



Foster Packet

*Guidelines & Policies for GRR Foster
Caregivers*

Foster Programs

Guidelines & Policies for Foster Care Providers:

Foster care providers typically provide homes for animals in the following situations:

- Pregnant or nursing
- Too young to be adopted (under eight weeks)
- Animals needing extra care and/or attention
- Animals recovering from illness, surgery or injury
- Animals that are not doing well in the shelter and needing extra attention/socializing
- Sleep-over/weekend getaways. Or, a day out of the shelter for a field trip
- Pet safe housing: Through the Northwoods Battered women's shelter. This is for a maximum of 60 days with the intent of returning the pet to the owner.

General Procedures & Policies:

The Board of Directors formulates and approves the Foster policies of Great River Rescue, and delegates administration of those policies to the Executive Director.

Great River Rescue will foster out animals that meet the following terms; medical conditions or concerns that can be better met in a foster home, behavioral concerns (examples: Kennel breakdown, under-socialized), too young to be adopted. Animals will not be fostered out in exchange for a trial adoption.

Great River Rescue retains all rights of legal ownership of the animal until it returns to the shelter or is adopted. The shelter will be responsible for medical needs of the animal while in foster care, with exceptions mentioned in the Medical portion of this document.

Clear and accurate records showing the number of animals in foster care will be presented to the Board of Directors at each regular meeting.

A foster care provider has the right to adopt the animal in their care.

Great River Rescue agrees to reserve open kennel space for all animals in foster care in case a foster care provider needs to return the animal to the shelter for any reason.

Foster care providers agree to allow the animal to reside indoors. If a foster pet goes outdoors, it must be kept secure on a leash or in a securely fenced in yard. Foster pets must never be left unattended outdoors. Foster pets must not be left outside during extreme heat, cold, or inclement weather.

Cats must be kept away from resident cats due to the risk of infection and illness. This can be done by restricting the foster cat's access to only one room (a bedroom, office, or finished basement) where the cat can still be socialized and monitored on a regular basis.

Dogs may be housed with resident dog(s) pending meet and greet at the shelter as well as updated veterinary records (including rabies, DAPP, and Bordetella vaccines as well as spay/neuter status).

A foster care provider may choose to adopt their foster pet once they are ready to be adopted.

Foster Homes:

1. Individual training will be provided for special needs pets
2. All foster care providers will be asked to sign up for our Facebook Foster Care Group. (you will need to have a Facebook account to sign up for this)
3. All foster care providers will be asked to sign up for a Wagtopia Account. This is an online platform to access your pet's records and provide updated information.
4. Foster care providers agree to, and sign an agreement, to keep any foster dogs on a leash when outdoors or, in a securely fenced in area. Dogs will not be permitted to go to dog parks in order to ensure the safety of the foster dog as well as the community dogs. Cats will be strictly indoors.
5. Lost pets **MUST** be reported to Great River Rescue. **IMMEDIATELY**. Foster care providers will be required to pay the full adoption fee for any pets that are lost.
6. Foster care providers will be provided with needed supplies upon request.
7. Foster care providers must be at least 18 years of age. Parental permission will be required for any provider still living with parents.
8. Foster care providers must agree to bring pet in for scheduled vaccines and vet appointments. We will do our best to work with your schedule.

Medical Policies & Procedures:

