



HUMANE SOCIETY
of Weld County

Foster Handbook

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE HSWC FOSTER PROGRAM	2
A. What is a Foster Home?	2
B. Why Foster?	2
C. What Are the Benefits of Fostering?	2
D. What are the Responsibilities of an HSWC Foster?	3
E. How Does HSWC Support its Fosters?	3
F. What Types of Animals Need a Foster Home?	3
II. CONTACTS, COMMUNICATIONS, & EMERGENCIES	3
A. Contacts	3
B. Communications	4
C. Emergencies	4
III. ONBOARDING	5
A. Application Process	5
B. Qualifications For Being a Foster Parent	5
C. Conduct Expectations for HSWC Fosters	6
D. Foster Termination	7
IV. PLACEMENT	7
A. Getting Matched With a New Foster	7
B. Placement Restrictions	7
C. Additional Placement Requirements	8
D. Picking Up Your New Foster	8
V. CARING FOR YOUR FOSTER ANIMAL	9
A. Bringing Home a New Foster	9
Required Separation Period for Adult Animals	9
B. Care Responsibilities as a Foster	9
C. Medical Care for Animals in Foster	9
Shelter Medicine Approach	10
Supportive Care	10
D. Medical Concerns and Symptoms	11
E. Reporting Medical Concerns	11
Reporting Non-Urgent Medical Concerns	11
Reporting Urgent Medical Concerns	12
F. Vet Appointments	13
G. Medications and Preventatives	13
H. Spay and Neuter Surgeries	13
I. Fostering Kittens and Puppies	14
Kitten and Puppy Foster Agreements	15
Required Separation from Resident Pets	15
Vaccines and Boosters	15

Failure to Thrive	16
Fading Kitten/Puppy Syndrome and Protocol	17
J. Marketing You Foster	17
Other Ways to Market Your Foster	17
Marketing Guidelines as a Foster Parent	17
VI. ADOPTION	18
A. HSWC Adoptions	18
B. Adoption Process	18
C. Adoption Denials	19
D. Adopting Your Foster	19
E. Foster to Adopt	19
Foster to Adopt Process	20
VII. AFTER ADOPTION	20
A. So What Now?	21

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE HSWC FOSTER PROGRAM

A. What is a Foster Home?

A foster home is a temporary home in which a member of the public acts as an extension of the shelter by housing and caring for an animal in need. This extension and partnership with the public aids in lifesaving efforts by opening up kennel space at our facility that can be used to help other homeless animals within our community.

B. Why Foster?

Fostering saves lives! HSWC is the only animal shelter in Weld County and we take in all animals found as strays and animals being surrendered by members of the public. We have limited space at our facility, and for every animal sent to foster, a kennel space and other lifesaving resources are made available to more animals in need.

C. What Are the Benefits of Fostering?

Being a foster has rewards beyond saving a life.

- Experience an animal companion without a lifetime commitment.
- Provide your resident pet with socialization and a great temporary companion.
- Learn more about caring for animals that may have different needs and become a more experienced pet owner.
- Above all, you get the joy of knowing that you have changed the life of an animal in need!

D. What are the Responsibilities of an HSWC Foster?

Beyond providing plenty of love, foster homes are generally responsible for:

- Providing a safe, clean, and caring environment
- Providing access to shelter, food, water, companionship, and toys/enrichment
- Providing exercise and socialization, as appropriate
- Monitoring any medical and/or behavioral issues and working with our medical and/or behavior teams, as needed, to provide the best care possible for the animal
- Transporting their foster dog to and from HSWC for medical appointments, intros, behavior/training sessions, etc.
- Actively marketing their foster animal for adoption
- Screening and meeting with potential adopters; being responsive and courteous towards potential adopters, and following our adoption protocols)

E. How Does HSWC Support its Fosters?

We provide fosters with:

- All supplies needed to care for their foster animal. This includes collars, leashes, crates, food, and all needed medical treatments, preventatives, and medication.
- Assistance with caring for your foster, including medical and behavior support
- [Foster Resources Webpage](#) that includes various resources and information about the HSWC Foster Program
- Assistance with marketing your foster animal and corresponding with potential adopters
- Educational resources and opportunities
- Provide community support for fosters through the [Humane Society of Weld County Volunteers/Fosters Facebook Group](#)

F. What Types of Animals Need a Foster Home?

The Foster Program at HSWC focuses on placing high-priority animals into foster homes. High-priority animals include puppies and kittens that are too young for adoption, animals that are receiving medical treatment or recovering from an illness or injury, animals that require additional behavioral support or modification, and animals that are deteriorating in shelter due to stress. You can see all animals currently being plead for foster on the [Humane Society of Weld County Trello Board](#).

