



Foster Policies and Procedures Manual

BARC Animal Shelter & Adoptions 📍 3200 Carr Street 🐾 Houston, TX 77026
Shelter Services: 713.229.7300

Email Contact: BARC.Aid@houstontx.gov
Website: www.houstonbarc.com

We are BARC. We care deeply about animals.

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BARC Vision

“Our vision is to be the nationally recognized model of excellence in animal care and placement where City governments throughout the United States see BARC as the beacon of best practices dedicated to delivering humane, efficient and high quality service.”

BARC Mission

“Our mission is to promote humane animal care and protect Public Health and Safety in the City of Houston, including shelter, pet placement, ownership, education and enforcement. Critical to our mission is excellence in everything we do.”

Welcome

Welcome to the BARC Animal Shelter & Adoptions Foster Program! Nearly any shelter animal can benefit from foster care. BARC manages a volunteer foster care program for volunteers to care for sick, or immature animals in their homes, or to take in animals when our shelter is full.

Here are the most common reasons animals need a foster home:

- Orphaned kittens and puppies that are too young to be adopted, some may need to be bottle-fed.
- Under-aged, self-feeding kittens and puppies (1-8 weeks old)
- Mother cat or dog with nursing kittens or puppies
- Animals recovering from injury or illness (may need medication)
- A dog or cat that needs socialization and tender loving care.
- A pet that might need additional medical treatment (like heartworm treatment)
- Healthy animals waiting for space within our shelter as determined by BARC
- Adoptable animals that have been at the shelter for 30 days or more
- The BARC veterinarian has requested an animal be placed in foster care for medical reasons

We take great care to match the animal to you and your situation. Some animals may need fostering for only a few days while others may need to be in your home for much longer. Again, we work with you to ensure that you are comfortable with the animal, its needs, and the expected timeline for fostering, and the outcome plan.

With additional foster parents, many more shelter animals can be adopted, and ultimately find their forever homes. We thank you for your interest fostering a BARC animal, and hope you will join us in our efforts.

BARC Foster Care Program

BARC staff and volunteers share the values of professionalism, responsibility, compassion, commitment, integrity, and accountability with our community partners. These values are exhibited through:

- Providing animal care services that minimize fear, pain, stress and suffering to animals in and out of the shelter
- Providing safe and healthy human-animal interactions
- Providing humane, efficient, high-quality care of animals in our shelter
- Promoting responsible pet ownership including licensing, vaccinations, and spaying/neutering
- Promoting compassion toward animals in and out of the shelter

Volunteer Qualifications and Expectations

- Foster parents provide a safe, loving and stable environment for the foster animal.
- Foster care volunteers feed, groom, socialize, train, and sometimes medicate an animal during its stay in the foster home.
- Experience with animal behavioral or medical issues is a plus, but is not necessary.
- Foster parents possess common sense and patience, as well as be willing to nurse any injury and/or illness — with the understanding that some issues may result in the death of an animal.
- Foster parents transport their foster animal to and from BARC during clinic and/or business hours, for any Veterinarian clinic needs or for a prospective adoption.
- Attendance at a New Volunteer Orientation, offered regularly on the second or fourth Saturday of each month at 10am in the BARC Classroom. Sign up on-line as a volunteer and log your foster volunteer hours
- When the animal is healthy and ready to be adopted, various programs are available to promote adoptions. BARC can post the animal's story and photograph and promote adoption through our various social media on-site adoptions at BARC and periodic off-site adoption locations.
- Foster parents can elect to make the foster animal a permanent part of their family by personally completing a BARC adoption application, and meeting the basic adoption requirements.
- Foster parents have the option to meet potential adopters. Foster input will be considered, however BARC retains the final decision regarding approval or decline for all prospective adopters. Shelter adoption guidelines, forms and screenings will be followed at all times.
- Fosters are welcome to bring the fostered pet to a private veterinarian, however, BARC cannot reimburse for medical expenses incurred at another facility/vet.

Foster Care Volunteer orientations are free, and attending an orientation session does not obligate you to foster an animal. Foster Care Volunteer orientations are held at BARC, in the administration building classroom. BARC Animal Shelter & Adoptions is located at 3200 Carr Street, Houston, TX 77025. To learn more about the BARC foster care program, and to find out more information about foster care volunteer orientations, call 713-229-7354 or email us at BARC.aid@houstontx.gov.