1. Great River rescue will pay any pre-approved medical expenses. Authorization may be given by the Executive or Assistant Director.
2. The foster care provider does NOT have permission to take their foster pet to the vet without prior approval of the Executive or Assistant Director. In cases of emergency, and after hours, the foster provider will make all reasonable attempts to contact the Executive or Assistant Director at **218-214-2309**. If all reasonable attempts at contact have failed, the foster may contact either of the following vet offices:
 - Animal Care Clinic: 218-444-2222
 - Northern Vet Clinic: 218-444-5797
3. Any previously unauthorized vet visits will require a receipt submitted to the director for approval and POSSIBLE reimbursement. Any bills for over \$1000, will need board approval for reimbursement. Reimbursement will depend on if the vet deems the visit was an emergency and only if all attempts to contact GRR were unsuccessful.
4. Foster care providers, or foster-to-adopt parents, who wish to pay the vet bill themselves, must still submit a copy of treatments provided for the pet's record.
5. Any of the following is considered an emergency:
 - Becoming unresponsive
 - Listlessness (unable to wake up or stay awake)
 - Hit by a car
 - Any accident that has caused an injury
 - Temp over 104 degrees for more than one hour
 - Becoming cyanotic (blue) or jaundice (yellowing of the eyes, ears or gums)
 - Uncontrolled bleeding from any orifice

*Anything outside of what constitutes an emergency will be addressed the following business day

The emergency phone number is:

218-214-2309

6. Foster care providers who pay out of pocket for vet expenses, must submit a copy of treatment the dog/cat received, for our records.
7. Please refer to www.greatriverrescue.com/contact/resources and your foster care packet for more information on pet care.

Health & Wellness:

Your foster animal may not display any signs of illness until quite ill. Therefore, it's up to you to observe your foster animal closely each day. Contact Great River Rescue if you notice any of the following:

- Unusual discharges from the eyes, nose or other body openings
- Abnormal lumps
- Limping
- Difficulty getting up or down
- Lost of appetite
- Abnormal waste elimination
- Other abnormal behavior

Diarrhea - Diarrhea can be caused by several factors, including stress, change of diet, poor diet, eating garbage, parasites and viruses. Contact Great River Rescue if you notice diarrhea. Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pinch the skin, and twist, just below the shoulder blades. If the skin snaps back, the dog is most likely not dehydrated. If the skin slowly goes back down, your foster pet may be dehydrated. Call Great River Rescue if you notice dehydration. If the dehydration is noticed with lethargy, call your emergency contacts. In an emergency, follow the GRR protocols for taking your foster dog to the vet.

Distemper - Distemper is an extremely contagious, and often fatal, viral disease. It is an airborne infection that can be transmitted with or without direct contact with an infected dog through mucous, urine and feces. Some of the symptoms include, squinting, congestion of the eyes, pus from the eyes, weight loss, coughing, vomiting, nasal discharge and diarrhea. Contact Great River Rescue immediately if you suspect Distemper.

Fleas - Most foster dogs have been treated when arriving at the shelter. Additional flea treatments are available if needed. Do not attempt to treat fleas on your own, unless under the direction of a vet. Flea treatments contain insecticides that can cause nerve and liver damage, impair the immune system and even cause cancer. Regular flea combing is the best way to control and monitor the fleas. Vacuum all areas of your house that your foster uses at least every two to three days. If fleas are suspected, inspect your dog. Pay special attention to the lower abdomen, tail, neck and under the chin and head. Fleas typically like to hang out in the warmer parts of the dog. Also inspect for evidence of flea dirt. These present as tiny black specks and are digested blood. Before you begin combing, get a bowl of tap water and add a few drops of dawn dish soap. You can place any fleas you find in this solution and they should drown. If just using water, the fleas can swim out. If you find fleas, contact the shelter for treatment. Change the bedding and vacuum the floors. The washing machine will remove fleas, eggs and dirt. Fleas

can also carry tapeworms. If your foster pet has fleas, monitor for, what will appear to be, tiny grains of rice like worms. If you notice this, contact Great River Rescue for treatment.

Injured Dogs - Injured dogs will have specific needs. They'll most likely be recovering from surgery and will come with veterinary orders. Generally, fracture, cast or other surgery patients may need to be confined to a crate or a small room to limit mobility. This type of foster situation may require you to schedule follow-up appointments with the dog's veterinarian. As with all foster dogs, watch for signs of illness, since injured foster dogs are under additional stress and are more prone to illness. Lots of human contact is important for healing injured dogs. Active play should be limited.

Follow the veterinarians recommended parameters for play. Cuddling, petting and brushing are all good social activities for a recovering animal.