II. CONTACTS, COMMUNICATIONS, & EMERGENCIES

A. Contacts

Audrey McFadden

Foster and Transfer Coordinator

foster@weldcountyhumane.org

970.506.9550 ext. 29

Hours: Sunday- Thursday 9:00am- 6:00pm

Humane Society of Weld County

1620 42nd Street

Evans, CO 80620

970.506.9550

Monday- Friday

Stray/reclaim services: 12pm - 6pm

Visitations/adoptions: 1pm - 5pm

Saturday- Sunday

Stray/reclaim services: 11am - 5pm

Visitations/adoptions: 1pm - 4pm

Emergency Number:

970.703.6327

B. Communications

The most efficient way to get in contact with the Foster Coordinator and foster team is by emailing the foster@weldcountyhumane.org address. The HSWC Foster Program is growing, and emailing allows us to communicate more effectively and keep records of correspondence with our fosters!

- Because emailing is the primary form of communication for the HSWC Foster Program, please be aware that missed calls and voicemails will typically require a longer response time.

All emails sent to foster@weldcountyhumane.org will be responded to within 72 hours on the days the FTC is working.

- If you have not received a response within 72 hours Sunday- Thursday, please follow up.
- This address is monitored on Fridays and Saturdays for emergencies and all other correspondence will be responded to during FTC working hours.

Please understand this is a high-volume account and that all emails are responded to according to the level of urgency. Every email will get a response, but there may be other urgent situations that need to be resolved first! We appreciate and thank all of our fosters in advance for their understanding and patience.

C. Emergencies

The number for emergencies is **(970.703.6327)**. This line should be called at any time for emergency situations. (Please see [Reporting Urgent Medical Concerns](#) under section V.) **Please always leave a voicemail if your call is not answered and follow up with a text and email describing the situation. Please include your name, the name of the animal you are fostering, and a detailed description.** Someone will be in touch as soon as possible, but it is important that you call, text, and email if your call is not answered initially!

What is an emergency? Below are some (but not all) situations that can be classified as an emergency-

- Lost animal
- Animal bite that broke skin
- Bleeding profusely
- Seriously injured
- Having trouble breathing
- Unresponsive
- Ingested foreign/dangerous item
- Unable to stand or walk
- Disoriented/drunken walking

Depending on the situation, you may be asked to take your foster animal to PETS Emergency Hospital. You will be given explicit instructions to go to PETS if that is deemed necessary by the HSWC staff member responding.

- **DO NOT** take your foster animal to PETS without being instructed to by an HSWC staff member.

PETS EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

3629 23RD AVE
Evans, CO 80620
970.230.7572

III. ONBOARDING

A. Application Process

If you are reading this, chances are that you are already an approved foster parent! But if not, the following steps will need to be completed in order for you to become an approved foster:

- Complete the [Humane Society of Weld County Foster Application](#)
- Complete and Virtual Home Inspection conducted by an HSWC representative

Once your application has been reviewed, a member of the HSWC Foster Team will reach out to schedule a virtual home inspection that will be completed via Zoom. This inspection is required by the state to ensure that we are sending our animals into safe and healthy foster homes! The Zoom call will only last about 10 minutes and is a quick walk through of your home.

Once your application has been approved and you have completed a virtual home inspection, you will receive a welcome email with important instructions for your foster experience! In that email, you will receive a link to the [HSWC Foster Program Agreement](#). All fosters will be required to review, initial, and sign this form prior to taking home a new foster animal.

B. Qualifications For Being a Foster Parent

Requirements for being a foster parent:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be approved to have a foster pet where you are living

- Live within 40 miles of the HSWC facility
- Pass a home inspection performed by an HSWC representative
- All resident animals must be up to date on all vaccines (including bordetella for dogs) and spayed/neutered
- Have access to reliable transportation to bring your foster to HSWC shelter as needed
- All residents in the home must agree to fostering
- Provide a safe and caring environment for your foster animal

Reasons that a foster application may be denied:

- Resident animals are not fully vaccinated or spayed/neutered
- The usage of advanced training techniques or tools that do not align with HSWC Behavior Modification philosophy
- Resident animals are kept outside permanently or consistently for long periods of time
- History of abuse of any kind
- Foster's home does not pass the home inspection and necessary modifications cannot be made
- Does not meet all foster requirements listed above

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of reasons that a foster application may be denied. An HSWC representative may deny an application for other justifiable reasons. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the HSWC Foster Team.

C. Conduct Expectations for HSWC Fosters

Every individual associated with HSWC (including staff, fosters, and volunteers) are united in the shared goal of ending pet homelessness and suffering within Weld County and beyond. As members of this HSWC community, there are certain conduct expectations that fosters are required to recognize and uphold.

- Fosters are expected to align their personal reasons for fostering with the mission of HSWC and follow all rules, protocols, and decisions made by HSWC.
- Fosters are expected to treat other fosters, volunteers, and staff members with kindness and respect.
 - Any implications that other members of the HSWC community are not concerned about the care, safety, or well being of our animals will not be tolerated and will result in immediate termination from the HSWC Foster Program.
- Any questions, concerns, criticism, or comments must be communicated respectfully and through appropriate channels.

