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## TALLAHASSEE-LEON COMMUNITY ANIMAL SERVICE CENTER FOSTER POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure standard care and regulate the future adoption of fostered animals from Tallahassee-Leon Community Animal Service Center (TLCASC). With municipal services there is an obligation to protect the public interest by keeping accurate records ensuring accountability to the citizens.

It is an express goal of the TLCASC to decrease euthanasia rates of animals not ready for adoption due to curable disease, young age, injury, poor health, or shelter overpopulation.

### 2.0 APPLICABILITY

The Foster Policy applies to all TLCASC employees and any individual registered or applying to be registered as a foster candidate into the TLCASC Foster Registration Book.

### 3.0 DEFINITION

**Foster Agreement:** A contract between the TLCASC and the Fosterer for each animal or group of animals fostered at one time. The Foster Agreement provides and clarifies specific conditions related to each fosterer but does not supersede or modify the Foster Policy

**Foster Registration Book:** The TLCASC register, which records all the approved individuals, humane and rescue organizations and their members

**Fosterer:** Any employee of the TLCASC, member of a humane or rescue organization registered in the TLCASC Foster Registration Book or individual registered in the TLCASC Foster Registration Book

**Foster & Adoption Committee:** A group of five people appointed by the TLCASC Management Team to analyze and recommend updates of the Foster Program to the TLCASC Management Team

**Infant:** Any dogs or cats below the age of eight weeks old; any kittens under two pounds of weight; animals from other species unable to nourish themselves when food is provided

**Medically-not-adoptable:** Any ill animals as determined by the TLCASC Health Assessment process or by the discretion of TLCASC Management Team as in need of medical treatment which requires skilled or prolonged care, including females at full-term pregnancy or those nursing infants

**Stray or Possible Owner Claim Period:** A time frame designated by County and City Animal Control ordinance and extended as an additional time designated by TLCASC Management if an animal arrives in the TLCASC facility wearing a collar, collar and tags, collar with owner information, or is tattooed.

**TLCASC:** The Tallahassee-Leon Community Animal Service Center

**TLCASC Behavior Assessment:** The **Assessing Dogs on Practical Tests (A.D.O.P.T.)** program is a research-based assessment process for all shelter dogs

**TLCASC Management Team:** The Animal Service Center Manager, the Animal Service Center Assistant Manager, the Administrative Specialist III, the Animal Care Supervisor, the Animal Control Supervisor and the Humane Education Supervisor

#### **4.0 POLICY**

- 4.1 Only employees of the TLCASC or individuals that are registered in the TLCASC Foster Registration Book can serve as a Fosterer.
- 4.2 Only animals identified as adoptable by the TLCASC Behavior Assessment, an infant or an animal found medically-not-adoptable can be fostered. The TLCASC Management Team, at its discretion, may identify additional animals that qualify for fostering.
- 4.3 Anyone registered in the Foster Registration Book interested in providing foster care for one or several animals must fill out and sign a Foster Agreement for each animal or group of animals to be fostered.
- 4.4 No animals can be fostered or requested prior to signing the Foster Agreement. Animals shall be picked up within 24 hours of signing the agreement.
- 4.5 Animals shall not be fostered during a *hold* status which is defined as, but not limited to, hold initiated by an Animal Control Officer, hold for the duration of bite quarantine, and hold for stray or possible owner claim period.
- 4.6 No animals shall be fostered before remaining three days in the TLCASC adoption ward, unless they are medically-not-adoptable or considered an infant. Should TLCASC reaches full capacity of adoptable animals, the TLCASC Management Team may designate animals that qualify for fostering prior to the three-day adoption ward period.
- 4.7 The TLCASC Management Team reserves the right to decide which animals will be fostered and how many days after the required waiting period (Article 4.6) the animal may enter the foster program.

- 4.8 All medically-not-adoptable animals taken by a Fosterer cannot be adopted until reclassified as *medically adoptable* by the TLCASC Management Team, at which time, a new Foster Agreement shall be prepared and signed.
- 4.9 All Infants fostered cannot be adopted until they reach applicable the age and/or weight as defined for Infant. At that time, a new Foster Agreement will be prepared and signed.
- 4.10 The Fosterer assumes full responsibility for the animals' safety, medical care and welfare once the animals have been removed from the premises of the TLCASC. TLCASC will provide all food for fostered Infants and TLCASC will transport Infants to the vet when deemed necessary.
- 4.11 The TLCASC Management Team reserves the right to deny any Fosterer from being included in the Foster Registration Book for cause. In addition, any current registration can be cancelled at any time without notice for cause. Any Fosterer excluded or cancelled may submit a written appeal to the TLCASC Foster & Adoption Committee within 10 business days of the notice of termination.
- 4.12 The TLCASC Management Team reserves the right to exercise home or premises visit (fostered animal's location) at any time during the foster or before accepting a Fosterer for the purposes of determining the quality of care for TLCASC fostered animal(s).
- 4.13 The Foster Agreement can be terminated at any time before its completion date at the discretion of the TLCASC Management Team for cause. Affected animals will be held for a period of 10 days (UNLESS ADOPTED) to allow the Fosterer to appeal to the Foster & Adoption Committee for termination criteria resolution and to reinstatement of the Foster Agreement or placement with another Fosterer.
- 4.14 All fostered animals from TLCASC that die during the fostering period must be returned to TLCASC, or the Fosterer must send a confirmation letter to the TLCASC Management Team of the death from a licensed veterinarian in the state where the animal is fostered for verification of the animal's death.
- 4.15 All fostered animals must receive all medical and surgical care approved and recommended by the TLCASC Management Team within the noted time period. Fosterers are responsible for all veterinarian fees and can apply for financial assistance through the TLCASC Management Team.
- 4.16 The TLCASC Management Team must pre-approve every expense involving the TLCASC. For every approved expense a receipt must be provided before receiving reimbursement.
- 4.17 The TLCASC Management Team shall set a limit on the number of animals per Fosterer. The maximum number of animals taken by a Fosterer may vary and be based on the Fosterer's ability to care for fostered animals.

