



Adopt-A-Pet Shelton WA

940 E Jensen Road

Shelton, WA 98584

Foster FAQ's

Why should I foster?

Foster parents are a critical part of our program at Adopt a Pet (AAP) and allow us to help even more dogs by freeing up space that would otherwise be taken in our shelter facility. In addition to saving lives, fostering also brings joy and companionship to your home.

There is a tremendous need in Mason County for dogs who are waiting to be surrendered to shelters. Some of these dogs may desperately need to get out of very difficult or dangerous situations. Fosters can help a dog transition from a bad situation to a loving home. In a home environment, the dog can blossom and become ready for their forever home.

Being a foster parent takes up time and requires a lot of love and patience, but the benefits are immeasurable.

What types of dogs need to be fostered?

Some dogs struggle in a shelter environment and would do best in a home while they wait to be adopted. They may be senior dogs, have some health issues, or just need a quiet environment to decompress. In other cases AAP will transfer a dog to foster simply to free up more space in the shelter.

Regardless of the type of dog, AAP staff will work closely with the foster parent to match the right dog with the right foster. We want the relationship between the foster dog and foster parent to be successful.

How long are dogs in foster care?

It depends on the individual dog. The duration can range from a few weeks to several months. We ask the foster parent to commit to the dog for the duration of their stay with AAP. If a foster parent is unable to continue to foster a dog, we will try to find another foster rather than returning the dog to the shelter. We also ask the foster parent only make such a request when absolutely necessary (family emergency, unforeseen difficulties).

Do I have to be a homeowner to foster?

No – as long as you have obtained landlord approval and the dog meets any size/weight requirements. Landlord approval must be provided in writing to Adopt a Pet.

Can a foster parent live in a condo or apartment?

Yes - depending on the dog and on a case by case basis. Landlord approval must be provided in writing and we would want to understand how the dog will get exercise and outdoor time.

If I have my own pets, can I still foster?

Yes. Many of our dogs have lived with other dogs, cats and critters. We do require a meet and greet at AAP with any dogs that will be in the household with the foster.

All AAP dogs have received their vaccinations. We require all dogs owned by the foster parent to be up to date on vaccinations as well.

Who can foster a dog for AAP?

We require all fosters to be at least 21 years old, which is the same age requirement for anyone wanting to adopt a dog from AAP.

AAP has a firm rule that dogs cannot be fostered by people who allow smoking and vaping in their home. Why is that?

Dogs have very sensitive noses that can easily be irritated by cigarette or vape smoke. Exposure can also cause eye irritation and in some cases, skin irritation if the dog has an allergy to the substance in the smoke. We want our dogs to be in a happy, healthy environment and firmly feel that exposure to vaping or cigarette smoke does not achieve that.

Further, dog fur can also absorb the odor from cigarette or vape smoke. If the dog is meeting a potential adopter, that adopter may be allergic to the smell or certainly just dislike the odor and may decide against a dog that smells of smoke. We want all of our dogs to be adoption ready at all times.

How do I become a foster?

[Complete the foster application HERE](#). The Foster Coordinator will reach out to you to talk about your interest, and subsequently schedule a home visit. Home visits are conducted by AAP volunteers to meet you and any other family members in your home environment.

Once the home visit is completed, any dogs available for fostering will be discussed with you. A meet and greet with potential dogs will take place at AP so that everyone can be comfortable with the foster. Finally, if a dog is assigned to you, you will need to [complete an Acknowledgement Form HERE](#) for the foster assignment to begin.

What does AAP provide and what do fosters provide?

Foster parents provide the basics that you would provide to your own dog: space, exercise, socialization, basic training and love. We provide food, bowls (if needed), bed, collar or harness, leash and toys.

What happens if veterinary care is needed?

AAP schedules and pays for all necessary, pre-authorized vet care. All prescription medication is also paid for by AAP.

If an emergency need occurs, volunteers at AAP will be responsible for scheduling and transporting the dog to the vet clinic. You may be asked to bring the dog to the AAP facility, or another location, to facilitate transport.

What if my foster dog becomes sick?

Notify the Kennel Manager as soon as practicable. This may mean a phone call in the middle of the night, depending on how ill the dog is and if the foster parent feels like it is an emergency. Even less serious signs of illness (occasional vomiting or diarrhea) should be reported promptly to the Kennel Manager, for example the next morning.

What happens if I need to travel out of town?

AAP will either temporarily assign the dog to another foster or house it in the shelter (if space allows). We ask the Foster Parent to provide at least two weeks notice (longer if possible) to the Foster Coordinator for all scheduled vacations.

Am I responsible for training my foster?

We ask our foster parents to work with the dogs to develop basic obedience and manners, such as walking on a leash, sit, stay, off. We also like our dogs to be socialized by being carefully introduced to other dogs and people who may be visiting the foster parent.

Can I use a crate with my foster dog?

Yes. Some training may be necessary, given the foster dog's previous experience (or lack of) with crate use. An appropriately sized crate will be provided by AAP. Some dogs will need a transition period to get used to the crate.

We want the crate to be a safe happy place for the foster dog and therefore should NOT be used as punishment. Foster parents should always use kibble or a treat to encourage the dog to go into the crate. The amount of time the dog spends in the crate should be limited, especially during the day if the dog is crated at night. The Foster Coordinator or Kennel Manager can respond to any questions about appropriate use of the crate, and what is reasonable crate time.

How can I help my foster dog become more adoptable?

A happy, confident dog that has been treated kindly and with consistency will shine during meets with potential adopters. We ask our foster parents to work with the dog to develop basic training, such as walking on a leash, and the commands sit, stay, wait, off (no jumping).

We want our fosters to look good too! Grooming and nail trims are provided by AAP groomer volunteers and can be scheduled through the Foster Coordinator.

What if I want to adopt my foster?

We hope you fall in love with your foster! Adoptions, even by fosters, require an application to be filled out. The application is available on line at the AAP website.