Failure to uphold these expectations and any rude and/or inappropriate behavior may result in immediate termination from the HSWC Foster Program at the discretion of the Foster and Transfer Coordinator or other HSWC Management.

D. Foster Termination

Active fosters may have their foster status with HSWC terminated if deemed appropriate and/or necessary by the FTC or other HSWC Management. Below are examples of why a foster may have their status terminated-

- Repeated rule violations
- Failing to uphold conduct expectations
- Serious injury to a foster animal due to neglect or failure to abide by rules and protocols
- The death of a foster animal caused by neglect or failure to abide by rules and protocols
- Justifiable belief that foster animals are or will be at risk of injury or illness in the foster's home

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of reasons for an active foster's HSWC foster status to be terminated. Termination from the foster program is at the discretion of and decided by the FTC and other HSWC staff.

IV. PLACEMENT

A. Getting Matched With a New Foster

Email foster@weldcountyhumane.org

- From here, FTC or another HSWC staff member will recommend potential foster candidates based on your home set up

Looking at the [Humane Society of Weld County Trello Board](#)

- This board includes all animals that are currently being plead for foster. Each animal will have a brief description and labels indicating specific qualities or placement restrictions.
- If you see an animal you are interested in on the Trello Board, email foster@weldcountyhumane.org for next steps.

Respond to an email plea

- Email pleas are regularly sent to the foster base including animals that are high priority to be placed into foster homes. Respond to the email plea if you are interested in fostering any of the animals listed on the plea.

B. Placement Restrictions

Foster parents will be matched with foster animals that are appropriate for their lifestyle and home set up. Not all foster animals are going to be appropriate matches for all fosters. The FTC or another HSWC staff member will let you know if your home is a good match for a particular animal and give you alternative recommendations if needed. We want all foster matches to be successful and consider many different variables when recommending potential fosters. Some of those considerations include but are not limited to :

- How many adults live in the home?
- Are there any children in the home? If so, what ages?
- What type of home do you live in? (house, apartment, duplex, etc)

- Are there any breed restrictions?
- Are there any resident animals? If so, are they social with other animals?
- How often do you have visitors over?
- Are there already foster animals in the home?

C. Additional Placement Requirements

Additional requirements may be needed prior to taking home a specific foster animal.

- We may require that all residents meet the animal prior to taking them to foster
- A dog-dog intro may be required between the foster's resident dog and the potential foster dog
- The behavior team may require one or more training sessions to happen prior to taking home a foster
- The foster may be required to come in for a consult on medical care and treatment for a specific animal if needed

D. Picking Up Your New Foster

You and the FTC will schedule a time for you to come pick up your new foster animal. At the time of pick up, the following steps may take place prior to handing off the foster animal:

- If you are a first time foster, you will need to review, initial, and sign the [HSWC Foster Agreement](#) and [HSWC Volunteer Release Form](#). You will be sent with copies of both documents after signing
- You will be provided with any supplies needed for the care of your foster animal
 - This includes dry food and wet food if needed, litter, litter boxes, enrichment, etc.
- You will receive a print out of your foster animals records that will include your foster's basic info (Specied, age, breed, DOB, etc) and medical records.
 - The medical records will include all past medical treatment, vaccines, and boosters and will also provide the date that any future vaccines, boosters, or medical appointments are scheduled for.
- You will be sent a text message to your phone with a link to sign the foster contract for your specific foster(s).
- You may be sent with documents or resources regarding your foster animals specific medical or behavioral needs (if applicable).
- You will be given any medication that your foster animal is currently taking along with a Medical Sheet used to track when each dosage is administered.

After everything above has been completed, you will be given your new foster animal!

This is also a great time to ask any questions that you may have about taking home a new foster animal or what to expect once you get them home! We know that the first few days after bringing home a new foster are challenging, so we want to help you feel confident about caring for your new foster! You can also join the [Humane Society of Weld County Volunteers/Fosters Facebook Group](#) to get advice and support from your fellow HSWC Fosters!

V. CARING FOR YOUR FOSTER ANIMAL

A. Bringing Home a New Foster

The first 3-5 days after bringing home a new foster are almost always the most challenging for everyone involved. Transitioning from a shelter environment into a home can be a confusing and stressful time for your new foster animal. To help make this transition as easy as possible, please review the following documents and utilize the techniques and resources detailed.

- [Bringing Home a New Foster Cat](#)
- [Bringing Home a New Foster Dog](#)

We know that it is exciting to bring home a new foster animal, but keep in mind that this is not the time to introduce your foster to any and all new experiences. Your top priority during this adjustment period is to help your foster animal feel comfortable in their new environment. Too many new experiences may be overwhelming and provoke a negative response from your foster. There will be plenty of time for fun adventures later on!

