
Safety Net Foster Program Enrollment Criteria and FAQ

Owner Requirements

- The owner and their pet must be located in San Diego County.
- The owner must be experiencing financial hardship and unable to pay for private boarding or foster care.
- The owner must have already tried alternate [boarding resources](#) including reaching out to those in their network (friends, family, coworkers, etc.).
- The owner must be able to reunite with their pet within 90 days. With that said, the program works in 30-day contract increments and extensions past 30 days are not guaranteed. Instead, they are dependent on foster availability, how the pet is doing in foster care and the owner's ability to communicate about reunification plans.
- The owner or an agent must be able to commit to weekly or biweekly phone or email check-ins with program staff, depending on their individual situation.
- The owner cannot have a negative history with San Diego Humane Society.
- The owner must have had the pet for a minimum of three months.

Pet Requirements

Age of Pets

Pets cannot be less than 4 months of age.

Number of Pets

We will provide support for a maximum of three pets per owner; however, each pet's enrollment will be evaluated according to our resources at the time. Litters will not be accepted and can instead be supported through the [litter abatement program](#).

Type of Pets

All legal animals will be considered for enrollment in the program.

Behavior Requirements

The pet will not qualify if...

- The pet has bitten a person or another pet, necessitating medical attention.
- The pet has a history of seriously injuring or killing another animal.
- The pet shows severe signs of stress and anxiety, such as destruction to doorways or windows, chronic escape or self-inflicted injuries, when left alone in the home.

- The pet shows severe signs of fear around people, animals or in new environments, such as panicked attempts to flee or hide, becomes completely unresponsive, or tries to bite or bites.

Medical Requirements

- If the pet is not already spayed/neutered, the owner must agree to allow us to perform the surgery (cats and dogs only).
- We will administer any due vaccinations (DHPP, Bordetella, FVRCP and Rabies), flea preventative and dewormer upon intake, as well as a microchip upon intake if one is not present.
- We are unable to enroll pets who are actively receiving a prescription for a controlled veterinary substance. Commonly prescribed controlled veterinary substances include Buprenorphine/Buprenex, Tramadol, Butorphanol/Torbugesic, Fentanyl, Hydromorphone, and Hycodan/hydrocodone. If you are unsure, please see the full [list](#) of controlled substances from the DEA website.
- Cases with pets determined to be Unhealthy-Untreatable (UU) according to the Asilomar Accords will be reviewed by Medical leadership.

Program FAQ

- **Is there a fee for the program?** While there are no fees associated with the program, we are required by law to charge for a microchip (\$25) and license (varies depending on city) at the time of reclaim. Donations are always welcome!
- **Do I provide care supplies for my pet while they are in foster care?** SDHS will provide all care supplies for the duration of program enrollment. Pets will receive a Purina diet. If another type of food is preferred, it must be provided by the owner. SDHS is not able to guarantee return of any care supplies that the owner leaves at the time of drop off (bedding, toys, etc.).
- **How long will it take to find a foster for my pet?** Typically anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. During this time, the owner and program staff will remain in frequent contact to advise of any changes on either end. Large breed dogs, especially those with behavioral challenges such as reactivity generally take the longest to place.
- **Will my pets be placed in foster care together?** While placing more than one pet in foster care can be challenging, we will do our best to accommodate bonded pets.
- **Can I see my pet while they are in foster care?** While we are not able to arrange visits while pets are enrolled in the program, program staff will share frequent foster updates and photos and owners are welcome to pass along messages to share with the foster.
- **Who are the foster caregivers?** SDHS foster caregivers are community members who have signed up to temporarily care for different types of pets—adult cats and dogs, kittens, puppies, small pets, etc. Foster volunteers also have the option to sign up for this program and provide temporary care for a community member's pet. All foster volunteers receive specialized training and sign an agreement before taking on their first foster assignment and are in frequent communication with program staff.
- **Can I have my foster caregiver's contact information?** Because safety net foster enrollees are often dealing with sensitive personal situations, we maintain confidentiality between owners and fosters.
- **Will the foster keep my pet/what if I cannot reunite with my pet?** The goal of this program is to provide

temporary support to enable pet owners to reunite with their pets. If an owner is not able to reunite with their pet at the end of their enrollment in the program, their pet's pathway will be determined at that time and we will proceed accordingly.