Kennel Cough - The shelter is much like a child day-care center. As soon as one has a cold, most will get the cold as well. Just like humans, kennel cough develops when the dog is stressed or when the immune system is compromised. Kennel cough usually goes away as soon as the dog has a stress-free environment to sleep in. Kennel cough is typically a dry, hacking cough. There may be some discharge from the nose and a clear liquid that is coughed up. It's generally a mild, self-limiting illness of the trachea and bronchi encountered in all age groups of dogs, but especially in those under unusual stress. Kennel cough is contagious. Infected dogs should not be around other dogs until a vet deems it is appropriate. If you have another dog in the home, speak with your vet regarding how you should handle your dog's health and wellness. Strenuous activity can bring on coughing episodes. Limit activity and encourage rest. Even baths can be stressful to the system and should be avoided. However, bringing your foster dog into the bathroom while you're taking a shower can be beneficial. The steam from the shower can help loosen some of the mucous. Incubation of Kennel Cough is 5-10 days; its course is 10-20 days with symptoms generally more marked the first week. Fever, lack of appetite and a yellow-green-brown nasal discharge can indicate secondary infections. Call the shelter if any of these symptoms occur.

Parvo - Parvo attacks the intestinal tract, white blood cells and heart muscle. Signs of infection are depression, loss of appetite, vomiting, severe diarrhea, fever and sometimes kennel cough symptoms. The virus is contracted through contact with the infected feces from another dog. It can also be contracted from the environment that an infected dog has lived in. Parvo is hardy and can live outside, even in extreme temperatures, for years.

Parasites - Parasites can cause diarrhea, stomach bloating and/or vomiting. Parasites include tapeworm, roundworm, hookworms and mange. Tapeworms will look like pieces of rice coming out of your foster animals' behind and in their stool. Roundworms and hookworms may be vomited, and roundworms look like spaghetti. Hookworms are smaller and rarely distinguishable without the aid of a microscope. Mange is an infestation of tiny mites. These mites bite and cause intense scratching, reddened skin and loss of fur. Only rare cases of mange (sarcoptic) are contagious to humans. If you suspect your foster pet has parasites, call Great River Rescue.

Vaccination & De-Worming - Your foster pet's vaccination and worming history will be given to you. Your dog most likely has been vaccinated for distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvo and kennel cough. Rabies vaccines will be given based on age and availability of our partner vets. Contact Great River Rescue. You will receive a list of when vaccine boosters are due. We will try our best to work with your schedule.

Spay/Neuter Surgery - The scheduled date for your foster pet's s/n date will be given to you along with any boosters that are needed.

Behavior:

Housetraining - Be patient with your foster dog. Even house trained adult dogs will make mistakes. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, a foster dog may “mark their territory.” This action should be encountered by watching for signs that your foster dog is about to do this and taking them immediately outdoors. Catching them after the fact, won’t do any good. Watch for signs such as sniffing, circling and beginning to lift their leg. If you notice these, immediately distract them and take them directly outdoors. Reward when they’ve gone to the bathroom. Use an odor neutralizer (like nature’s miracle) on the areas where the dog has marked. This will take away any scents and hopefully the dog won’t mark there again. You can begin to housetrain a puppy as early as five to six weeks. Determine where you will want your foster dog to eliminate. Then take them there every time. Once they do their business, reward them with a high pitched “Good job” and a treat. When first training, you should take them out about every two hours. Your pup may wake you up to go out in the middle of the night as well. Take him/her when he wakes up, after he eats, after a play session, or at least every two hours.

Crate Training - Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them down and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and house training mistakes. Start training when you are home. The crate should feel like their safety net and not their prison. Remember that a crate should Never be used as a form of punishment. Crates should be thought of as dog playrooms. It should be a place where dogs like to feel safe and secure.