Required Separation Period for Adult Animals

Adult foster animals (6 months and older) will need to be kept separate from all resident animals for a minimum of 1 week. This is to help prevent any exposure to potential contagious illnesses and to give your foster animal the opportunity to decompress and adjust to their new foster home without the additional stress of getting to know the resident pets!

- This is different from the required separation period for kittens and puppies (see [Fostering Kittens and Puppies](#) under section V.)

B. Care Responsibilities as a Foster

Fostering an animal combines all of the benefits of having a pet without making a lifetime commitment. Although fosters are not responsible for an animal's long term care the way that adopters are, foster parents are responsible for the safety and well being of their current foster animal while they are in their care.

- See [Foster Program Agreement](#) for comprehensive list of responsibilities

C. Medical Care for Animals in Foster

Depending on the animal you are fostering, you may be required to bring your foster to one or more appointments at the shelter for vaccinations, health checks, medical needs, etc. Fosters will be provided all known medical information about their animal at the time of placement; however, there is the possibility of an illness or injury arising after being placed into foster care. To help ensure the wellbeing of animals in foster, foster parents are required to communicate all new signs and symptoms of injury to the FTC so that appropriate next steps can be taken. HSWC provides all medical care for animals in foster care including vet checks, preventatives and medications, vaccinations and boosters, and any other necessary medical treatments or procedures.

Shelter Medicine Approach

While caring for an animal in foster, you may notice that the medical decisions made and treatments prescribed are different from what you have experienced while taking your pet to the vet. This is due to the different ways in which medical care is addressed in shelter medicine vs a veterinary private practice. In shelter medicine, those providing the medical care for the animals must evaluate the necessary medical needs of each individual animal while also considering the care of hundreds of other animals. There are limited resources available that must be deliberately allocated to ensure that all animals in custody are receiving necessary and lifesaving care. In private practice, a vet is usually considering the health of an owned animal and treatment plans are discussed and decided upon with that pet's owner.

- Read [Humane Society of Weld County Medical Care- Shelter Medicine](#) for more information on how HSWC makes medical decisions using a shelter medicine approach

We want to make every effort to ensure the safety of the animals in the foster program and that is best accomplished when foster parents play an active role in their foster animal's medical care. This can be done by tracking vaccinations, preventatives, medications, and any other special care needs. When you are placed with a new foster animal, you will be given a copy of their medical records which will include the due dates for their next round of vaccines/boosters and any upcoming medical appointments.

- It is a huge help to us when foster parents help us keep track of these things and are proactive about scheduling appointments!
- To schedule an appointment or check the vaccination status of the animal in your care, please email foster@weldcountyhumane.org.

Supportive Care

Supportive care can mean different things in different situations, but generally it is care that can more easily be provided in the foster home than in a shelter environment. Fosters are able to closely monitor their foster animal and provide more personalized comfort and care for them. These factors are very important when providing medical care to an animal and helping them recover and we are not able to provide these things to the same extent here in the shelter.

It is very rare that any medical treatment will immediately resolve whatever symptoms that an animal is experiencing and supportive care is needed to help an animal recover while their treatment takes effect. Supportive care is also needed in certain situations and circumstances in which we are restricted in the medical care that we can provide. This often includes very young animals and animals with chronic illnesses or symptoms. In these situations, the animal in foster will largely require supportive care from their foster parent.

Supportive care can include (but is not limited to):

- Closely monitoring your foster animal and reporting any symptoms
- Ensuring that your foster is meeting all nutritional requirements and has easy access to clean water
- Keeping your foster's face clear of any discharge
- Giving "steam baths" to congested animals

- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting your foster's living space
- Making sure that your foster is kept warm and comfortable
- Providing a calm and relaxing environment

Most importantly, supportive care is also showing your foster animal love and affection when they aren't feeling well. Your foster animal will know that they have someone who cares about them and is helping them feel better! This kind of support can only be provided by someone who has a special connection with them and can play an important role in helping your foster recover.

D. Medical Concerns and Symptoms

Any new or worsening medical concern or symptoms needs to be reported to the FTC as soon as possible. The sooner we figure out what is going on, the sooner we can start helping your foster feel better! Below are examples of non-urgent and urgent medical concerns. Please see the section below for instructions on how to report non-urgent and urgent medical concerns and symptoms.

Some examples of non-urgent medical concerns include (but is not limited to) the list below-

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Inappetence
- Colored eye or nose discharge
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Watery eyes
- Skin irritation/excessive itching
- Lethargy

Some examples of urgent medical concerns and symptoms include (but is not limited to)-

- Severe injury
- Unable to stand or walk
- Excessive bleeding
- Seizure
- Unresponsive
- Ingestion of foreign/dangerous items
- Difficulty breathing

E. Reporting Medical Concerns

Reporting Non-Urgent Medical Concerns

Non-urgent medical concerns (see examples in previous section) need to be reported to the FTC as soon as possible via email to foster@weldcountyhumane.org. When reporting a medical concern, please be as detailed as possible and include the following information-

- When did you first notice the symptom you are reporting/how long has it been happening?
- Are they vomiting or having any diarrhea?

