

# Friends Of Citrus County Animal Services, Inc.

(a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization)

## FOSTER GUIDELINES

If you are considering taking on the rewarding and incredibly helpful task of fostering a homeless animal for the Friends Of Citrus County Animal Services, Inc. (FOCCAS), you should carefully review the following guidelines, in addition to the [Foster Agreement](#) you will be asked to sign.

Fostering parents and families form the backbone of the work we do. We cannot exist as a rescue if people are not willing to bring needy animals into their homes while we search for permanent homes for them. Fosters have our undying gratitude and deepest respect and admiration. There are never enough foster homes to go around, so each is precious to FOCCAS and the animals we are trying to save.

To make your fostering experience as positive as possible for you, your family, and your furry friend, please commit the following to memory before bringing him/her home:

1. Arrange to introduce the new animal to your own pet(s), if you have them, outside on neutral territory. Once inside, it is best to situate the foster animal in a crate at first, and introduce him/her gradually to other household members. Do not try to make the foster an immediate part of your family. Let him/her settle into the new place, and help him/her learn the rules of the house as soon as possible. Never let the foster take over and place your own animals at risk or under stress.
2. Use a training collar to walk a foster so he/she cannot slip out of the collar and run off. A dog can easily slip out of a flat collar, which should be worn for identification purposes only. The training collar should be used only for walking and training and should be removed after the session. Keep the training collar attached to the leash at all times. If you do not know how to put the collar on properly, please check with a Director of FOCCAS.
3. If you find prospective adopters for your foster on your own, please make them aware of the application process, as well as the FOCCAS requirements and adoption donation. The FOCCAS screens applicants very carefully. First, the written application is evaluated. Next, a veterinary check is made for all animals the prospective adopter owns or has owned. If the application and vet check are good, a home visit is scheduled. If the adoption is then approved, a contract is signed, and an adoption donation is provided by the adopters. The donation amount varies per animal.

Please keep some clean applications and adoption contracts on hand, or have the capacity to print them from the website, to give to promising prospects, just in case you will be handling the adoption.

4. Before taking a foster, ask about the animal's breed (it's not always a pure breed, or even a dog!), age, gender, temperament, behavior, and why he/she is in need of adoption. Find out to the best of your ability and ours if he/she is a stray, from a shelter, a private surrender, a victim of abuse or neglect, etc. Share any applications you might get on your own with Mike DeRose. Remember that not every prospective adopter is approved, and sometimes other applications may be pending. Some animals are more popular than others and can have multiple applications. Others must wait for that special someone. But they all find homes, sooner or later, if we work cooperatively together.

5. **Never** turn over a foster to someone who claims it is his/her lost pet! This person could be mistaken, or he/she could be deliberately trying to mislead you. The animal could have been removed from his/her former home for all kinds of reasons. The claimant could well have mistreated the animal. Report any such claims to Mike DeRose immediately, and we will investigate.
6. If necessary, FOCCAS can lend you a crate, a collar and/or leash. Whenever you transport any animal, make certain you have him/her on a leash, with a training and flat collar. If you plan to foster on a regular basis, it would be a great help to FOCCAS if you could get a crate of your own. Make sure the animal has ample room to move around when choosing the proper size.
7. Foster families typically provide treats, and chew toys for their foster animals, with no reimbursement from FOCCAS. Some pet stores will donate items for foster dogs, so it is worth contacting your local pet stores like Petsmart and Petco. Fosters may also be asked to participate in transporting animals or assisting in house checks.
8. If your foster animal becomes ill or gets hurt, contact Mike DeRose immediately. FOCCAS covers medical expenses, but I must authorize treatments and medications before they are administered, and I must also approve the veterinarian who will be doing the work. In emergency cases, when every moment could mean the difference between life or death, do not hesitate to take the animal to a vet immediately or to an emergency clinic if after regular vet hours. We will work out emergency expenses. The important thing is to do everything possible to save the animal in distress. Know where your closest vet and emergency center are located before you foster any animal. Keep the numbers handy, easily accessible. The time to search is not when you are holding a sick or injured animal in your arms.
9. Be careful what you tell potential adopters. Avoid giving advice and criticizing. Also avoid answering any questions with absolutes, and **never** answer any question you are not sure about. Do not mislead inquirers. Ask for assistance when you don't know something. Tell inquirers you will get back to them as soon as possible. Always recommend that potential adopters do as much reading about animals and adoptions and about their breed, if applicable. Urge them to sign up for obedience training with a reputable trainer.
10. If you have **any** hesitations or peculiar feelings or "bad vibes" about the adoption or any of the people involved in the adoption of your foster dog(s)-- like the family seems great, all except for the angry look on the father's face -- **DO NOT ALLOW IT TO GO FORWARD!** Say the final decision is not yours to make, and we will get back to them as soon as possible. You do not have to take the heat for your instincts, but I have learned through experience that it is best to go with them. *Try to determine what is giving you pause or making you wary, and take note of it.*
11. Be very familiar with the regulations and policies of FOCCAS. Most of all, remember that no one can be approved until their application is deemed acceptable, the vet check is satisfactory, and a home visit is completed. If the adopters are approved, the adoption contract must be signed -- by the adopter(s) and by a FOCCAS representative -- with all information carefully filled out and checked by you. Adopters must provide the non-refundable donation to FOCCAS either before taking possession of the dog or upon taking possession of the dog.
12. If any foster dog in your care bites any person or another animal and breaks the skin (i.e. draws blood) you **MUST** report the incident to Mike DeRose @ 352-201-8664 as soon as possible.

Any further questions should be directed to **Mike DeRose** [Info@FriendsOfCCAS.org](mailto:Info@FriendsOfCCAS.org) **352-201-8664**