



Dark Horse Dogs, Foster Basics

(A quick and easy overview of the process)

- Apply to foster at darkhosedogs.org under the foster resources page.
[DHD Foster Application Link](#)
- Read and understand our training beliefs and methods.
<https://darkhosedogs.org/training-agreement>
- Pass our screening application which is overall quick and easy.
(More details on that below)
- Sign our foster agreement/contract/license.
[Sign Foster Contract/Agreement](#)
- Find the foster that's right for you (meet and greets).
(More info below on picking the dog that's right for you)
- Bring home your foster and the supplies we provide.
- Spend 2 weeks going slow, allowing decompression, and learning about your foster.
<https://darkhosedogs.org/two-week-shutdown>
- List your dog for adoption.
- Get your dog adopted.

Dark Horse Dogs, NFP

Phone: 630-446-0169

La Grange Highlands, IL 60525

darkhosedogs@gmail.com

www.darkhosedogs.org



Application and approval process

Click here to apply to FOSTER or FOSTER to adopt: [Foster Application](#)

If you have existing animals in the home, we will do a vet check. Dogs should be altered (spayed/neutered), up to date on rabies, and be on heartworm prevention.

A home check. Currently we are asking for video of the main living area and any yard, if applicable. Or you can do a FaceTime, or Zoom home check. Doesn't need to be over the top, or very long.

Supplies we provide

- Food
- Crate
- Leash
- Harness
- Collar
- Heartworm prevention
- Flea and tick prevention (depending on time of year)

My Foster is Home Now, What do we do?

NOTHING!!! ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!! You take it slow (please refer to the Two Week Shutdown document) and you get to know each other. The first 2 weeks, you guys stay boring as can be. Low key, no confusion, no pressure or expectations.

You work on routine. Crating, making sure they know where they need to go potty and you just figure out each other and learn about each other.

Decompression Matters!!!

Please also review the 2 week shutdown. This link is being added a second time in this document. Which means...it's important. <https://darkhosedogs.org/two-week-shutdown>

Can you give your new dog a bath? Absolutely NOT! Unless your new dog is covered, head to toe in crap, you should not, under any circumstances, give them a bath! This dog does NOT know you! You do NOT know this dog! Do you want to find out your new dog is terrified by baths because you just got bit, trying to put this unknown dog in a bathtub?

Consider your new dog to be in a Covid lockdown! For 2 weeks, do nothing. Don't go anywhere (unless a vet trip is needed). If you're not fully fenced, and you need to leash walk, walk in your area to potty, then go back in. Do not invite the neighborhood over to meet the dog, do not go to PetSmart, and don't stop by all your friend's houses. Do nothing! Be boring and work on just getting in a nice routine in your home. More fun and excitement can come after a couple weeks. You have no idea how a new dog will react in any situation, don't set them up to act a fool.

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Crating is not mean! Crating is for safety, decompression, and sometimes, when everyone just needs a mental break (humans included). We do not want dogs sitting in crates nonstop. But we do want crates to be utilized for regular routine purposes, and to make sure everyone has some forced downtime. We recommend using the crate more in the beginning than you'd normally want. This isn't forever, it's just to get through the beginning transition. When humans get too stressed, it doesn't often go well. Give yourself, your family, and animal's breaks. Humans need decompression too.

THINGS YOU ABSOLUTELY SHOULD NOT DO WITH YOUR BRAND NEW DOG!!!

- NO FACES!!! Do not put your face – in the dog's face!!!
- Do NOT walk your foster and your personal dog by yourself. One dog per person!
- Don't go to the park, the store, to a friend's house, don't go anywhere with that dog!
- Don't invite people over to meet your new dog! It's not a toy.
- Don't yell at, grab, or forcefully try to get your dog to do something. Use TREATS!
- DO NOT LEAVE THEM ALONE WITH ANY CHILDREN OR ANIMALS IN THE HOME!!!
- DO NOT GO TO DOG PARKS. THIS RULE APPLIES 100% OF THE TIME. NO DOG PARKS.
- No baths. We aren't sure why humans are so obsessed with new dogs and baths. Don't do it.
- Don't allow children to walk the dog. This rule applies 100% of the time.
- Do NOT feed your foster with your resident animals. Dogs should have separate safe spaces to eat in peace and not be bothered.

We understand a new dog is exciting, and we want you to be excited. But it's far less exciting when things go haywire immediately. Do not assume you know how this dog will react in any situation. You don't know. Until we've put in the time, built a bond and mutual respect, we do not know what this dog will do. In any situation. Interact safely, respect boundaries, and learn about each other, in a calm and safe environment.

When Does My Foster Go Up for Adoption? What do I Need to do for that?

We don't have a "set" timeframe but after the 2 week shutdown is a nice reference point. This could be shorter or longer, depending on the dog. Some need medical help, some have to work on certain behaviors, and some are basic and can go up for adoption pretty quickly. See below for timeframes on foster to adopt decisions.

The foster can write their own bio, or give us all the key information, and we will write the bio. PICTURES!!! We need good pictures! Taking pictures regularly makes all the difference when trying to get dogs noticed.

Then we list the dog and wait! We will continue to post updates on Facebook as long as you provide us with new pictures and new information, and/or funny/cute stories.

How long will it take for my dog to get adopted?