Attention & Playtime - Gentle and calming human contact is important for dogs. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies. Be sure to give your foster dog several minutes of play time throughout the day. Never allow your children to behave with a foster dog in a manner you would not want the child to behave in with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave the dog alone when he/she is eating, sleeping and chewing on a favorite toy. Never allow a child to remove a toy or any other prized possession from a dog. Do not play tug or wrestle with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw a toy toward the dog. He may think you are throwing things at him. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away so that you are controlling the toy and playtime. Always have your dog sit before feeding, giving a treat, or throwing a toy. Make them work for what they want. This helps with mental stimulation.

Behavior Issues - Many of the behaviors that we find problematic-such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and “hunting” other animals-are really just normal dog behaviors. The easiest way to cope with these behaviors, is to have an appropriate outlet for them. If your foster dog is exhibiting any “behavioral” issues, ask yourself these questions:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is my foster dog left alone for long periods of time?
- Does he have interesting toys to keep his mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behavior? Some examples of this are scolding a dog when they are seeking attention. Any type of attention is still attention. Or engaging the dog when he uses bad manners to get you to play.
- Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?

- Am I providing specific outlets based on his natural instincts and drives?

We don't expect foster care providers to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, talk to Great River Rescue. Another foster home might be best for both you and the dog. Regardless of the issue, we don't condone punishment, which will not address the cause of the behavior and in fact it may worsen behavior that's motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs who aren't currently fearful. People often believe their dog makes the connection to discipline because he runs and hides or "looks guilty." What this actually is, is your dog cowering, running away or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn't know what he's done wrong; he only knows that you're upset. Due to the short attention span of dogs, they won't know what you are upset about after the fact. They will only understand that you're angry about something, but they won't know what. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may provoke other undesirable behaviors too.

Foster Program (CATS):

Great River Rescue also fosters out cats. The cats that are eligible for our foster program are the ones that are nursing or pregnant, recovering from illness or injury, or not doing well in the shelter environment.

Pregnant, or nursing cats, will need to have their own quiet space. No cat may be kept in a garage or barn. The foster will be required to alert us when the cats give birth. The kittens will need to come in for their first exam and worming at two weeks of age. Supplies for the cats will include cat litter, cat box, food, bowls, blankets and toys.

Any pets in foster care, must be adopted through Great River Rescue. Please remember that foster pets are still the property of Great River Rescue and you do not have permission to send your foster pet to another unapproved home. If you can no longer care for your foster pet, you must call Great River Rescue and decide to have the pet returned to us. If you are planning on going out of town, the foster pet will either need to go to another approved foster home, or the pet can come back here while you are out of town.

Any resident pets will be required to have age appropriate vaccines and altered. This is for the safety of all pets involved. You will need to provide veterinarian records prior to approval to foster a pet.

Health & Wellness:

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) - Upper Respiratory infection (URI) are very similar to human colds. The cat will often be congested, sneezing, have nasal and ocular discharge, etc. If your cat displays any of these symptoms, call Great River Rescue. As, a cold could be a symptom of another virus. Due to being congested, your foster cat will not be able to smell their food. This will cause the cat to not want to eat what they can't smell. Using other foods, such as canned food, tuna, or an appetite stimulant, can help get them eating again. If your foster cat goes for more than two days without eating, or displays other symptoms of a more serious illness, contact Great River Rescue.

Dehydration - If your foster cat is showing signs of illness, you may also want to monitor for dehydration. This can be tested by pinching the back of your cat's neck, below the shoulder blades. Gently pinch and twist the skin. If the skin snaps back. Your cat is most likely not dehydrated. If it goes back down slowly,

your cat is most likely dehydrated. A lethargic cat is often dehydrated. If your cat is dehydrated, subcutaneous fluids may be required. Please contact us right away if you suspect dehydration. We may arrange a home visit to administer fluids or direct you to a vet who can bill the shelter directly.