- Are they eating and drinking normally?
- Are they having any issues urinating or defecating?
- Have you noticed any changes in their energy level?

There are several illnesses that are more commonly found in animals coming from a shelter environment and in animals with unknown histories (do not know if they lived inside, if they regularly received vaccines, were frequently around other animals, etc). Several of these illnesses can present with different combinations of symptoms, so please report any and all symptoms that are present.

The FTC or other HSWC staff member will respond to your email with instructions on what needs to happen next or may ask for additional information and/or photos. We know that caring for an animal that isn't feeling great is never fun and we want to help them recover just as quickly as you do! We treat hundreds of sick animals in the foster program and you will be given appropriate instructions for what needs to be done next depending on the situation!

Reporting Urgent Medical Concerns

Fosters need to call the emergency line to report all urgent medical concerns and emergencies. The foster emergency number is **(970)703-6327**. If your call is not answered, leave a voicemail including your name, the name of your foster, and the reason for calling. After leaving a voicemail, fosters then need to send a text and email to foster@weldcountyhumane.org with the same information.

- Please call this number during emergency situations- **do not only text**.

An HSWC staff member will answer your call, gather information about the situation, and provide instructions on what needs to be done next. The care needed and instructions provided is determined by the situation. This can range from continuing to monitor and provide [supportive care](#) until the following morning or taking your foster animals to PETS Emergency Hospital.

We understand that these situations can be scary, but sometimes the best thing you can do is stay in your home with your foster and monitor them until we are able to bring them in for an appointment with our vet. This may not feel like you are doing enough but know that if these are the instructions you are given, it is the best thing for your foster animal at that moment. If necessary, you will be instructed to take your foster to an emergency vet. Fosters should **only** take their foster animal to PETS if explicitly instructed to do so by an HSWC staff member.

- **Reimbursements will not be given to any foster parent that takes their foster to an emergency vet without approval from HSWC staff.**
- **Fosters cannot authorize any third-party medical treatment for their foster animal without HSWC staff approval.**

HSWC staff will notify PETS of any foster emergencies. Foster parents will only need to drop off their foster animal and do not need to wait for them to be released. PETS will communicate with HSWC staff directly regarding the animals current condition and any medical care needed.

We ask that fosters please respect these levels of communication when reporting medical concerns!

F. Vet Appointments

All vet appointments are scheduled **Monday- Friday between 3:00-5:00pm** (excluding emergencies). If your foster animal requires an appointment, a day and time will be confirmed with you. If needed, we can arrange for your foster animal to be dropped off and then picked up after their appointment. Prior to your appointment, please monitor your animal so that we can get the most up to date and accurate information possible at the time of their appointment.

- Fosters without confirmed appointments will **not** be able to be seen by our vet! Please contact the FTC regarding any medical concerns prior to coming to the shelter.

G. Medications and Preventatives

It is extremely important that your foster animal receives all prescribed medications and preventatives. If your foster animal is prescribed medication, you will be sent with the medication itself and a Medication Chart that is used to track each dose that is administered to your foster animal. (It is crucial that this be filled out and returned to HSWC once completed!)

You will be provided information about each medication that is prescribed to your foster animal. This information will include the reason for being prescribed, the dosage amount, frequency that it needs to be administered, and how long the prescription will last.

- Your Medication Chart may indicate a recheck once the prescription has been completed. If this is the case, please reach out to foster@weldcountyhumane.org to schedule a recheck appointment!
- If your foster animal receives regular medication that is repeated, please reach out to foster@weldcountyhumane.org to request a refill **before** the current prescription runs out.

Dogs 6 weeks and older will be prescribed a monthly flea and heartworm preventative. If you are fostering a dog that is prescribed monthly preventatives, please keep track of when their next dose is due. No appointment is needed and foster parents can stop by the shelter at any time during open hours to pick up preventatives. Once you have administered the preventatives, please email foster@weldcountyhumane.org so that we can update our records.

H. Spay and Neuter Surgeries

All animals are required to be spayed or neutered prior to becoming available for adoption. Puppies and kittens are eligible for surgery once they are 2 months old and weigh at least 2lbs (given that there are no other medical concerns).

Spay and neuter surgeries for animals in foster are scheduled every Thursday.

Depending on the time of year and the population of animals currently in foster, we may not be able to schedule surgery for your foster as soon as they become eligible, but we will try to get them booked as soon as possible! A member of the HSWC foster team will notify you when your foster animal is scheduled for their spay/neuter surgery and confirm drop-off and pick-up times. Please know that we

cannot do surgery on animals that are currently exhibiting any signs or symptoms of illness including (but not limited to) eye or nose discharge, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, or extreme lethargy.

