



Foster Program FAQs

What kind of prior pet experience does a foster need?

Ideally, a foster will have had a dog or cat at some point in their life and are familiar with basic pet ownership expectations. We try to match an animal's needs to a foster's experience and comfort level. For example, if a foster has had a cat or dog for years and is very comfortable with having animals in their home, we can match them with an animal we pull from a shelter whose personality or unique needs haven't been determined yet. For someone who hasn't had a lot of experience with animals, we can pair a foster with cat or dog being surrendered by their owner, or one that's already been in a foster home, which means we're familiar with their temperament.

What do you look for in a foster?

We look for people who are passionate about helping animals and have a home environment conducive to fostering. Because volunteers sometimes adopt an animal they've fostered, the foster application is very similar to the adoption application. If there is current/prior pet history, applicants need to show that they've been responsible pet owners and have a consistent history of annual vet check-ups. We also require that all pets in an applicant's home have been spayed or neutered.

What is the process for becoming a foster?

Anyone interested in fostering an animal for Henrico Humane Society will need to complete a foster application, which asks for information on topics such as a person's home life and their prior pet experience. Applicants will be interviewed by an HHS volunteer who will explain more about the foster program, review information on their application, and ask a few additional questions. An in-person or virtual home visit may be requested. *

HHS screens applicants very carefully to ensure the home environment is appropriate for fostering, and that the applicant is prepared to accept the responsibility of caring for one of our animals. If approved, the volunteer will be provided with Foster Guidelines to review and acknowledge. After a brief orientation, volunteers will be ready to foster their first dog or cat!

**Henrico Humane Society does not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, age, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.*

What commitment is a foster expected to make?

Volunteers are asked to commit to fostering for a minimum of 3 months, or at least until their first foster has been adopted. We also have shorter-term options for anyone interested in caring for an animal for 1-2 weeks while the foster is on vacation, etc.

What does it cost to foster?

Fosters do not pay for any expenses! HHS provides the food, treats, toys, bedding, and other supplies needed to care for the dog or cat in a foster's home. While fosters may sometimes be asked to take an animal to the vet, all related expenses are charged directly to HHS.

How long does it take for a dog or cat to be adopted?

It typically takes 1 to 2 months for a dog to be adopted, and 2 to 4 weeks for a puppy. It usually takes 2-3 months for a cat or kitten to be adopted. Depending on the animal, it can take 6 months to a year to find the right home. Fosters are not required to commit to keeping an animal until it's adopted, no matter how long it takes. Ideally an animal stays in the same home until it's adopted, but if a volunteer is no longer able to foster a dog or cat, it will be placed in a different home.

How often should I bring my dog or cat to adoption stand?

Adoption stand is held at the Short Pump Petco from 11 am to 2 pm every Saturday. Fosters are expected to bring their animal to at least 2 adoption stands per month to increase their chances of finding a forever home. While fosters are not required to stay at stand after dropping off their animal, it's strongly recommended whenever possible. Hearing about a dog or cat's unique personality directly from their foster helps potential adopters decide if the animal would be a good fit for their home.

[Click here](#) to access the foster application. If you'd like more information about fostering before submitting an application, email foster@henricohumane.org.