Foster Partnership Program SOP

Program Overview
The [BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER] will support the [DV SHELTER/RESOURCE] in developing a program and recruiting volunteers for the purpose of providing safe and secure foster housing for the pets of domestic violence victims who are utilizing the shelter’s services.

Program Coordinators/Liaisons
To facilitate communication and sustainability of the program, one representative from the [BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER] and one representative from the [DV SHELTER/RESOURCE] will be designated to serve as program coordinators and liaisons to each other. If the representative from either organization should leave that organization or no longer be able to serve as the liaison, another shall be appointed in their place.

Program Fundraising
It may become necessary to raise funds to cover medical, short-term boarding and supplies costs as the program grows. Fundraising efforts may be undertaken via community events, donation solicitation at businesses or veterinary clinics in the community, from [BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER], etc. Care should be taken to maintain the security of the program when any advertising or fundraising efforts are made.

Foster Home and Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
1. The [BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER] and the [DV SHELTER/RESOURCE] work in concert to actively recruit foster home volunteers and transport volunteers through methods including, but not limited to: website information, printed flyers, social media, and at events.
2. Foster volunteers must successfully complete:
   a. Standard application (including information about all adult and minor family members in home, work schedules, resident pets, yard/fence/house/apartment, etc.) with references, including family veterinarian and landlord permission, if applicable.
   b. Home check and interview of all persons living in the home by a trained program volunteer foster coordinator
   c. Short training course or document/quiz to demonstrate understanding of domestic violence safety concerns, privacy, anonymity, their limited role in the pet’s life, and the fact that the pet will remain owned by the original owner regardless of their circumstances unless they voluntarily agree to permanently transfer ownership.
      i. To be developed by [DV SHELTER/RESOURCE]

Foster Home Requirements and Matching
1. It is recommended that a foster home coordinator volunteer be selected and trained to do home visits, keep medical records up to date for foster home resident pets, and help match pets with foster homes.

2. Foster homes must be able to provide a safe, secure and home-like environment for the fostered pet. The fostered pet should not be kept in confinement or alone away from the family as its majority housing, should be protected from inclement weather and should be provided affection and exercise as any family pet.

3. Foster home assignments will be made by the joint program coordinators or a trained volunteer that they delegate the responsibility to. The best possible match will be made between fostered pet and foster home, taking into account resident pets, fostered pet's behavioral or health needs, and ideally keeping the fostered pet as far from the abuser's home/work/daily routine as possible.

4. Resident pets:
   a. Resident dogs: owner must provide and keep updated proof of age-appropriate vaccinations for rabies (1-3 yr), distemper (1-3 yr), parvovirus (1-3 yr) and bordetella (1 yr) and pet must not show signs of contagious disease (coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, unless already diagnosed as secondary to non-contagious cause).
   b. Resident cats: owner must provide and keep updated proof of age-appropriate vaccinations for rabies (1 yr) and FVRCP (1-3 yr), and negative FIV and feline leukemia tests (one time for indoor cats; annually for cats that go outside), and pet must not show signs of contagious disease (coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, unless already diagnosed as secondary to non-contagious cause).
   c. All resident dogs and cats must be on adequate, effective flea and tick prevention.
   d. A negative fecal parasite test must be submitted for all resident dogs, and at least one resident cat (if multiple cats in household) annually.
   e. Resident dogs and cats must be well-socialized and friendly toward other animals.
   f. The medical requirements above, and medical costs related to accidents or illness incurred during fostering, will be the responsibility of the resident pet’s owner, unless demonstrably caused by failure to disclose behavioral or health information by the foster pet’s owner.

*Foster Home Engagement*

Demand for foster home volunteers will naturally wax and wane. Maintaining enthusiasm and engagement among the volunteers is crucial, especially if they are not called for service for a substantial period of time. Efforts to retain and continually train volunteers should be made through regular digital engagement and/or community events, including but not limited to:

1. Monthly email newsletters/communications
2. Annual or semi-annual thank you celebration or small gift potentially sponsored by [BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER] or via raised donations.
Eligibility, Intake and Stay

1. Eligibility: only individuals entering the [DV SHELTER/RESOURCE] or, on a case-by-case basis, those utilizing other area agencies that serve those with temporary housing loss are eligible for pet foster housing through this program.
   a. Pet owners retain ownership of and responsibility for their pet, including incurred medical costs during their foster stay, unless demonstrably due to negligence by the foster home or program. Pet owners will agree to life-saving and pain mitigating treatment of their pet in an emergency situation until they can be reached.
   b. Pet owners must reclaim their pet within 2 weeks (14 days) of leaving the shelter or other approved residential facility.
      i. If pet owners do not reclaim their animal within this timeframe, notice will be sent by registered/certified mail to the last known address. If the owner does not claim the pet within 10 days after this letter is sent, the animal will be considered abandoned and the program will rehome the pet or turn it over to a humane society for rehoming.
      ii. Questions regarding the need for safe pet housing will be included in the standard intake process.
      iii. Owner may ask for extension if circumstances require, but it may not be possible or granted.

2. Transport and short-term housing:
   a. Transport: individuals may need a variety of timing and transport options to get themselves and their pets to safety, sometimes with very little warning. The foster home volunteer and the pet owner should never meet directly - this will require the use of intermediary transporters, whether they be [DV SHELTER/RESOURCE] staff, transport volunteers, or law enforcement. Training and communication to all of these parties should be regularly undertaken to ensure safe practices.
   b. Short-term housing: the pet owner or a transport volunteer may transport the pet to either [PARTICIPATING DOG DAYCARE, BOARDING or VETERINARY PRACTICES], depending on if the pet needs medical care, with prior coordination and communication with these facilities by a program coordinator/volunteer. The foster home or a transport volunteer may then transport the pet to the foster home when ready.

3. Fostered pet requirements
   a. If proof of valid vaccinations/recent tests/ectoparasite control cannot be provided, owner will agree that pet be vaccinated/tested for the items below at their regular veterinarian or the [PARTICIPATING VETERINARY PRACTICE], and provided ectoparasite control. If owner cannot cover these costs, the program will use raised/sponsored funds to compensate veterinarians whenever possible.
      i. Dogs: rabies, distemper, parvovirus.
1. If going to foster home with other dogs: add bordetella
   ii. Cats: rabies
      1. IF going to foster home with other cats: add FVRCP, negative FIV/feline leukemia test within past 6 months
   iii. Negative fecal parasite test w/in past 3 months
   iv. Effective, regular flea and tick control

b. If needed, lifestage-appropriate dog and cat food will be provided at no cost for pets in the program.
   i. Costs of food for other animal species may be covered out of raised program funds if the owner is unable to cover costs.

c. Items such as leashes, collars, crates, carriers, etc. may be provided by [BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER] or out of raised program funds as needed.