To prepare for your foster's spay/neuter surgery, feed them a regular dinner the evening before their scheduled surgery but please no food after midnight or Thursday morning. Surgeries are done at our onsite clinic and drop-offs are typically scheduled the morning of surgery between 7:00- 8:30am. You will be given a specific time frame for dropping off your foster animal prior to the day they are scheduled to come in.

Pick-ups for animals returning to foster are from 3:30-5:00pm in the afternoon. Dogs and puppies will be sent with a pain medication that they will need to take for a couple of days after their surgery. Cats and kittens are given a long lasting pain medication at the time of surgery and will not need any additional medicine after returning to foster. Please see the [Post-Surgery Care Instructions](#) document for additional details about caring for your foster animal after their surgery.

A member of the HSWC Foster Team will reach out the day after your foster's surgery to make sure that there are no concerns or possible complications. If there are no concerns that need to be addressed, your foster animal will be made available for adoption and their online profile will be posted on the website for potential adopters to see.

If your foster animal already has an interested adopter or if you are planning on adopting your foster animal, adoption paperwork must still be completed after your foster has had their surgery. **We cannot process adoptions before a spay/neuter surgery has been done and adoptions will not be processed the same day as the scheduled surgery!** This is so that our clinic can resolve any complications that arise immediately after surgery before releasing any animal in foster from HSWC custody.

- Please communicate with the interested adopter when your foster animal has been made available for adoption and instruct them to come to the shelter to complete the adoption paperwork during our open adoption hours.
 - Open adoption hours are Monday- Friday 1:00- 5:00pm and Saturday- Sunday 1:00- 4:00pm. Potential adopters need to come in to complete the paperwork as soon as possible once your foster has been made available.
 - Adopter must have met your foster animal in person prior to completing the adoption paperwork.
- Once the paperwork has been completed, you can arrange a handoff directly with the adopters.
 - Please verify the adoption and ask to see the completed paperwork before handing off your foster animal!

I. Fostering Kittens and Puppies

Kittens and puppies sure are cute! Because they are young and undervaccinated we have to take some extra precautions in order to help keep them safe and healthy! We appreciate foster parents helping keep these babies safe by making necessary accommodations and following all instructions regarding their care.

Kitten and Puppy Foster Agreements

Fostering kittens and puppies can be an incredibly rewarding and fun experience. But the truth is that puppies and kittens are also a more vulnerable population of animals that require additional care to keep them healthy, safe, and happy. Because of this we do ask that fosters take their responsibilities as a puppy/kitten foster seriously and understand what is expected when fostering a kitten or puppy. Below are specific foster agreements that detail the commitments and requirements for fostering a kitten or puppy.

- [Kitten Foster Agreement](#)
- [Puppy Foster Agreement](#)

Required Separation from Resident Pets

- Puppies and kittens must be housed in a safe and enclosed area in the foster’s home such as a bathroom or spare bedroom. This space should be thoroughly inspected to ensure that there is no way that there is no way from them to escape!
- Puppies and kittens in foster must be kept completely isolated from resident pets until they are 8 weeks old.
- Puppies and kittens over 8 weeks can have short supervised interactions with resident animals after an initial 2 week quarantine period.

Vaccines and Boosters

Animals under 20 weeks (approx 5 months) old are considered to be undervaccinated and will require vaccines and booster appointments every 2 weeks starting when they are 2 weeks old until they are fully vaccinated.

Kittens	2 Wks.	4 Wks.	6 Wks.	8 Wks.	10 Wks.	12 Wks.	14 Wks.	16 Wks.	18 Wks.	20 Wks.
Pyrantel (Dewormer)	X	X	X	X	X	X				
FVRCP		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rabies						X				
Eligible for Spay/Neuter				X						

Puppies	2 Wks.	4 Wks.	6 Wks.	8 Wks.	10 Wks.	12 Wks.	14 Wks.	16 Wks.	18 Wks.	20 Wks.	7 Months
Pyrantel (Dewormer)	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Bordetella		X	X								
DAPP		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Flea Preventative				X		X		X		X	
HW Preventative				X		X		X		X	
Rabies						X					
HW Test											X

Foster parents caring for kittens and puppies are expected to keep track of their foster pet’s vaccination schedule and work with the HSWC Foster Team to make sure that all medical care appointments are being scheduled prior to their due date.

- If fostering a puppy or a kitten, please use the below documents to track your foster’s vaccine and booster schedule.
 - [Puppy Standard Medical Care Schedule](#)
 - [Kitten Standard Medical Care Schedule](#)

To help streamline the process for scheduling vaccination and booster appointments, the Foster Guide Volunteer Team will reach out to foster parents with upcoming due dates and send a link to the [Calendly Foster Vaccination Appointment](#) scheduling page. Fosters can then use the calendar to schedule an appointment here at the shelter.

- This tool allows fosters to schedule an appointment at a specific day/time that works best for their schedule.

While puppies and kittens are less than 20 weeks old and susceptible to common viruses and diseases, they cannot go into spaces where there are frequently other animals. Examples of this include communal areas in apartment complexes and pet stores.

