

Becoming an ARPO Foster Parent

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster parent for the Alliance for Responsible Pet Ownership (ARPO)! Because we do not have a shelter, we rely on a network of foster homes to house adoptable dogs and cats while they await permanent homes. Foster homes are a crucial part of ARPO's ability to save an animal's life. Following are some frequently asked questions regarding ARPO's foster care program. Specific questions may be directed toward any member of ARPO's board of directors by calling 317-774-8292. Our voice mail is answered several times a day by one of the board members, who take turns in a rotation. You may also e-mail ARPO at foster@adoptarpo.org.

What is ARPO?

The Alliance for Responsible Pet Ownership (ARPO) is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to placing stray and surrendered animals into loving homes, and promoting animal companionship as a lifetime commitment. ARPO uses a network of foster homes to house available pets, and holds adoptions events staffed by volunteers to increase opportunities for adoptions. ARPO makes every effort to ensure that our adoptable animals are placed into loving, lifetime homes. We require a fee for adoptions, as well as an application, contract, and home visit.

What are my responsibilities as a foster home?

Foster parents are responsible for the care of the foster animal, including providing quality food, shelter, grooming, and attention. Foster parents are expected to bring the animal to adoption events. These events are scheduled at various pet stores around town. Visit our web site for a current list of locations and times. Foster parents are also responsible for transporting their foster animal to ARPO's vet if needed. Foster parents are responsible for complying with all state and local laws regarding the keeping and care of the companion animal. Foster parents are required to sign a contract detailing responsibility and limiting ARPO's liability while the animal is under their care.

What are ARPO's responsibilities?

Veterinary services for foster animals are covered by ARPO at ARPO's vet of choice. ARPO will make available its Petsmart and internet resources to increase the pet's chances of adoption. ARPO representatives are available to assist the foster home in dealing with issues related to the foster care of the animal. ARPO is responsible for facilitating all adoptions.

How long does it take for an animal to get adopted?

The answer varies widely. Puppies and smaller dogs often are adopted within a few weeks; kittens and adult dogs can take anywhere from 2 weeks to several months. Adult cats may take several months to adopt. Some pets are adopted within a week, while others can take 6 months, a year, or, rarely, even longer.

Can I choose which animal I wish to foster?

Foster parents may request a certain type of pet, such as a dog, cat, puppy, kitten. If a specific size, gender, or trait (such as good with children) is required, the foster parent should notify ARPO. ARPO maintains a list of animals needing foster homes, and desires to place the neediest animals first. However, ARPO representatives will work with the foster parent to find an appropriate animal for his/her home.

What if I can't transport my foster pet to adoption events every Saturday?

An occasional missed week is to be expected. Adoption events allow the public to meet the pets, and increase the opportunities for adoption. Foster parents are requested to contact ARPO as early as possible if the animal will not be at the scheduled adoption event.

What if I want to adopt my foster pet?

It is very easy to fall in love with a companion animal who relies on you for all of his/ her care. While ARPO doesn't like to lose a foster home, we are happy to see a pet find a loving, permanent home. Foster parents must complete the official adoption process, including payment of the full adoption fee, and completion of all adoption paperwork.

What if I know someone who wants to adopt my foster pet?

Any potential adopters should contact ARPO if they are interested in adopting an animal. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS A FOSTER PARENT TO GIVE ANYONE POSSESSION OF THEIR FOSTER ANIMAL.** ARPO requires a home visit and completion of adoption paperwork, including the fee and contract, before turning an animal over to the adopter. **Members of the ARPO Board of Directors are the only persons authorized to approve or deny an adoption.**

Do foster parents attend the home visits when their foster animal is adopted?

ARPO may ask a foster parent to meet with them to take an animal to a potential adoptive home. Foster parents do not attend these home visits.

What if my foster pet requires medical attention while he/ she is in my care?

ARPO takes measures to ensure that its animals receive veterinary exams and appropriate vaccinations before entering foster care. Sometimes follow-up care, such as another round of shots or worming (for puppies or kittens), neutering, etc. is necessary. Foster parents are responsible for transporting their foster animal to ARPO's vet, usually Northside Animal Clinic in Carmel. An effort is made to accommodate the foster parent's schedule. Animals are normally dropped off in the morning and picked up in the evening. If a foster parent takes their animal to a different vet, or does not notify ARPO in advance of a vet visit, the foster parent is responsible for any expense related to the visit or any treatment performed. The foster parent is responsible for any medical expense necessary resulting from improper care or negligence while under the care of the foster home.

What if I travel while a foster animal is in my care?

Foster parents must arrange for the safe care of their foster animal if they must travel while the pet is in their care. Occasionally, kennel space is available at ARPO's vet, or at kennels which ARPO can recommend. If space is not available, the foster parent must make his/her own arrangements. All boarding is at the expense of the foster parent.

What if I am having behavioral issues with my foster pet?

Becoming a foster parent is a big responsibility, and you will likely not get the perfect pet. Many of the animals that ARPO rescues have been strays, or haven't received a proper amount of training and good treatment. Even the most well-behaved animal can undergo stress adjusting to new people and a new environment. The animal may exhibit this stress through inappropriate behavior. In many cases, a little TLC goes a long way. However, many behavioral problems to require some effort. ARPO representatives are available to discuss ways to handle your foster pet.

What if my foster pet doesn't get along with my own animals?

ARPO makes an effort to place animals who are likely to get along with a particular foster parent's pets. Proper introductions are crucial. It is also possible in some homes to manage a foster pet despite an animal-aggressive resident pet. Please contact ARPO for advice.

What if my foster pet damages my apartment or home?

ARPO cannot be held liable for any damage caused by your foster pet. The foster parent is responsible for providing a safe environment for his/her foster animal. Crate-training is recommended for dogs. Crates may be borrowed from ARPO if available, but must be returned in the event that fostering is discontinued.

What if I can no longer foster the animal in my care?

Fostering an animal is a large commitment. ARPO asks that foster parents make every effort possible to provide a caring, stable environment for the animal in their care. Transfers from place to place can stress the animal and utilize ARPO's limited resources. However, sometimes situations occur which necessitate the surrender of the foster animal. If this happens, the foster parent **MUST** return the animal to ARPO. Advance notice is requested, when possible, to allow ARPO to find an alternative foster home.