



## Policy

<b>Foster Policy</b>	<b>Form #354</b>	<b>Revision #000</b>	<b>Issue Date: 09/11/2025</b>
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### Foster Policy

At TLHS, our foster program is vital to saving lives. Foster caregivers extend our shelter's capacity for care by providing temporary, loving homes for animals in need. This policy outlines eligibility requirements, responsibilities, and expectations to ensure the safety, well-being, and successful placement of all foster animals.

### Foster Philosophy & Approach

#### Community Partnership

Our foster program is built on community support and partnership. By opening their homes, foster caregivers help animals recover, socialize, and prepare for adoption.

#### Shared Responsibility

Fostering is a partnership between the caregiver and TLHS. Caregivers provide daily care and a safe environment, while TLHS provides medical oversight, supplies, and adoption support.

### Foster Process

#### Application & Agreement

Potential fosters must complete a Foster Care Contract and agree to all guidelines, rules, and responsibilities outlined by TLHS.

#### Placement of Animals

Animals are placed into foster homes based on need, foster capacity, and suitability. Fosters do not have ownership rights; all animals remain the property of TLHS until adoption is finalized.

### Eligibility & Requirements

#### Age Requirement

Foster caregivers must be at least 18 years of age.

#### Employee Fosters

Employees of TLHS are eligible to foster after completing at least thirty (30) days of continuous employment.

#### Residence & Proximity

Caregivers must live within 40 miles or approximately one hour of TLHS in Tupelo, MS.

#### Resident Pets

All resident pets must be fully vaccinated, including rabies as required by law, and not



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immunocompromised.

### **Agreement to Terms**

Caregivers must maintain current contact information and agree to follow all TLHS foster policies and directions.

## **Animal Care & Biosecurity**

### **Separation Period**

Foster animals must be kept separate from resident pets for at least the first week.

### **Cats**

Foster cats must remain indoors at all times.

### **Dogs**

Foster dogs must always be kept **leashed, vaccinated, and under supervision** when outside the home. They may accompany their foster caregivers to public spaces, including pet-friendly areas and dog parks, as long as they remain on a leash and are closely monitored at all times. Foster dogs may interact with resident or other well-vaccinated dogs in controlled settings. Dogs may spend time in a fenced yard if the space is secure, safe, and the caregiver is present to monitor them.

### **Travel & Transfers**

Foster animals may not travel outside the area, be boarded, or be transferred to another person without prior TLHS approval.

### **Daily Care**

Caregivers must provide adequate food, water, shelter, and enrichment. Cosmetic procedures (declawing, cropping) are not permitted.

## **Medical Care**

### **Veterinary Oversight**

All medical care is coordinated through TLHS. Foster caregivers are not reimbursed for outside veterinary expenses without prior written approval.

### **Routine Care**

Animals return to TLHS approximately every two weeks for booster vaccines, deworming, or as directed.

### **Pediatric Spay/Neuter**

Puppies and kittens are altered at TLHS once they are at least 8 weeks old and weigh at least 2 pounds.

## **Marketing & Adoption**



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### **Promotion**

Foster caregivers are expected to help market their foster pets and communicate with potential adopters professionally and courteously.

### **Adoption Decisions**

Final adoption decisions rest with TLHS. Foster caregivers may apply to adopt but are not guaranteed approval or reduced fees.

### **No Unauthorized Placements**

Fosters may not hand off animals to adopters, trial homes, sitters, or other fosters without TLHS approval.

## **Reporting & Safety**

### **Lost Animals**

Caregivers must immediately report if a foster animal becomes lost or escapes.

### **Bite Protocol**

All bites must be reported immediately to TLHS. The Bite Protocol includes reporting requirements, quarantine procedures, and guidance for medical treatment.

### **Behavior & Health Concerns**

Fosters must notify TLHS of any illness, behavioral concerns, or inability to continue fostering.

## **Housing & Containment**

### **Preferred Housing**

TLHS strongly prefers that dogs live indoors as part of the family. Some dogs may be more suited to outdoor time; in these cases, dogs must be housed in a secure fenced area or safe enclosure.

### **Tethering**

Tethering is not encouraged. If used, the animal must always have access to adequate shelter, food, water, and enrichment.

## **Program Oversight**

### **Home Visits**

TLHS may visit foster homes to check on the well-being of animals.

### **Compliance**

Failure to comply with foster policies may result in removal of the animal and termination of the foster relationship. Animals must be returned to TLHS within 24 hours upon request.

### **Liability**



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Caregivers acknowledge inherent risks of fostering, including illness, injury, and property damage, and agree to hold TLHS harmless as outlined in the Foster Care Contract.

### Post-Foster Follow-Up

#### Return of Animals

At the end of the foster period, animals return to TLHS for adoption, medical care, or transport.

#### Ongoing Support

Foster caregivers have access to staff support during business hours and after-hours emergency contacts for urgent foster needs.