Truthfully, we don't know. There are so many different factors that play a part. Time of year, age, breed, looks, temperament, their story, and online popularity. The best way to make sure you're doing all you can do, is to keep taking pictures and providing us with great details about your dog. The more info you give us, the more posts we can make online about them. Once dogs have a decent following, they usually have interest and get applications.

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What if I'm considering adopting my foster but I can't make up my mind?

Standard timeframe for listing a dog for adoption is 2 weeks. This can be longer if we're dealing with medical or behavioral issues. When the dog has been medically and behaviorally "cleared" for adoption, fosters will have 1 week to decide if they'd like to move forward with adoption themselves. If within that week the foster has not chosen to adopt, we will list the dog for adoption. If the adoption process starts moving forward and we have an approved app, the foster can no longer change their minds. It would be unfair to another family that is invested and is excited to bring their new family member home. Please remember, fosters do get first dibs! But foster families cannot prevent a dog from becoming adoptable, and they cannot hold their dog in foster limbo, because they don't want to commit. If the foster family truly can't decide, then that's probably the answer and the dog should be listed for adoption. We also need to keep dogs moving forward so we can move on to saving more.

What if I want to adopt my foster? What do I need to do?

You can! Foster families get first dibs!

- Adoption fee (under 1 year \$450, 1 to 7 years \$350, 8+ years \$350)
- All adoptions will require processing through the Shelterluv system. We will send you a link to pay electronically and after payment is made, all documents will go through the Shelterluv system.

What happens when we get an app on my foster?

We receive it and we screen it. We confirm the home ownership, vet check if necessary, and home check. If the app appears solid, we pass the app to you to look at. If you like them, we setup a meet and greet. If you don't, we move on.

How does the meet and greet work? Where do we do them?

It is completely dependent on the foster home, the dog, and what everyone is comfortable with. If you want to foster and not be a part of meet and greets, please let us know and we will try to accommodate. If you want to meet the family, see the home and know where your foster is going, you have that option! We actually like this option best. Then you can feel good about where your foster goes and you can have whatever relationship you'd like with the new family. Just as most other things, the meet and greet location can vary depending on the humans and dogs. Sometimes the potential adopters go to the foster's home, sometimes the foster and dog go to the potential adopter's home, and sometimes we meet in the middle. Whatever works best and is in the best interest of the dog.

What happens if the meet and greet goes well and they want to adopt?

We usually recommend everyone take a day to think about it and regroup, after the meet. But on occasion, we will allow same day adoptions, if everyone is prepared. We suggest that everyone take a day though, and if the new family and the foster family all feel like it's a match, we prepare for adoption! You setup a time and place for the handoff (whatever works best for everyone and the dog). The new family gets prepared with everything they need to welcome a new dog into the home. We recommend sending the dog with food for the new family to transition with, but otherwise, supplies for fosters, stay in the foster home and the new family purchases what they need. One of us will reach out to the new family and email all documentation. There will be 2 forms they need to sign and we will provide all medical records as well.

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What vetting does the dog have done?

(The dog may or may not have already completed vetting, before you take them as your foster. It all depends where the dog comes from and what their situation is. We can provide more information on a specific dog, when there's a specific dog in mind.)

Before dogs are available for adoption, they have the following completed:

- Spay/Neuter
- Age Appropriate Vaccinations (rabies, K-9 distemper/parvo)
- Microchip
- Heartworm test (age appropriate)

What happens with the microchip?

Regardless of the brand of microchip your dog has implanted, it is registered with [My24Pet](#).

Your new dog's microchip is registered to Dark Horse Dogs. Upon receipt of the adoption fee, signed paperwork, and any supplies (if you were a foster first), we will initiate a transfer of the microchip into your name and address, at no additional cost to you. We will continue to still be a point of contact on the microchip, for the life of the animal.

Foster to Adopt Supplies - What happens with the supplies I was loaned?

Although we'd love to be able to provide families with supplies after adoption, costs of supplies are high. A crate is between \$75 - \$100+. We ask that you please return all supplies to one of our volunteers, so we can continue to use our volunteer time efficiently and effectively. Below are examples of (but not limited to) some supplies we may have provided you, which we would need to use for a future animal. Please view the suggestions of supplies on the next page that you can purchase for your animal, prior to returning our supplies. Prefer to keep the supplies you're currently using? We will gladly take new items! You can order items from the lists below and send to one of the addresses below. Please keep in mind, if we loaned you a large crate, we will need a crate that's comparable in size. Same goes for sizing on any other items.

- Crate
- Any unused heartworm prevention
- Any unused flea and tick prevention

FOSTERING MATTERS! IT LITERALLY SAVES LIVES!

Although the process can be hard at times, and there appear to be a lot of "rules," once you get in a routine and get to know your dog, fostering is incredibly rewarding. Is it heartbreaking to let them go? HELL YEAH IT IS!!! Some dogs are harder than others to let go of. But whenever you think you may not be able to let one go, and you do it, you'll find another in the future that you love just as much. And you would have never known that dog, if you had kept that previous foster. There is never a shortage of homeless dogs, and fosters are the most important part of rescue. Without foster homes, we have no rescue. Being a foster isn't always easy, and it's not always fun. But it matters! What you're choosing to do, is saving multiple lives. Actual living beings that may not have made it out of animal control alive, are now in a home, because you decided to foster. Your decision to foster, saved their life. That is something to be proud of.

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