



DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES

Foster Care Guide

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Shannon is your point of contact when Stephanie is unavailable.

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Welcome to the Louisville Metro Animal Services Foster Care Program!

Thank you for opening your home to a shelter companion animal. Louisville Metro Animal Services (LMAS) began our foster care program in order to give young, injured or sick, abused, or under-socialized pets a chance to grow and/or heal and eventually find permanent homes. Since the start, our foster care program has saved numerous dogs and cats that would otherwise not make it out of the shelter. Fostering is a very self-rewarding experience as well as a selfless act that changes and saves hundreds of lives. By fostering, you help animals heal, become more social, and change the way your community views shelter pets. **By fostering with Louisville Metro Animal Services, you are changing the world, one life or litter at a time.**

We encourage you to join our social media group on Facebook, please use your Facebook search bar and type in "LMAS Staff, Volunteers, and Fosters" You will be

required to answer 3 questions, please answer these questions to join.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/931794043622923/>

Did you know you can write fostering expenses off on your taxes? What a cool perk!

What kind of animals need foster homes?

- **Orphan litters - puppies or kittens,**

Kittens and puppies, in a litter or paired with another orphaned kitten or puppy. They are fostered until they are nine weeks old and/or meet surgery weight. Most kittens and puppies are fostered for 2-6 weeks. In some circumstances, the orphans are not weaned and need to be bottle fed. Bottle fed orphans require round the clock care. You must have prior experience in bottle feeding and/or willing to learn.

- **Nursing Mom & babies**

Litters of kittens or puppies with their moms are fostered until the babies are 9 weeks old and/or at surgery weight. There are times when the babies will need to be supplemented (bottle fed). Generally, mom does all the work until the babies have teeth. The mom will feed, stimulate, and clean up after the babies.

- **Ill or recovering from injuries**

Dogs and cats suffering from minor common ailments such as upper respiratory infections, eye infections, or ear issues, will often be sent to foster to recover in a home environment. These are usually minor cases but will need to be kept away from other animals in the home to avoid spreading disease. Dogs and cats that are recovering from major surgery such as amputations also qualify for foster. This time frame can be anywhere between 2 weeks to a few months.

Please note, we are an open intake shelter and animals whose medical condition don't improve or may worsen are at risk of euthanasia based on a team of experienced supervisors' decision. We exhaust all options (foster, rescue) before deciding on this end of life decision.

- **Minor behavior issues**

Dogs or cats that need extra socialization are fearful in the shelter, shy, or just need basic obedience assistance may also qualify for foster. These animals will come with a behavior protocol and plan in place. All dogs and cats in foster homes for minor behavioral issues will be

given a timeline and goals to set prior to being up for adoption. **Please note, we are an open intake shelter and animals whose behavior don't improve or may worsen are at risk of euthanasia based on a team of experienced supervisors' decision. We exhaust all options (foster, rescue) before deciding on this end of life decision. We will not adopt out any animal that is a danger to people or other animals.**

- Waiting Rescue Transport

We work with a multitude of rescues around the country. When an animal has a confirmed spot with a rescue, they may need a foster home until the rescue can pull the animal or until transport is ready. This would be considered short term fostering, typically 2-4 weeks. Animals waiting for rescue transport shall be closely monitored for any signs of illness as transporting sick animals is not advised.

- •Overcrowding, Time/Space

Some animals may be sent to foster homes to help alleviate overcrowding problems in the shelter. This would be considered short term fostering, approximately 1-2 weeks or until there is space open at the shelter.

- **Senior Animals “Hospice Fostering”**

These animals are aged; sometimes medical cases that are waiting rescue or just needing a place to live out the rest of their lives. The ideal foster home for these animals would be laid back, have prior experience with senior pets, and be willing to care for these animals for their remaining years. LMAS will honor these pets by providing the most care we can.

Animals sent to foster are evaluated by our foster coordinator, behavior coordinator, and/or vet staff prior to going in to foster care.

Time commitment and responsibilities

Commitment and responsibilities depend on the situation and animal. Animals going in to foster care have often been through an inordinate amount of stress. It is essential that foster parents understand that moving the animal from the shelter to the foster home is also very stressful and emotional. We have specific guidelines to help the animal decompress in your home.

These animals will depend on the foster parents for guidance through this adjustment period. Adjustment periods for pets can be anywhere from 3 days to 3 weeks. Don't give up on a foster companion animal! Read through this manual and call your foster coordinator for help. Foster parents must be willing to be patient and commit to these animals because our goal is to keep

them in a stable and consistent environment. The sooner the animals feel secure, the sooner they will be healthy, recovered, and adopted.

