

FOSTER ANIMAL ADOPTION FAQs

WHEN IS A FOSTER ANIMAL “CLEARED” FOR ADOPTION?

- **All MD SPCA pets must be medically and behaviorally cleared before being ready for adoption.**
 - To be “cleared” for adoption, an animal must be altered (spayed/neutered), up to date on vaccines/treatments, and approved by a veterinarian if the animal is a medical case or approved by behavior staff if the animal is a behavior case.
 - You can track your foster animal’s progress by looking at your Foster Sheet. This will usually give you a good estimate as to when your foster animal will be cleared for adoption.
 - If you are unsure whether your animal is behaviorally/medically “cleared” do not hesitate to email the Foster Team and ask!

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY FOSTER ANIMAL IS CLEARED FOR ADOPTION?

- When your foster animal is ready to be made available, we will ask you to submit their personality profile/adoption materials via our google forms. Foster animals cannot be made available until we have a personality profile from you, so be sure to complete them within 48 hours upon request. Foster Parents are also welcome to complete personality profiles prior to them being officially cleared, provided you have a good sense of your foster animal’s personality and needs.
- After submitting a personality profile, your foster animal will be listed for adoption on the Maryland SPCA’s website (<https://www.mdspca.org/humane-care/adopt/>).
- Foster animals that are available for adoption will either be scheduled to return to the shelter to be available or the Foster Parent may foster the pet through the adoption process. In some cases, foster animals are required to be fostered through adoption due to behavioral or medical reasons.
- Once listed on our website, our Adoption Counselors will screen and approve incoming applications on a first-come-first-serve basis and will conduct interviews with promising applicants. If the pet is still in foster care, an Adoption Counselor will reach out to you directly to schedule a virtual or in person meet and greet with the prospective adopter and a staff member.
- After the meet and greet, the applicant will finalize the adoption paperwork and payments, and the Adoption Counselor will schedule a time for the foster animal to be returned to the shelter for adoption pick up.
- Foster animal adoption drop offs are scheduled based upon the Foster Parent and adopter’s availability. You are more than welcome to stay for the adoption hand off – there’s nothing more rewarding than seeing your foster animal off to their forever home!

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SOMEONE I KNOW WANTS TO ADOPT MY FOSTER ANIMAL, WHAT DO I DO?

- Provided your foster animal is not yet available for adoption, and the interested party has already met the pet, **email foster@mdspca.org with the interested adopter's full name, email address, and phone number and specify the name of the pet they want to adopt.** This information is necessary to give to our Adoptions Team to place the pet "on-hold." Once a pet is placed "on-hold," they will not be made available to the public and will be reserved for the individual they are being held for.
 - For unaltered pets (primarily in the case of kittens and puppies), we need this information NO LATER than 48 hours prior to the day of spay/neuter surgery. We cannot guarantee kittens or puppies being held for anyone after the pet has had surgery.
- Once the pet is medically and behaviorally cleared and altered, an Adoption Counselor will email the interested adopter that has the pet 'on-hold' to begin the adoption process. Applications will be completed online, and interviews will be completed over the phone. Paperwork and payments will also be completed online.
- After the application, interview, paperwork, and payments are completed, the Adoptions Team will give the 'green light' for the adopter to pick the pet up from the Foster Parents' home. We only permit adopters to pick up directly from a Foster Parent's home when they are a friend/acquaintance of the Foster Parent. We do not approve of strangers picking up foster animals directly from a Foster Parent's home. In the case that the foster animal has returned to the shelter, the interested adopter that has the pet 'on-hold' will be scheduled to pick the pet up during adoption center hours.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **Once an animal is made available for adoption, we cannot guarantee that we can put them 'on-hold'.** Once pets are available for adoption, all adoptions are done on a first-come-first-serve basis. If your foster animal is already available for adoption, direct interested parties to our website to apply and email us immediately to check whether the animal can still be placed on hold for your friend.
- If you have an adopter for your foster animal, you do not need to submit a personality profile. **Please send the name and contact information to the Foster Team before the pet is made available.**
- An adoption counselor will contact the interested party directly once the pet is cleared to complete the adoption process. Once completed, an Adoption Counselor will let you know so you can plan for the adopter to pick up the pet. **Again, this is restricted to acquaintances of Foster Parents who have already met the pet.**

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I WANT TO ADOPT MY FOSTER ANIMAL, WHAT DO I DO?

- While our Foster Program does not do 'trial-runs' or 'foster-to-adopt', we do see Foster Parents fall in love with their foster animals. The Maryland SPCA does allow Foster Parents to adopt their foster animals; however, the Foster Team always asks Foster Parents to consider how adoption will affect their ability to foster in the future; we always hope to see you continue to grow as a Foster Parent and help us save more lives. If you are interested in adopting your foster animal, you need to inform the Foster Team as soon as possible.
 - If your foster animal is not yet cleared/available for adoption, we will complete 'hold paperwork' for you and your foster animal; this ensures that your foster animal is placed 'on-hold' for you.
 - Once the pet is cleared for adoption, the Foster Team will give the adoptions team your and your foster animal's information, and they will contact you directly to complete the adoption process.
 - Once the adoption is completed, the pet will be an official part of your family and will no longer fall under the care and custody of the Maryland SPCA.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Foster Parents only reserve the right to 'have first dibs' on adopting their foster animal if they inform the Foster Team PRIOR to the pet being made available for adoption to the public. Once a foster animal is made available for adoption and is listed on our website, we can no longer guarantee a Foster Parent's ability to adopt their foster animal, as adoptions are competed on a first-come-first-serve basis.
- If you wish to adopt your foster animal and they are already listed for adoption, please let the foster team know asap, we cannot guarantee anything but we will try our hardest. You can also fill out an application on the website.

WHY DO WE SEND AVAILABLE ANIMALS TO FOSTER RATHER THAN KEEPING THEM IN THE SHELTER?

- Fostering gives a chance at life to many animals who cannot live or thrive in shelter environments. There are many reasons a cat or dog may require a foster home. If a cat is very shy or skittish, they will do better in a home rather than a noisy shelter. If a dog came in as stray and we have no home history, weeks of foster-fact finding gives us the ability to make a better match based on the pet's needs.
- Additionally, some animals spend weeks in the shelter and get incredibly stressed; it's critical to provide animals breaks from the stress of shelter life to ensure they maintain a happy and healthy life.