Important Considerations

There are a number of things you should consider and discuss with the rest of your family prior to submitting an application to foster with BARC:

- Will you have enough time to spend with your foster animal? Most of the animals needing foster care will be in a great need of quality time and TLC. Socializing is very important, especially with young animals. The more time spent with your foster animal, the better the chance for a successful and permanent adoption to a forever home.
- Do you have pets of your own? Very young animals have limited immunity and are more susceptible to possible infections carried by older animals. Keeping your foster animals in a separate room with no carpet works best.
- It is a requirement of the Foster program that you keep sick/injured foster animals indoors. Garages and enclosed patios may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Foster animals should be housed indoors at all times, and dogs may spend some short periods of time outdoors in a fenced yard.
- Do you have the time to clean up after your foster animals? Keeping animals and their living areas clean will help prevent illness and stress. Remember, young animals are usually doing one of the four things: Eating, sleeping, playing, going potty.
- Will you be able to keep a close watch on the foster animal's health? There is always the possibility that the animal you are fostering may die if health complications arise. As a foster, it will be your responsibility to monitor and report any concerns or signs of illness to BARC staff immediately. The Foster Care Coordinators may need you to bring the animal in for an unscheduled examination. If it is deemed that your foster animal needs veterinary attention, the Coordinator will make the appointment. BARC will pay for all veterinary care provided at BARC for foster animals that have been approved in advance by appropriate shelter staff (Executive Director or Foster Care Coordinators). You are welcome to bring the fostered pet to your private veterinarian, however, **BARC cannot reimburse for any medical expenses incurred at another facility/vet.**
- Will you be emotionally able to return the animal to BARC after the foster period is over? This can sometimes be the hardest thing to do. It's easy to become very attached to your foster animal.

Letting go of the foster animal can be emotionally draining at first. Keep in mind, the more you foster, the more animals you help place into new homes.

BARC - Services & Hours

Services BARC offers

- Sheltering Animals
- Spaying and Neutering of Adoptable Animals
- Animal Control Services
- Pet Licensing
- Vaccinations
- Micro-chipping
- Wellness Center

Hours of Operation	Adoptions Wellness Center Customer Service	Foster Clinic Hours
MONDAY	CLOSED	12 PM – 4 PM
TUESDAY	12 PM – 6 PM	12 PM – 4 PM
WEDNESDAY	12 PM – 6 PM	CLOSED
THURSDAY	CLOSED	12 PM – 4 PM
FRIDAY	12 PM – 6 PM	CLOSED
SATURDAY	12 PM – 6 PM	CLOSED
SUNDAY	12 PM – 6 PM	12 PM – 4 PM

Admittance to the facility on Mondays and Thursdays when BARC is closed to the public is through the back gate entrance located at 2700 Evella Street.

Contact Information

BARC Animal Shelter & Adoptions

3200 Carr

Houston, TX 77026

Shelter Services: 713-229-7300

Foster / Rescue: 713.229.7354 / 7377

Adoptions: 713.229-7331

Website: www.houstonbarc.com

BARC.Aid@houstontx.gov

BARCAoptions@houstontx.gov

Foster - Policies and Procedures

Foster Policy

The BARC Foster Program seeks to provide supplemental care to animals with special needs, to decrease the rate of euthanasia, to increase the rate of animal adoptions, and to expand public relations within the community. The ultimate goal of the foster care program is find a permanent home for the foster animal.