LMAS uses positive reinforcement and redirection to help animals in need. We have a full-time behavior coordinator that will help with basic obedience as well as unwanted quirks/behaviors. If you are in need of assistance with training or noticing behaviors that are unwanted, please reach out to Lawrence: Lawrence.Durgasingh@louisvilleky.gov Please be sure to CC Stephanie.jackson@louisvilleky.gov throughout communication.

You are not to use adverse training tools/methods such as (but not limited to): prong collars, shock collars, choke chains, spray bottles, physical or verbal punishment.

Type of animal & average weeks fostered & daily hours to commit

Weaned kittens: 2-6 weeks, 2-4 hours a day URI cats: 2-3 weeks, 2-4 hours a day Mom with kittens: 2-8 weeks, 2-4 hours a day Injured cats: 1 week -2 months up to 8 hours a day Bottle feed kittens/puppies- up to 6-8 weeks , round the clock care for the first 4-5 weeks Dogs with a cold: 1-3 weeks, 2-3 hours a day Weaned puppies: 2-6 weeks, 3-6 hours a day Injured dogs: 1 week- 2 months up to 8 hours a day Orphaned puppies: up to 8 weeks, up to 8 hours a day Behavior cases: 2-6 weeks, 2-4 hours a day Mom with puppies: 2-8 weeks, 2-4 hours a day If additional health problems develop, daily hour commitments may be extended. For example, foster parents may have to transport their foster animals to the shelter, to vet care, or administer extra medicine.

How do pets in foster care get adopted?

All foster parents are encouraged to promote the adoption of their foster pet to friends, family, and other potential adopters. Please feel free to utilize social media outlets to promote the adoption of your foster. When marketing the dog on social media, we ask you use the hashtag #fostermelouisville

For information on how to write a great dog bio check this link here:

<https://bestfriends.org/resources/pet-profiles-how-write-adoptable-animal-bios>

Here are LMAS expectations for a foster parent while a pet is in foster care and has a potential adopter:

- All potential adopters are to complete an adoption survey prior to meet and greets. We will reply to potential adopters via email and give them the online link to do so. Here is the link: <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/animal-services/pet-application>
- Reply to emails in a timely manner (48-72 hours)
- Encourage potential adopters to meet you at a public location of your choice that is a safe, calm, and controlled. Animal House is always an option for this specific instance. Please let us know before meeting at Animal House.

- Encourage conversation with potential adopters about their lifestyle and expectations of a dog they would like to adopt.
- Start conversations and correspondence with positivity and helpfulness. Highlight your foster pets wonderful qualities. Be kind. Be open minded.

When your foster is transferred to Animal House for on sight floor adoptions, we gladly welcome any information, written stories, pictures, etc. to accompany them. Any pictures provided will be posted on their kennel doors. *Foster pets returned with bios, pictures in homes, with kids, other animals, and fun facts are the first to get adopted!*

Can foster parents adopt their foster animal?

Yes! Foster parents are encouraged to network their foster pets prior to making this decision.

Are foster animals contagious? Will my personal pet's health be jeopardized?

It is always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals whether at the off-leash areas of a dog park, the vet waiting room, or other common animal areas. But if the foster parents' own animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young- and therefore immune systems are not [as] compromised, then the health risk is minimal. If you or someone you know are immune compromised, consult your doctor before fostering. If you or someone in your household is pregnant, talk to your doctor before fostering cats. Working or living with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called zoonosis. A zoonotic disease is defined as a disease transmitted from animals to humans and also from humans to animals. Proper hygiene, preventative measures, and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease.

Are foster pets ever euthanized?

We are an open intake shelter and animals whose behavior or medical conditions don't improve or may worsen are at risk of euthanasia based on a team of experienced supervisors' decision. We exhaust all options (foster, rescue) before deciding on this end of life decision. We will not adopt out any animal that is a danger to people and/or other animals.

Where will your foster pet stay while at your home?

Cats/kittens - Indoors only (do not let your foster cat/kitten outdoors). A large crate or separate room (bathroom, laundry room or large walk in closet) is best for kittens. A separate room for adult cats to acclimate and then transition to common area is best. Unweaned neonatal kittens are best kept in a smaller crate with a heating pad and away from other animals.