Failure to Thrive

Fosters with young kittens and puppies (specifically newborn litters, neonates, and kittens/puppies under 1 month) should know that it is typically uncommon for an entire litter to survive in nature. Young puppies and kittens will occasionally pass away for reasons that we cannot identify. This is also called “failure to thrive”. Being in a foster home decreases the likelihood of kittens and puppies passing away due to failure to thrive, but it is still a possibility. Even with love, attention, and perfect care and treatment, these puppies and kittens will sometimes still not make it. We want to do everything in our power to prevent these situations from happening by adhering to specific safety and handling protocols, providing preventative medical care, and preparing fosters for what to do when a kitten or puppy starts

to crash (see Fading Kitten/Puppy Protocols) These unfortunate do situations occasionally happen and fosters taking home these young populations of animals should know that this is a possibility.

Fading Kitten/Puppy Syndrome and Protocol

Fading Kitten Syndrome and Fading Puppy Syndrome is not one specific illness or disease, but rather a combination of symptoms happening concurrently that can be fatal to young puppies and kittens (usually 4 weeks or younger). A puppy or kitten can also start to fade or “crash” due to failure to thrive. Fading Kitten/Puppy Syndrome can result in death if not dealt with immediately, so early detection and treatment are imperative. Fosters with young puppies/kittens should be aware of the symptoms of a fading kitten/ puppy and familiarize themselves with the following protocols-

- [Fading Kitten Protocol](#)
- [Fading Puppy Protocol](#)

J. Marketing You Foster

Show the world how amazing and wonderful your foster animal is! The best way to market your foster dog is to make sure that they have a complete and eye-catching online profile including attention grabbing photos and a personalized bio. Check out the [Best Practices for Creating an Online Profile](#) document for tips on making your foster animal a dazzling profile!

Having a bio written by the foster is always ideal since foster’s are able to provide more details and personal information about their foster animal.

Other Ways to Market Your Foster

- Post photos and updates to your personal social media
- Share updates on the [Humane Society of Weld County Volunteers/Fosters Facebook Group](#)
- Share your foster animal’s profile on apps like Nextdoor, community facebook group, and reddit
- Connect with your community! Talk about or introduce your foster animal to friends and family
- Find a target audience- e.g. if your dogs is very active and loves to run, create a flyer and post them near a popular running trail

Marketing Guidelines as a Foster Parent

We love to see fosters posting their animals online, promoting them for adoption, and sharing their stories and personal experiences as a foster parent! However, foster parents should be aware that they are not allowed to act as a representative of or speak on the behalf of the Humane Society of Weld County when marketing their foster animal. If any foster encounters a topic or issue that needs to be addressed by HSWC, please notify the FTC.

VI. ADOPTION

A. HSWC Adoptions

HSWC does not have an open adoption policy. This means that we screen every potential adopter to make sure that they meet all the basic requirements for adopting and are a good fit for the specific animal they are interested in.

- Adoption Guidelines
 - We strive to place all healthy and safe animals.
 - We require spaying/neutering of all pets in accordance with State law.
 - We require that all pets receive proper veterinary care (annual exam, vaccinations and rabies).
 - We do not permit the adoption of an animal for someone else.
 - We do not permit the adoption of an animal by anyone under 18 years old.
 - We do not place dogs to be used solely as guard, fighting or hunting dogs.
 - We do not release any animal for research or experimental purposes.
 - We require proper identification be kept on all pets in the form of collars, tags, and/or microchips.

We want to give the animals in our care as many opportunities as possible to find their forever family, but we also want to make sure that we are setting up our animals for success! All adopters are required to review, agree to, and sign the [HSWC Adoption Contract](#) when finalizing the adoption of any HSWC animal. This contract can be referenced and used as a helpful tool when communicating with any interested adopters.

B. Adoption Process

Most potential adopters first see the animal they are interested in online through the HSWC website. This is why having a complete online profile is so important!

Interested adopters are instructed to call the shelter directly to inquire about animals they are interested in adopting an animal that is currently in a foster home. Our team at the front desk will do a preliminary screening and make sure that they are eligible to adopt from us and that their home meets the adoption requirements for the specific animal they are interested in. If the adopters home seems like a good fit for the animal they are interested in, our team will then reach out to the animal's foster and arrange a time for a visit to happen here at the shelter.

- Adult dogs will often require an intro with the adopter's resident dog prior to completing the adoption. This will be scheduled to happen at the same time as the visit with the potential adopters.
- We do not facilitate introduction with resident cats but can provide guidance and instructions for completing a successful intro in the home!

If the interested adopters then decide to move forward with the adoption after the visit, they will be able to fill out the paperwork the same day and then take their newly adopted animal home with them!

If you, the foster, find someone interested in adopting your foster animal, please let us know ASAP so that we can make a note in your foster's record with the PA's info and list them as an interested party.

