

CLEVELAND APL CRISIS SAFETY NET FOSTER ORIENTATION

THE CLEVELAND APL IS AN INDEPENDENT NON-PROFIT HUMANE SOCIETY, SERVING THE ABANDONED, HOMELESS AND ABUSED ANIMALS OF CLEVELAND AND NORTHEAST OHIO. OUR MISSION IS TO FOSTER COMPASSION AND END ANIMAL SUFFERING.



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OUR MISSION

- **THE MISSION OF THE CRISIS SAFETY NET PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY SAFE HAVEN FOR PETS AND PET OWNERS IN NEED BY PROVIDING CRISIS PET FOSTER CARE AND BOARDING TO CUYAHOGA COUNTY RESIDENTS WHO ARE FACING TEMPORARY HARDSHIPS AND ARE UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR PETS. THIS SUPPORT WILL ALLOW PET OWNERS TO RETAIN THEIR PETS DURING HARDSHIPS.**

All pets entering the Cleveland APL's Crisis Safety Net program will be vaccinated, tested for transmittable illnesses, treated for fleas and dewormed. Spay/neuter is highly encouraged, so if the pet is not already fixed, this may be done at the APL's expense and the pet would recover in a loving foster home.



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FOSTERING CATS



- If you are fostering a cat, you will receive the following:
 - Cat carrier
 - Cat food and bowls
 - Litterbox, litter, and scooper
 - Toys, scratching options and enrichment items
- When first arriving at the foster home, it is important to ensure that the environment is quiet and calm (e.g. minimize barking from any resident dogs). Take the cat directly to the space you set up for them and let them come out of the carrier on their own, this may not happen immediately, and that's OK. Cats often can need time and space to feel safe and comfortable in a new setting. Feel free to spend the first 15-30 minutes of the cat being in the room observing their behavior to determine how to best meet their needs.



A LITTLE MORE ABOUT CATS

- If you have any valuables or furniture that you don't want to risk getting damaged, remove those from the space before the foster cat arrives. Also, make sure to take down any objects that can be knocked over by the cat (as they are notorious for doing).
- Since cats like having vertical spaces and often feel safer in higher spaces, you can clear off dressers or other pieces of furniture for them to use. If you have cat trees, you can place those in the room as well.
- Cats generally love watching the outdoors, so if you have a window in the room, place a perch near it. If you have a TV in the room, you can also play "Cat TV" (look it up on YouTube) to keep your foster cat entertained.
- If the cat seems to want to jump over the gate, consider closing the door to the room the foster cat is in. Plan to take turns spending time with the foster and the other pets, especially if the foster needs a lot of human attention.



FOSTERING DOGS

- If you are fostering a dog, you will receive the following:
 - Crate
 - Dog food and bowls
 - Leash, harness and martingale collar (please do not remove the dog's collar)
 - Toys and enrichment items
 - Blankets/bed
 - Baby gates (ask for if needed)
 - Poop bags
- If you have a fenced in yard, please check it very carefully for any areas that may allow a dog to escape. They can generally fit through any holes the size of their head. Please get down at a dog's height when you do this inspection.
- To keep the pets separate, you can set up the foster pet's space in a spare room and block off the entrance with a baby gate. Placing a second gate down the hallway outside of the room will help prevent animals from having nose to nose contact. Plan to take turns spending time with the foster and the other pets, especially if the foster needs a lot of human attention.

HELPING YOUR FOSTER DOG GET COMFORTABLE

- It is important for the pet to have a designated quiet space (that is still close to you) where they feel comfortable and safe. You should place the dog's crate, food and water bowls and toys so they are easily accessible to the pet.
- Using baby gates/crate is highly recommended, as this gives the dog a den-like space to decompress and feel safe, and keeps the dog safe while you are away.
- Playing calming music can also help the dog relax, so you could set up a TV or speaker to use while you have the foster.
- It is important to remember when bringing a new dog into your home, they are strangers in your home, so they do not know the rules or the routine. Anything that you don't want ruined or chewed on should be put away.
- If the dog has an accident, don't react. Take them out more often and praise them a lot when they do go outside.



MORE ON DOG INTRODUCTIONS TO THE HOME

- The risk of a dog running away is high in the first 72 hours of their stay with you.
 - It is highly encouraged to have dogs doubled leashed (have two leashes, 1 attached to the collar and 1 to the harness) whenever they are out for a walk.
 - No retractable leashes are permitted.
 - Foster dogs are not permitted to visit dog parks.
- Foster Dogs should not be introduced to your resident pets. The Cleveland APL is not responsible for potential injury or illness to your pets while you are fostering. Use techniques like crate and rotate, keeping the dogs on different levels of the house or in different rooms while fostering.
- Tandem (side by side) walks with your resident dog are allowed on a case-by-case basis- please discuss this further with the Crisis Safety Net team.
- You will be provided with an emergency contact that you can call for afterhours emergencies.
- If you are having any behavior or training issues, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Safety Net team so we can help you with helpful positive reinforcement techniques.





INTRODUCTIONS TO CHILDREN:

- If you have children, they should be instructed to respect the dog's space and crate, use gentle touches, never put their face in the dog's face and never to sit or climb on the dog.
- Teach your child that petting an animal is a privilege, not a right, and that contact should be gentle, kind, and only when the animal is wanting to be petted. Teach your child how to greet an animal safely. This can be done by standing sideways and crouching down inviting the animal to come to them and sniff. If an animal chooses not to interact, tell the child it is not personal, the animal is still adjusting to a new situation. Have the child pet them for a count of 5, then stop and take a few steps back and see if the animal seeks to be petted again.
- It is important that children learn to respect the wishes of the animal. When approached by the new animal, teach your child to stand still and not be overly excited with their first interactions. Be ready to intervene if you feel the situation is even remotely uncomfortable. Spray bottles should not be used.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC PLACES

- Please do not post any pictures of your fosters on social media or take them to public places as they may be coming from domestic violence situations, and their location cannot be disclosed.
- We will ask for pictures and updates for the owner while you are fostering so, please take lots of photos.

FOSTERING IS TEMPORARY- YOUR LOVE AND CARE MAKE AN EVERLASTING DIFFERENCE.