Dogs - Indoors only (supervise in a fenced in yard). Dogs shall be on a leash at all times when outdoors. Keep the foster dog on a leash in new fenced in areas for at least 3-5 days, as they can get spooked and attempt to escape. Please note that you shall not take a contagious dog to an off-leash area. Also, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of your foster dog: Do

not let your foster dog off leash or be kept unsupervised outside. Foster dogs shall not be taken to dog parks. Foster dogs shall not be introduced to other animals without consulting the foster coordinator first. After surgery, dogs shall be leash walked only for 7 days.

Puppies – Indoors - Rooms such as a kitchen (you may want baby gates), bathroom, or laundry room (puppies shall be around humans for socialization purposes and shall not be isolated. Puppies shall be kept in a crate appropriate for their size when unattended or sleeping. Outdoors - Only supervised in a fenced in area. Do not take puppies to highly trafficked dog areas such as dog parks or community spaces.

Providing Veterinary Care

Routine veterinary care is provided by our veterinarians at Louisville Metro Animal Services during normal scheduling hours. Drop in hours are Monday – Friday 12pm-3pm at 3516 Newburg Rd. Appointments can be made outside of this time frame based on veterinary staff's approval. Please speak to the foster coordinator before bringing in the foster pet outside of drop in hours. The foster coordinator will work directly with our vet staff to manage the health and well-being of each foster pet or litter. All foster pets will be receiving a vaccination series, deworming as appropriate, a microchip, and any medications as prescribed by our veterinary staff. After hours, the foster coordinator will take calls when emergencies arise. In the event of an emergency the foster coordinator will contact the veterinarian on-call as how to manage each case and, should after-hours treatment be needed, the foster coordinator will instruct the foster parent or family on the appropriate steps to take.

Louisville Metro Animal Services has a policy that we will not reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals when taken for veterinary care outside of our veterinary staff. Please note, we do allow foster parents to take the foster pet to their vet in special circumstances, but we do not reimburse for those visits. You must get permission from the foster coordinator, rescue supervisor, and/or vet supervisor.

General Guidelines for Seeking Veterinary Care

Cats or dog neonates to 9 weeks

- • Diarrhea that lasts for longer than 12 hours
- • Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 2 hours
- • Vomiting more than once in an hour
- • Not eating for more than 4-6 hours
- • Lethargy without fever for more than 6 hours
- • Lethargy with fever

Cats or Dogs 9 weeks to 9 months must see our vet for:

- • Diarrhea that lasts for more than a day (24 hours)
- • Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 6 hours
- • Vomiting more than once in an hour
- • Not eating for more than 12-24 hours
- • Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours
- • Lethargy with fever

Dogs older than 9 months must see our vet for:

- Diarrhea that lasts for more than 1-2 days
- Diarrhea and occasional vomiting for more than one day (24 hours)
- Vomiting more than 2-3 times in one hour
- Not eating for more than 24 hours
- Lethargy without fever for more than a day (24 hours)
- Lethargy with fever

Cats older than 9 months must see our vet for:

- Not drinking for more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea that lasts for more than 1-2 days
- Diarrhea and occasional vomiting for more than a day (24 hours)
- Vomiting more than 2-3 times in an hour
- Not eating for more than 2 days
- Lethargy without fever for more than 2 days
- Lethargy with fever

All issues must be communicated to the foster coordinator. Appropriate steps and measures will be taken to ensure the animal is given the best possible medical care & outcome possible.

Please note you must have transportation to and from our shelter location to see our vet staff. We have 24 hour vet care for emergencies. You must follow the guidelines provided. If you would like to take on the costs of taking the foster pet to your personal veterinarian, you must have approval from the foster coordinator before doing so.

Vaccination in Shelter Pets & Fosters

Vaccinations are one of the best tools in the prevention of disease in both humans and animals. The Association of Shelter Veterinarian Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters recommends shelter or foster pets vaccinated every 2 weeks until 4 months of age or at least twice 2-4 weeks apart for adults.

What is a vaccine? A vaccine is a suspension of attenuated (modified so as not to produce disease) or killed infective agents or of antigens (characteristic pieces) derived from these agents. This suspension is administered to an animal either by injection or placing drops of the suspension in nostrils. The ideal situation is that the animal's immune system responds in a complex way and to such an extent as to protect the animal next time it is exposed to that particular agent.