Foster care may be provided to animals that:

- Require socialization and/or training
- Have temporary health problems (e.g. malnourished, healing wound, etc.)
- Are too young or ill to be adopted, or are pregnant or nursing
- Have a temporary condition affecting their physical appearance (e.g. an animal that needs to be shaved, has ringworm, mange, etc.)
- Suffer from kennel / cage stress
- May be euthanized for lack of shelter space

Foster Requirements

To become an Approved Foster, a volunteer must:

- Submit a BARC Foster Application.
- Submit the BARC Foster Agreement, adhere to all BARC policies and procedures outlined in the manual, Sterilization Agreement, and Outcome Plan.
- Be 18 years or older.
- Show proper identification. (If DL is not current, foster must provide a bill /lease with current address)
- Must live within the Houston city limits.
- Be able to provide a safe, loving and stable environment for the foster animal.
- Be willing to nurse an injury and/or illness — with the understanding that some issues may result in the death of an animal.
- Be able to transport the foster animal to and from BARC during normal BARC business hours.
- Complete an interview with the Foster/Rescue Coordinator.
- If applicable, provide proof that their landlord allows companion animals.
- Be approved by the Foster Coordinator.
- Must have private veterinarian selected within 72 hours after foster is approved.

An applicant may be refused Approved Foster status if, among other things, he/she:

- Lives outside the Houston city limits (does not apply to incorporated cities surrounded by Houston city limits).
- Unable to produce proof of paid pet deposit for rental property.
- Requests to foster animals not allowed by a landlord.
- Demonstrates or acts in an aggressive or cruel manner towards an animal in the presence of a BARC employee or volunteer.
- Has turned in an owned animal to a shelter.
- Was convicted, suspected or under investigation for animal cruelty, has left dead animals on property, or has left an animal in a vehicle in extreme weather conditions that caused death to the animal.
- Has a home environment that is not conducive to fostering a companion animal.
- Refuses to adhere to BARC policy/procedures.

- Have one or more members of the household who do not want animals.
- Clearly states that he/she or a member of the household is allergic to animals.
- Has repeatedly violated license, at-large or nuisance provisions of municipal, county or state code.
- Cannot provide the animal with proper care, or cannot keep the animal confined or contained.
- Appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Acts in an abusive or disruptive manner towards a BARC staff member
- Indicates that a pet recently died of an infectious disease that could risk the health of a foster animal.
- Previously fostered from BARC and did not honor the Foster Agreement.
- Previously refused to return an animal as requested by BARC.

When you become an Approved Foster, we ask that you abide by the following guidelines:

- Adhere to all BARC policies and procedures.
- Respond within 24 hours to communications from BARC staff or potential adopters.
- Immediately report to BARC staff any aggressive behavior by the foster animal.
- Respect the premises by returning them to orderly condition after use.
- Inform the Foster Coordinator regarding concerns about animal health, safety, and facility conditions as well as issues that need improvement. Fosters may also submit suggestions and concerns by email to BARCfosters@cityofhouston.gov.
- Provide changes in your BARC Foster Application personal information (i.e. name, address, phone, e-mail, household occupancy) to the Foster Coordinator in a timely manner so that all records can be kept up to date.
- **BARC retains guardianship and control of all animals in foster care.** The shelter staff will make all final decisions regarding their placement. **Foster animals are NOT to be given away or kept – any adoption of an animal in foster care MUST go through the BARC adoption process with all applicable and accompanying BARC forms and fees.**
- Foster animals are to be cared for as if it were your own pet and receive fresh food and water daily. Foster animals must be housed in a climate-controlled area that is comfortable and stress-free.
- Foster homes may be limited to the number of pets fostered at any given time and will be considered on a case by case basis.
- A home visit may be conducted prior to and/ or during fostering.
- Foster pets are to be kept in the home of foster parent on record; any situation necessitating removal or transfer of the pet must be communicated to BARC, and express written permission must be provided prior to removal or transfer of the pet.
- Foster pets may not be transported outside the Houston area without the permission of the Foster/Rescue Coordinator.
- BARC staff will inform the foster family of medical treatment required, expected length of care required, the care objectives and any other expectations when the foster pet is picked up, and on an on-going basis.
- Any problems/questions encountered during the fostering period should be discussed with the Foster/Rescue Coordinator.
- You are welcome to bring the fostered pet to your private veterinarian, however, **BARC cannot reimburse for medical expenses incurred at another facility/vet.**
- Foster pets may be required to schedule a follow up examination 14 days into the foster program. This will be determined by the veterinary staff. After the health clearance, the

pet will be put in the adoption program. We ask foster homes to assist us in promoting the adoption of foster animals through friends, family and co-workers, online websites and off-site adoptions.

