in their care, and respond to all inquiries within 48 hours.



## **Adoption Events**

Another option for foster care providers seeking forever homes for the animals in their care are adoption events. These events are typically held on weekends, at the Petsmart Everyday Adoption Center at 16821 Coit Road in Dallas. Details about these events will be made available to you.

## **My foster animal has an adopter, now what?**

1. The adopter must go through The DAWG Project' approval process
2. Once you have confirmed that someone is interested in adopting your foster pet contact the foster coordinator right away to let us know.
3. After the foster animal has been spayed/neutered and microchipped, it may be transferred to the adopter.
4. The foster care provider should collect the appropriate adoption fee from the adopter.
5. Once the animal has been transferred to the adopter, the foster care providers must submit the completed adoption packet and adoption fee to the foster coordinator within three business days.
6. After the completed adoption packet and adoption fee have been received by the foster coordinator, all of the animal's paperwork and microchip information will be emailed to the adopter.

## **Returning Foster Animals to The DAWG Project**

If you need to return a foster pet to The DAWG Project for any reason, please contact the foster coordinator so that we can make arrangements for you to do so.

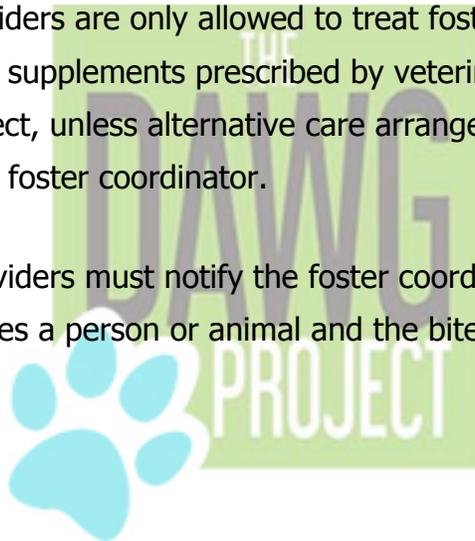
When returning foster pets, please complete a behavior profile for the animal(s) that you are returning. This will help us find a better foster fit for the dog.

## Policies and Procedures

**All animals in foster care are the property of The DAWG Project and are subject to all applicable rules and restrictions.**

1. Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate controlled homes with the temperature kept between 60 and 80° F. They are not to be left outside for long periods of time or crated for more than eight hours at a time.
2. Puppies under 10 months should never be left unsupervised outdoors. High-traffic areas such as the park, animal stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc., should be avoided, as puppies can be susceptible to deadly diseases that could be lurking there.
3. Dogs should spend time outside for supervised play time/exercise. When outdoors, foster dogs must be kept on leash or in a securely fenced yard. Some dogs can jump/climb over or dig under fences surprisingly fast, so please be cautious when leaving foster dogs unsupervised.
4. We ask that you do not take foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
5. If your foster dog gets loose, contact the foster coordinator immediately.
6. If injury or illness results from interaction between your animals and foster animals, The DAWG Project will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster pet for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.

7. The DAWG Project reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.
8. If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal for any reason upon request by The DAWG Project, or has improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and The DAWG Project may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the animal.
9. Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by veterinary staff working with The DAWG Project, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.
10. Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.



## Contact Us

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*The DAWG Project is a 501c3 organization dedicated to the welfare of Dallas dogs and their people.*

**Thank you for stepping up to be a hero for Dallas dogs by joining the Fawster DAWG program!**