Other Common Issues - Alert Great River Rescue if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Loose stool or diarrhea. This can be caused by a number of things. Anything from stress, to change of food or parasites.
- Continual vomiting that lasts more than a day.
- Lethargy
- Eyes that are red or have discharge and swelling.
- Any crumbly ear debris that has the consistency of coffee grounds.
- Fleas or flea dirt. Revolution or Senergy is normally applied on intake if ear mites are present or the presence of fleas
- Allergic reaction to any medication or vaccination. If your cat vomits, has diarrhea, trouble breathing, or lethargy, call Great River Rescue or the veterinarian.

Vaccinations & Deworming - FVCRP is what kittens are given beginning at six weeks of age.

- F: stands for Feline
- V: stands for viral
- C: Stand for Calici
- R: For Rhinotracheitis
- P: Panleukopenia

Pyrantel is a dewormer that takes care of roundworm, hookworm and pinworm. Kittens will be started on vaccinations at six weeks of age. These vaccines will continue until the cat is 20 weeks of age, or until they're adopted, and the adopter's vet decides what is necessary. Shelter medicine is different from veterinarian medicine.

Socialization - The ideal time for kitten socialization is between two and seven weeks of age. The older a kitten gets, without human contact, the greater chance they have of becoming feral. Eye contact should not be prolonged. Looking at a cat/kitten directly in the eye is threatening to them. Eye dilation could indicate fear or being overstimulated. Keep your foster in a room with accessible hiding spots. Hiding spots help kittens/cats feel safe. Make frequent visits to the room and just sit to get the kitty used to your presence. Try socializing kitty during meal times. Try petting them while they eat. By petting them while they eat, they will associate your touch with something positive.

Adoption from a Foster Home: Some of our foster care providers may wish to seek permanent placement for the pet(s) they foster. Your efforts to find a suitable home are greatly appreciated. With the help of our foster caregivers, we can reach more people, make more connections, and ultimately save more animals.

1. Foster care providers may seek permanent placement for their fostered pet in a suitable home.
 - a. Foster care providers may use their discretion to determine if a home is suitable. Guidance will be provided by Great River Rescue staff.
2. Adoptable pets will be posted on the Great River Rescue website. Foster care providers must provide a contact number that can be shared with potential adopters.

3. Foster care providers are encouraged to share updated photos, videos and stories of their fostered pets.
4. Potential adopters must submit an application to adopt to Great River Rescue. The application will be shared with the potential adopter via online link.
5. Once an application is approved, the foster care provider will be informed by Great River Rescue and may arrange transfer of the animal to the new home.
 - a. The foster care provider must inform Great River Rescue once the animal is transferred.

Field-trips: Short-term field trips are a great way to get shelter dogs out of the shelter and into the community. These experiences are enriching for the shelter dog, and helps promote their adoption through direct interactions with community members.

- This program is intended for shelter dogs only.
- Participants must be trained GRR volunteers and have viewed a field trip training video.
 - Participants must also have taken shelter dogs for walks on our shelter trails and exhibited the ability to handle shelter dogs.
- Arrangements must be made with shelter staff via fostercare@greatriverrescue.com or in-person to schedule a field trip.
- Field Trips should last at least one hour but no longer than three hours.
- Dogs must leave the building on a leash, martingale style collar, and Easy Walk Harness. Dogs must be wearing a GRR Identification tag. Training for use of the Easy Walk Harness will be provided.
- Before leaving the building, the volunteer must program the organization's emergency contact information into their personal electronic device, or must write it in a secure place.
- Field Trip participants are encouraged to share photos, videos and stories of their field trip experience on the Great River Rescue Foster Care Group Facebook page.
- Field Trip participants must complete a "report card" for the pet to help us learn more about the pet's behaviors on an outing.
- Dogs must wear an Adopt-Me vest, leash or bandana when taken to a public place.
- Field Trip participants must sign a liability waiver, provide a copy of a Driver's License or State ID, and two means of contact.

Email Communications

For all non-emergency situations, Great River Rescue can be contacted via email at:
fostercare@greatriverrescue.com

Please feel free to send us any updates, photos, questions, or concerns through this email address. Our foster care coordinator will respond as necessary