- As foster, you are expected to keep the pet securely confined and return the pet to BARC when requested. If an adopter requests to visit with the foster pet, the Foster Home must make arrangements with BARC to return the animal to the facility for viewing in a timely manner. Foster parents may be required to bring animals to an on-site or off-site event to promote adoption of their foster animal.
- **After 90 days in foster care, the foster parent will be contacted to review the placement plan for the animal.**
- Every effort will be made to adopt foster pets. If the pet begins to exhibit aggressive or undesirable behavior, a chronic debilitating or painful condition, or is terminally ill, euthanasia may have to be considered. This is rare, but the ultimate decision is reserved for the BARC veterinary staff and Foster/Rescue Coordinator.

BARC Aid – Email Plea and Response Mechanism for Animals in Need

BARC sends out daily specific emails to distribute information related to animals with specific and sometimes urgent needs to foster and rescue groups interested:

BARC.Aid@houstontx.gov - the email box at BARC used to send daily plea emails with specific information related to sick/injured or animals requiring specialized treatment receives incoming email from interested fosters or rescue groups, with questions, concerns, or information. BARC Aid is used to email information to this group throughout the day, and is monitored for incoming inquiries and messages.

Fosters looking for animals to care for are encouraged to select from animals on a plea list as these animals are the ones with the most need for home care. Various individual BARC staff members provide coverage for the BARC Aid email address daily; therefore it is imperative that all emails related to foster efforts be sent directly to the BARC.Aid@houstontx.gov email address, and not to any individual BARC staff email addresses. Though responses may come from an individual or a foster may be working with a specific individual, it is imperative that emails include the BARC Aid email address in all correspondence related to foster efforts. Sending to an individual only may delay the response to critical email.

Foster Procedures

- Processing of Animals
 - Potential foster animals are processed according to normal BARC intake procedures.
- Each animal will be tested for heartworms or FELV/FIV and given vaccines, in accordance with regular intake protocol.
- Selection of Animals
 - Foster Coordinator may contact Fosters by phone or email when potential foster animals are identified.
- Potential foster animals will be posted on foster web groups.
- Approved Fosters may select foster animals from the BARC.Aid plea lists, or via recommendations from the Foster Coordinators. All foster animals must be approved by the Foster Coordinator prior to placement in foster care.
- Pick Up of Foster Animal
 - The Foster should visit BARC and sign in at the front desk. The Foster/Rescue Coordinator or designee will be notified. (Appointments are encouraged)
- The Foster/Rescue Coordinator will assist the foster with the retrieval of foster animals, if necessary. The foster may tour the facility to locate additional foster animals.
- Foster may consult with veterinary staff for advice on the care of the animal or to have a Microchip inserted.
- Foster should visit the Customer Service counter, where the foster arrangement will be recorded. All foster arrangements will be reviewed every 90 days. If an animal remains in foster care after 90 days, one of the following must occur:
 - Foster may personally adopt the animal from BARC and pay applicable adoption fee;
 - Foster identifies and presents a possible adopter to BARC for adoption facilitation; or
 - Foster returns the animal to BARC.
- Regular Recurring Fosters:
 - BARC fosters will be limited to no more than 3 animals as over three months of age; exceptions will be considered based on experience level, home inspection and further interview process.
 - All adoptions of animals in foster care **MUST** go through **BARC**.
- One-time Foster Until Adoption:
 - No more than 3 animals at a time (First time fosters, Fosters to adopt, litters may be exempt)
 - Must qualify for all of the adoption application criteria.
 - Animal must be cleared by a vet and given surgery date in the future (within 40 days)
 - Submit a signed BARC Foster Application, Sterilization Agreement, and Foster Outcome Plan.
 - Adoption must be completed within 45 days.

- Foster to Promote:
 - Have only 3 animals at a time (First time fosters, Fosters to adopt, litters are exempt)
 - Must be cleared by a vet.
 - Be placed in contact with Adoptions Coordinator (Taran Hutchins) for information on potential adopters and adoption sites.
 - The animal must be adopted through BARC ONLY.
 - Submit a signed BARC Foster Application, Sterilization Agreement, Foster Outcome Plan.
 - Adoption must be completed within 90 days. If an animal remains in foster care after 90 days, one of the following must occur:
 - Foster may personally adopt the animal from BARC and pay applicable adoption fee;
 - Foster identifies and presents a possible adopter to BARC for adoption facilitation; or
Foster returns the animal to BARC.
 - All adoption paperwork and fees will be due to BARC within 5 days of adoption.