- 4.18 Fostered animals must not leave Leon County without approval from the TLCASC Management Team. Approved Fosterers residing outside of Leon County may transport animals to their home and to veterinarians within their home county. The Fosterer will promptly notify TLCASC of any and all changes in residence, mailing address, telephone number or location where the animal is to be housed.
- 4.19 Fosterers shall submit written requests for exceptions or non-routine changes in the status of animals to the TLCASC Management Team. Decisions of the TLCASC Management Team can be appealed to TLCASC Foster & Adoption Committee in writing within 10 business days.
- 4.20 No Fosterer can adopt a fostered animal without compliance with the TLCASC Adoption Policy.
- 4.21 The TLCASC Management Team shall give priority to an adoption recommended by the Fosterer when it meets TLCASC adoption criteria.
- 4.22 For all adoption of fostered animal, TLCASC employees and Fosterers must use TLCASC adoption forms and follow TLCASC adoption policy and procedures.
- 4.23 Every adoption by a Fosterer must comply with Florida State Law 823.15 and the TLCASC adoption policy.
- 4.24 The TLCASC Management Team, with review of medical treatment documentation, testimonials from the Fosterer, and/or presentation of the recuperated/rehabilitated animal, will decide whether to reclassify an animal from medically-not-adoptable to adoptable status. At its discretion, the TLCASC Management Team may require that such medically adoptable animals go through or repeat the TLCASC Behavior Assessment before being classified as adoptable.

## **5.0 PROCEDURE**

- 5.1 Each applicant must complete the Foster Application form to become a Fosterer.
- 5.2 Each application is submitted to the TLCASC Management Team for approval.
- 5.3 Each approved applicant is registered in the Foster Registration Book.
- 5.4 A Foster Agreement must be signed and submitted by the Fosterer for each foster animal or group of animals.
- 5.5 Every fostered animal must receive a health assessment and appropriate preventive cares and shall be microchipped before leaving the TLCASC premise.
- 5.6 Fostered animals may be returned to the TLCASC before the ending date of the contract. However, the Fosterer must give 24 hours notice of her or his intention to terminate the contract and return fostered animals to TLCASC.

- 5.7 All fostered animals not adopted must be returned to the TLCASC at the ending date stated in the Foster Agreement, unless the TLCASC Management Team grants in writing a temporary administrative extension to the contract.
- 5.8 Any request to extend the ending date of the Foster Agreement must be submitted in writing to the TLCASC Management Team not less than five business days before the contract expires.
- 5.9 TLCASC staff must complete a foster entry in the Chameleon database as follows
  - 5.9.1 Enter Foster demographics in Owner ID section.
  - 5.9.2 Go to Outcome section on the primary kennel screen.
  - 5.9.3 Enter "Foster" for type.
  - 5.9.4 Enter the subtype as "Medical" if the animal is medically-not-adoptable, "Infant" if the animal is too young to be adopted, "Behavioral" if the animal's present behavior inhibits adoption, "Time/Space" if the kennel is full capacity with adoptable animals.
  - 5.9.5 Enter your employee number.
  - 5.9.6 Enter the date and time.
  - 5.9.7 Go to Adopt Reason in Owner ID section.
  - 5.9.8 Enter "Foster" as the reason.
  - 5.9.9 Enter the scheduled return date that was agreed upon.
  - 5.9.10 Enter name/code of Humane/Rescue Organization and owner ID.
- 5.10 The TLCASC staff shall not provide the public with sensitive adoption information (copies of humane and rescue organization adoption contracts, addresses of adopters, home phone numbers of Fosterers, etc.) unless specifically required by official public records requests or the Animal Services Manager. The TLCASC staff shall instruct citizens that all public record requests must be completed at the Treasurer Clerk's Office located in City Hall, at 300 S. Adams St, Tallahassee, FL 32301.

## **6.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 6.1 It shall be the responsibility of all employees of the TLCASC, Fosterers and members of the Foster & Adoption Committee to acquaint themselves with the policy content to ensure compliance.
- 6.2 It shall be the responsibility of all Fosterers to adhere to the TLCASC Foster Policy.
- 6.3 It shall be the responsibility of the TLCASC Management Team and Foster & Adoption Committee to monitor the Foster Policy and Foster Agreement and address issues of non-compliance through counseling and/or disciplinary action which may include, but is not limited to, removal of the animal from the Fosterers and/or the deletion of individuals from the Foster Registration Book.

## 7.0 Effective Date

This policy shall be in effect on the date below upon the approval and signature of the Animal Service Manager and the Assistant Manager (or designee). This policy shall remain in effect as written unless amended or revised in writing.

**Effective Date: December 19, 2002**

_____ Animal Service Manager	_____ Date
_____ Animal Service Assistant Manager/Designee	_____ Date
_____ Representative Foster/Adoption Committee	_____ Date