At Louisville Metro Animal Services, we vaccinate dogs and puppies with DA2PPV, Canine Influenza, Bordetella intranasal, and Rabies 1 year (3 months and older) vaccines. LMAS will provide monthly heartworm/flea/tick preventative for dogs that are heartworm negative. We vaccinate cats and kittens with FVRCP , and Rabies 1 year (3 months and older) vaccine. Both dogs and cats receive multiple rounds of dewormer (pyrantel is a general dewormer and may not cover all internal parasites. Tapeworms (seen as rice like in stool cannot be treated by pyrantel, please contact the foster coordinator for medication)

Emergency Care

Should an emergency arise, the foster parent will call the foster coordinator first. The foster coordinator will evaluate the situation and put forth emergency steps as they see fit.

For medical emergencies: the foster coordinator will contact the vet on-call & communicate the proper steps needed to assist. We do offer 24 hour vet care for **emergencies only**. Please be sure to follow our **General Guidelines for Seeking Veterinary Care**.

- Louisville Metro Animal Services must approve any and all treatment to foster pets. You will not give supplements or medication without approval from LMAS foster coordinator and/or LMAS vet staff.

If the foster parent takes a foster pet to any emergency facility other than advised by the foster coordinator, the foster parent will be responsible for **ALL costs**.

Legal Guardianship

All animals in foster care are the property of Louisville Metro Animal Services and are subject to all applicable Louisville Metro Animal Services policies, rules, and restrictions.

Questions? Please ask any questions prior to or during your foster experience by contacting our foster coordinator, Stephanie Jackson, at (502)574-6978 or emailing her at Stephanie.jackson@louisvilleky.gov
During times of Stephanie's absence, Shannon Riley will be your point of contact.
Shannon Riley (502) 297-1402 shannon.riley@louisvilleky.gov

Foster Care Requirements

1. Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals including giving proper food, access to water always, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate-controlled homes.
2. LMAS uses positive reinforcement and redirection to help animals in need. We have a full-time behavior coordinator that will help with basic obedience as well as unwanted quirks/behaviors.
3. You are not to use adverse training tools/methods such as (but not limited to): prong collars, shock collars, choke chains, spray bottles, physical or verbal punishment.
4. Puppies should never be left unsupervised outdoors. High traffic areas such as the park, animal stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc., should be avoided, as puppies are susceptible to deadly diseases that could be lurking there.
5. Dogs can go outside for supervised play/exercise. When outdoors, foster dogs must be kept on leash or in a securely fenced in yard. We recommend keeping the foster dog on leash for at least 3-5 days even in a secure yard to prevent any mishaps.
6. You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on a leash, under your control, at all times.
7. You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other dogs, except those in your home, without permission from the foster coordinator.
8. Kittens and cats in foster care should be kept indoors only. When being transported, cats and kittens must be kept in secured carriers.
9. If your foster pet gets loose, contact the foster coordinator immediately. Failure to do so can result in being removed from our foster program.
10. If injury or illness results from interaction between your animals and foster animals, Louisville Metro Animal Services 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 to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.

11. Louisville Metro Animal Services reserves the right to perform home checks and wellness checks without notice to ensure the animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.

12. If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal for any reason upon request by Louisville Metro Animal Services staff, or has improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and Louisville Metro Animal Services may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the animal.

12. Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by Louisville Metro Animal Service's veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.

13. Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator if a foster animal bites a person or animal regardless if the bite breaks skin.

14. Children under the age of 18 will not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.

15. Foster caregivers are required to fill out a profile to help place the foster pet.

16. Foster caregivers are required to touch base with the foster coordinator at least once a week regarding your fosters progress. Email is the best form of communication.

Supplies

LMAS appreciates any supplies foster parents can assist with providing. LMAS can provide the essential supplies needed such as: food, crate, milk replacer for neonatal kittens/puppies, brain enriching toys, leash/collar with foster tag (for dogs). *this is contingent on supplies available at time of request* LMAS will provide necessary medications or supplements that have been prescribed by our veterinary staff. Fosters are required to go through the foster coordinator or designee to request supplies via email Monday-Friday with proper notice of at least 24 hours in advance. All LMAS supplies must be returned once the foster pet is out of the foster home.

Health and Temperament

LMAS will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

Foster care providers are required to be as accurate as possible about their foster animal's health and behavior. This will assist the shelter in determining the proper medical, training and/or action plan for the animal.