- Death of a Foster Animal
 - Foster should notify the Foster Coordinator immediately if an animal dies while in the Foster's care.

- Return of Foster Animals
 - If, for any reason, a Foster can no longer provide care for the foster animal, the Foster should notify the coordinator to find a replacement with another foster, rescue group, or adopter.

NOTE: BARC may send Animal Control Officers for a foster home visitation at any time to inspect the environment and condition of the foster animal(s).

Care of Foster Animals

- Unless surrendered by the owner, animals must be held at BARC for five full business days after arrival (the "Hold/Evaluation Period").
- Nonetheless, animals may be placed in foster care prior to the end of the Hold Period for medical reasons ("Medical Release"), as determined by a BARC Veterinarian. Conditions that may justify a Medical Release include:
 - Upper respiratory infection
 - Ringworm
 - High heartworm positive status
 - Puppies or kittens three months old or younger
 - Neonatal
 - Pregnancy
 - Having been hit by a car and/or having broken bones
 - Mange (sarcoptic)

- If a Foster picks up an animal prior to the end of the Impoundment Period under a Medical Release, the animal may not be spayed or neutered and no other non-essential surgeries may be performed before the end of the five full days.
- Foster may bring the animal to the BARC veterinary office during normal foster clinic hours for evaluation and care. There is no charge associated with veterinary care

administered at BARC for foster animals, remember to bring the kennel card with you for all vet clinic appointments.

- Veterinary services provided at BARC include:
 - Routine vaccinations.
 - Dewormer as needed (every two weeks).
 - Heartworm testing and FELV/FIV testing.
 - Sterilization.
 - Insertion of Microchip.
 - Care of minor illnesses treatable with antibiotics.
 - Heartworm treatment for high heartworm positive dogs (as medications are available).
- Except for the limited menu of veterinary services provided at no charge at BARC, the Foster is responsible for the care and expenses of providing care of all foster animals.
- Foster animals may be taken to the Foster's private veterinarian at the expense of the Foster. Fosters must provide the Foster/Rescue Coordinator copies of records regarding any veterinary care a foster animal receives outside of BARC. **BARC cannot reimburse for medical expenses incurred at another facility/vet.**

Foster Adoptions:

Animals in foster care are available to the public for adoption unless they are underage, receiving treatment for an illness, have behavior issues that are being addressed or are designated as Foster to Adopt.

- Fostered animals can be shown online on all of our web channels for more exposure to potential adopters. Fosters should designate an email address to be shown so that they may be contacted directly by interested adopters. A bio about the animal and a good photo can go a long way to help to get an animal adopted so fosters are encouraged to send these to the Adoptions Coordinator or Foster/Rescue Coordinator to be included in the online listing. This information can also be used to highlight the fostered animal on BARC's social media outlets.
 - Fosters are encouraged to bring their animals to BARC and off-site adoption events when the animal is healthy, has been spayed/neutered, and has been cleared by our vet staff. Bring your animal to BARC during Foster Clinic hours for a check-up with the veterinarian and to update their kennel card information with their new healthy status. This allows us to ensure that the animal is fully recovered and ready for any adoption event. Once cleared, you may bring your animal to BARC during our hours of operation for exposure to potential adopters. Weekends, especially Saturdays, are the best time to meet the most adopters. Please notify the Foster/Rescue Coordinator or Adoptions Coordinator if you would like to bring a fostered animal to an off-site adoption event. Most events have a limited crate space so a spot must be reserved for your animal.
 - If BARC locates an adopter, the Foster will be notified and required to return the animal to BARC.
 - Fosters are permitted to adopt animals in their care for themselves, if they qualify under the normal BARC adoption guidelines. Fosters are encouraged to attend Adoption Counselor training to fully understand the BARC adoption process and policies.
 - To adopt a fostered animal, the Foster must come to BARC or attend an off-site BARC adoption event and have the adopter complete a BARC adoption application and pay the applicable adoption fees. If the Foster identifies a potential adopter for the animal, the Foster should instruct the potential adopter to come to BARC or to attend an off-site BARC adoption event to complete the BARC adoption application and pay applicable adoption fees.
- **Transfers to Rescue Groups**
 - All transfers of foster animals between Fosters and Rescue Groups MUST be administered by BARC.
 - If a Foster desires to transfer a foster animal to a NEW Rescue Group, the Foster must return to BARC to submit the paperwork necessary to relinquish responsibility for the animal. The Rescue Group must then complete the standard rescue transfer process.
 - If a Foster desires to transfer to a REGULAR Rescue Group, the coordinator MUST be notified by phone or email before the transfer is made
 - **Reclaimed Animals**
 - If an animal is reclaimed by its owner, the Foster must return the animal to BARC. Expenses incurred by the Foster may or may not be reimbursed by the owner.