Depending on the animal, we may want to do some additional follow-ups and arrange a dog-dog intro if needed or schedule a visit here at the shelter.

- Most often, if the PA you tell us about has already met your foster animal and meets all of the requirements for adopting, they will be able to come to the shelter to fill out the adoption paperwork and then arrange a hand-off with you directly!
- Please verify the adoption and ask to see the completed adoption paperwork prior to handing off your foster animal!

C. Adoption Denials

We want to ensure that our animals find great forever homes, but we still strive to remain open-minded and fair when determining if a PA is a suitable adoption candidate. Below are some factors that **DO NOT** determine someone's eligibility to adopt-

- Age - adopters must be at least 18 years old but there is no upper age limit
- Appearance
- Occupation / being a college student
- Lack of previous pet experience
- Having roommates
- Living in an apartment (unless specified otherwise)
- Living alone / being single
- Not having a yard (unless specified otherwise)

HSWC reserves the right to deny any adopter from moving forward in the adoption process if deemed necessary. This includes but is not limited to the Adoption Guidelines previously listed.

D. Adopting Your Foster

Animals are great and it's easy to fall in love with them- especially when they are living with you already! If you decide to adopt your foster animal and make them a part of your forever family, please tell us ASAP. Once we know that you are interested in adopting your foster, we will take them off of the website and get you started on the adoption process.

We give fosters first priority when it comes to adopting their foster animal, but there may be circumstances when the priority for adoption is shifted to another party. This may include when an animal already has an interested adopter at the time of placement or another adopter is already in the process of adopting the foster animal (typically after the adopter has already completed the visit). We ask that fosters tell us as soon as they come to the decision to adopt and to be conscientious of other adopters if they are already in the process of completing the adoption.

E. Foster to Adopt

Foster to Adopt (FTA) is an adoption route that gives adopters time to determine if a specific animal is a good fit for them before making the commitment to adopt.

- Not every animal in the shelter is eligible for FTA. Animals that are considered to be highly adoptable, kittens and puppies under 6 months old, and animals with multiple interested adopters are not eligible for FTA.

- FTA is for eligible animals that are currently residing in the shelter. Animals already in foster homes are not eligible for FTA unless otherwise specified.
- The FTA duration period is one week. After that initial week, fosters will need to decide whether or not they would like to move forward for adoption. Extensions will not be given unless determined necessary by the FTC.
 - This excludes animals staged as FTA for medical reasons.
- **FTA does not guarantee an adoption.**
 - Like with all adoptions, HSWC reserves the right to deny any adoption if determined necessary by an HSWC staff member.

Foster to Adopt Process

1. Animal being adopted must be eligible for FTA
2. Adopters must submit a foster application, meet all HSWC Foster Program requirements, and complete the foster onboarding process (including a virtual home inspection).
 - a. While they are fostering, interested adopters are required to abide by all HSWC Foster Program rules and policies.
 - b. Adopters will not be candidates for FTA if they do not meet all requirements to be an approved HSWC Foster.
3. The FTA duration period is one week. During this week, the animal in FTA will be made unavailable and will not appear on the HSWC website. Adopters will be able to use this week to determine whether or not the animal in FTA is a good fit for them.
4. After one week, a HSWC representative will reach out to ask if the adopters want to move forward with adoption at that time.
 - a. If they are interested in adopting, the adopters will be given instructions for completing the adoption process.
 - b. If the adopters no longer wish to move forward with adoption, the animal will be made available and their profile will be posted on the HSWC website.
 - i. Fosters will be asked to continue fostering the animal currently in their care until they are adopted or another foster has been found.

VII. AFTER ADOPTION

Congratulations, you did it! You helped your foster animal find their forever family! This is the time to celebrate and to give yourself a hug and a big pat on the back. From all of us here at HSWC, thank you! Fosters like yourself are the reason why we are able to help so many animals in need and we are incredibly thankful for your support and dedication.

Be sure to share your big win with other fosters by posting on the [Humane Society of Weld County Volunteers/Fosters](#). This is a group of other fosters and volunteers who understand the foster process and want to share in your big win! Saying goodbye to your foster can also be emotional and challenging, so this group is also a place to turn to for support and encouragement.

A. So What Now?

If you borrowed any supplies while fostering, please return it to the shelter so it can be used to help other animals in need.

- Unless you plan on using it for your next foster animal!

Process your emotions and reflect on your experiences while fostering.

- If you have any feedback or questions about some aspect of the fostering process, please let us know! Our goal is to create a program that is beneficial for the animals, and our fosters, and our organization, so feedback about your experience and any suggestions on how we can improve the program are welcomed! Feedback will be taken into consideration and utilized as we continue to grow our Foster Program.

Let us know when you are ready for your next foster animal!

- You may want to take some time before picking up your next foster or you may want to fill that space in your home right away. Either way, we will be more than happy to help get you matched with a new foster when the time's right for you. There are always more animals in need of help!