Foster Program Policies and Procedures

Louisville Metro Animal Services Foster Policy & Procedures Agreement Numbered areas must be initialed before fostering with LMAS

I, _____, make the following statements and voluntarily enter into this Foster Care Agreement (hereinafter "Agreement") to provide temporary care as a foster caregiver for Louisville Metro Animal Services ((hereinafter "LMAS"))

1. _____ I have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment. I agree to notify LMAS if I am convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment in the future.
2. _____ I agree to comply with all federal, state, and local laws that pertain to companion animals and pet ownership in the jurisdiction where I reside.
3. _____ I understand that LMAS reserves the right to check on the welfare of my foster animal, which may include a visit to my home. I further understand that if LMAS finds a direct and immediate threat to my foster animal, LMAS may remove the animal from my care.
4. _____ I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the LMAS Foster Care Guide/Manual ("Manual"), and that I have read the Manual. I agree to full comply with policies, guidance, and requirements set forth in the Manual as applicable to my foster animal.
5. _____ I agree to not take my foster dog(s) or my foster cat(s) to dog parks, off-leash areas, daycare facilities, crowded public areas, or any similar locations, unless given prior approval by the LMAS Foster Coordinator. I understand that I will be solely responsible for any injury or damage caused by my foster animal if I do not comply with this provision.
6. _____ I understand that LMAS recommends that my foster animal(s) is to be kept separate from any other animals living in my home. I agree that if I choose to introduce my foster animal(s) to any other animal living in my home, I will be solely responsible for any illness or injury to other animals.
7. _____ I agree that the animal(s) that I foster will reside in my home, will be kept as household pets, and will not be used for breeding.
8. _____ I agree to notify the LMAS Foster Coordinator immediately by phone and in writing at (502) 528-0006 and MASfoster@louisvilleky.gov if my foster becomes lost or separated from me.
9. _____ I agree to notify the LMAS Foster Coordinator immediately by phone and in writing at (502) 528-0006 and MASfoster@louisvilleky.gov if my foster animal demonstrates any aggressive behavior, including, but not limited to, biting a person or another animal.
10. _____ I agree to seek immediate medical attention if I am bitten by my foster animal, or if I receive any other physical injury resulting from interaction from my foster animal. I further agree to seek immediate medical attention for any member of my household who is bitten or suffers any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal.
11. _____ I agree to return my foster animal(s) at any time upon the request of the LMAS Foster Coordinator or any other LMAS staff member.

12. _____ I agree to receive and respond to calls and emails concerning my foster animal(s), from LMAS shelter staff and vet staff.

13. _____ I agree to transport the animal to LMAS or an approved veterinary clinic to receive medical treatment as requested by the LMAS Foster Coordinator, LMAS vet staff, or LMAS supervisor or directors. If my foster animal experiences a medical emergency, I agree to follow the instructions outlined in the Foster Care Guide/Manual.

14. _____ I understand the LMAS will not reimburse me for any supplies or veterinary care.

15. _____ I agree to contact the LMAS Foster Coordinator (502) 528-0006 or MASfoster@louisvilleky.gov for any and all other emergency or non-emergency matters.

16. _____ I agree to assume the risks implicit in working with animals who may have been abandoned, neglected, mistreated, or who may suffer from an illness or disease. My participation with the LMAS Foster Program is entirely voluntary and without the promise or expectation of compensation. I have no known physical or mental condition that would impair my ability to participate in the LMAS Foster Program. I understand that while LMAS staff carefully monitors all animals, LMAS may have limited knowledge of their behavioral and medical backgrounds. Therefore, I understand that LMAS makes no warranties or representations regarding my foster animal's health, behavior, temperament, age, or breed. I further understand that environmental changes may affect and change the temperament of my foster animal(s).

17. _____ I understand and agree that the City of Louisville/Jefferson County, its members, officers, directors, agents, and elected officials have no liability or responsibility of any nature for injuries or damage to any person, animal, or property which may be caused by my foster animal(s) or my participation in the LMAS Foster Program. I, for myself and my heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, hereby release, indemnify and hold the City of Louisville/Jefferson County, its members, officers, directors, agents, and elected officials and their heirs, administrators, executors, successors, and representatives from all liability for and all risk of damage or bodily injury or death that may occur to me (including any injury based on negligence) now or hereafter in connection with my foster animal(s) and my participation in the LMAS Foster Program. I expressly agree that this release, waiver and indemnity is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the State of Kentucky and that if any portion is held invalid, the remainder shall continue in full force and effect.

By my signature below and, and by my initials beside each numbered item above, I affirm that all statements and stated agreements contained in this document are truthful, I affirm that I have read and understand this Agreement in its entirety, and I agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Printed Name: _____

This is provided as a copy for your records. You will receive this paperwork prior to fostering. LMAS will keep the signed, binding agreement.