Privacy

- Any information pertaining to BARC records and cases which you may become privileged to (including names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) as a result of your affiliation with BARC is confidential and may not be discussed with others, except as may be required by law.
- Under some circumstances, BARC staff may be prohibited from discussing with you certain specific details regarding cases that are under investigation or pending criminal court action.
- Your residential address and residential phone number will not be disclosed or provided to anyone unless specifically authorized by you or as may be required by law.

Animal Safety

- We ask that you follow strictly all BARC policies related to animal and people safety.
- You are required to wash your hands and/or change your gloves before and after each animal encounter, after cleaning animal cages or animal-care areas, and after contact with feces, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, exudates, or articles contaminated by these substances.
- In the Adoption Center, Fosters must use a hand sanitizer after each animal contact.

Accidents or Injury Reporting

- All accidents or injuries sustained by you at BARC MUST be reported immediately to the Foster Coordinator. A bite or scratch is considered an injury and must be treated immediately.
- You are required to fill out an accident or injury report for every incident. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.
- In an emergency situation, please focus on safety first!
- When treating an animal bite, you should:
 - Notify the Foster/Rescue Coordinator.
 - Flush the bite and surrounding area with soap and water or peroxide followed by water.
 - Fill out a Bite Report. The Bite Case unit will need this information to complete its investigation.
 - We encourage you to seek medical attention from your primary physician.

Resignations and Terminations

- If you choose to leave the BARC Foster Program, please notify the Foster Coordinator to be removed from the Approved Foster list.
- BARC can elect to terminate or suspend your participation in the BARC Foster Program. Reasons for termination can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Failure to follow the BARC Foster Agreement and guidelines indicated in this policy
 - Inhumane treatment or mistreatment of animals
 - Misconduct with or abuse of staff, volunteers or citizens
 - Falsification of BARC records, including the Foster Application
 - Insubordination
 - Theft
 - Possession of drugs or alcohol
 - Use of or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at BARC or BARC-related events
 - Presence in off-limit areas at BARC
 - Failure to return animals as requested by BARC
 - Deliberate destruction of BARC's or an individual's property
 - Possession of unauthorized weapons or dangerous materials on the BARC facility or at BARC-related events
 - Any other justifiable reason deemed appropriate by the Foster Coordinator or BARC Management staff.

Grievance Procedure

- If you are denied application or terminated from the BARC Foster Program, you have the right to appeal to BARC management.
- A written request for an appeal should be sent to the BARC Assistant Director, BARC, 611 Walker, 13th Floor, Houston, Texas 77002.

Thank You!

We would like to thank you for choosing to participate in our program. Fosters are a valuable asset to our organization and to the many animals that need loving homes. BARC provides a multitude of services to the residents and animals of the City of Houston, including sheltering animals, spaying and neutering adoptable animals, animal control services, low cost micro-chipping, and pet licensing.

This manual has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our Foster Policies and Procedures as well as general information about BARC. We are very grateful to have you as a part of our team. We hope that your affiliation with BARC will be extremely rewarding. You can have a huge impact on the lives of homeless animals in our community. The support of fosters is critical to the success of BARC and the fulfillment of our mission. We look forward to collaborating with you and finding every dog and cat a forever home!