

## About Fostering Animals for Ahimsa House

Thank you for considering becoming one of our foster homes! This page describes the process of becoming a foster home and gives you an idea of what is involved in fostering for Ahimsa House. If you have any questions at any time, you may contact us at [foster@ahimsahouse.org](mailto:foster@ahimsahouse.org)

The steps involved in becoming and being a foster home are:

- You complete our general volunteer application and online orientation at <http://www.ahimsahouse.org/ahimsa-house-volunteer-application>
- You complete the foster home application, which we send you after completing the general application/orientation process. We will need a copy of your driver's license and current auto insurance card (since foster volunteers may need to transport their foster pets), as well as vaccination history for any pets currently in your home.
- We process the application and complete your reference check and background check (please understand that this process may take several weeks depending on the availability of your references and of our volunteers).
- An Ahimsa House volunteer contacts you to schedule a time to come to your home for a foster home inspection and additional orientation session.
- We notify you as to whether you have been approved as a foster home.
- If approved, we place you on our foster home list. When we have a foster animal available, we email and/or phone you. You are under no obligation to accept a particular foster assignment, but we ask that you let us know as quickly as possible whether you can foster the animal, since we are usually paying to board the animal while we look for a foster placement.
- When you accept a foster assignment, we arrange for you to pick the animal up (usually from a boarding facility, since foster animals usually spend at least a night or two in boarding first so they can be evaluated for health/behavioral issues), or if necessary (for example, if the animal is coming directly from the client), we arrange for a transport volunteer to transport the animal to you.
- We provide you with any necessary supplies, and we ask you to commit to fostering for 60 days in most situations (though clients often require shorter or longer lengths of housing for their pets, and we will work with your schedule). We will notify you when the client is ready to reclaim the animal, and we will make arrangements either for you to return the animal (usually to a boarding facility again) or for a transport volunteer to pick up the animal.

This process may sound lengthy and complicated, but please understand we must conform to Georgia Department of Agriculture requirements regarding foster homes, as well as our own additional procedures to ensure everyone's safety (pets', clients', and your own) due to the nature of the situations we work with.

Being a foster home for Ahimsa House requires some patience and flexibility. Unlike rescue/adoption groups, we may not always have an animal available for you to foster: it depends on our client volume, where in Georgia our cases come from, whether an animal is suitable for foster placement, and whether there is a good fit between a particular animal and your household.

Please read thoroughly through our Foster Home Policies and Procedures on the next page and ensure you are comfortable abiding by them. If you have any questions at any time, you can reach us at [foster@ahimsahouse.org](mailto:foster@ahimsahouse.org)

## Ahimsa House Foster Home Policies and Procedures

- **I understand that my work with Ahimsa House is confidential.** I will not discuss any animals or cases with anyone except a representative of Ahimsa House without express prior authorization from an Ahimsa House representative. For everyone's safety, clients and foster homes are not permitted to have contact with one another or to know one another's identities or locations. If I become aware that confidentiality may have been breached in any manner, I will immediately notify Ahimsa House on the 24-hour crisis line at **404-452-6248**.
- Ahimsa House takes numerous precautions to ensure the safety of foster volunteers. However, if I ever encounter a situation where I feel my safety or my foster animal's safety is at risk, I will immediately call 911 and then Ahimsa House (404-452-6248), in that order.
- It is my choice whether or not I disclose to others that I am a foster volunteer for Ahimsa House. We keep our foster home list secret from everyone except Ahimsa House representatives and trusted volunteers. Although we have never had an abuser trace an animal to a particular foster location and go looking for the animal there, and we believe it is unlikely that this would ever occur, we respect your right to take whatever additional precautions you feel necessary to make you comfortable.
- Many animals who come to Ahimsa House have had difficult lives. They may have been neglected and/or physically abused. Incoming animals are screened by a veterinary professional or volunteer, and are given veterinary care as needed. However, I understand that:
  - It is possible that an animal may have a health condition (upper respiratory infection, internal parasites, etc.) that may not be detected until after the animal arrives at my home; and
  - It is possible that an animal may have a behavioral issue that may not be detected until after the animal arrives at my home.
- If health and/or behavioral issues arise, I will notify an Ahimsa House representative immediately.
- I have the right to refuse or return an animal for any reason.
- I will not take an animal to a veterinarian without prior authorization from an Ahimsa House representative, except in case of a medical emergency.
- In case of a veterinary emergency, I will immediately call the Ahimsa House 24-hour crisis line at **404-452-6248**. In the event that I am unable to reach an Ahimsa House representative, I will immediately take the animal directly to the nearest animal emergency clinic and authorize any treatment deemed reasonably necessary by the clinic. Reasonable emergency veterinarian expenses for the foster animal will be reimbursed by Ahimsa House in the event that an Ahimsa House representative cannot be reached.
- I will immediately notify Ahimsa House at 404-452-6248 if the animal escapes or cannot be located.

- I will not provide medication (including flea/tick/worming products), or make changes to an Ahimsa House animal's medication or diet, without prior authorization from an Ahimsa House representative.
- I will keep Ahimsa House animals indoors at all times, except for dogs who will receive regular outdoor exercise. I will keep the foster animal on a leash or in a pet carrier when outside a foster home or fenced yard, and in a passenger compartment of any vehicle during vehicular transportation.
- I will not leave an Ahimsa House dog unattended in my yard without special permission from Ahimsa House.
- I will not take any Ahimsa House animal out of the home for any reason, except for regular exercise (for dogs) or emergency veterinary treatment, without prior authorization from an Ahimsa House representative.
- It is recommended that Ahimsa House dogs be exercised only in the immediate neighborhood of the foster home, to minimize the chance of someone who knows the client or abuser recognizing the animal.
- I will not tie out, chain, or otherwise tether any foster animal.
- I will not expose foster animals directly to non-Ahimsa House animals, other than those already living in my home, without prior authorization from an Ahimsa House representative.
- To avoid the spread of parasites or disease to foster animals, I will maintain the health of other animals living in my home to the best of my ability.
- I will keep areas accessible to the foster animal free of common hazards such as unprotected wires, dangling cords, string, Christmas tree tinsel, toxic chemicals (especially antifreeze and rat poison), and plants and foods known to be toxic to pets. Guidance on "pet-proofing" is available from Ahimsa House.
- I will ensure that all people in my home, whether residents or visitors, keep doors and windows secured (also watch for loose window screens) and that they enter and exit with care so the foster animal does not escape.
- If maintenance personnel, etc. need to access my home while I am out, I will take steps to ensure the foster animal will not escape, e.g. by warning entrants of the presence of the animal or (preferably) by securing the animal in a crate or separate room.
- For dogs and cats, I will **immediately remove any ID tags** upon receipt of the animal and replace them with the Ahimsa House tag. When the animal leaves my care, I will **remove the Ahimsa House tag** and keep it for use on my next foster animal.
- For dogs and cats, I agree to keep the animal's collar and Ahimsa House identification tag on at all times. If collar or tag becomes damaged or lost, I will contact Ahimsa House immediately for a replacement. I agree that I will not place a collar that lacks a safety breakaway feature on any Ahimsa House cat.

- I will retain any of the client's property sent with the foster animal (e.g., toys and/or the animal's original ID tags) and return it with the animal when s/he leaves my care.
- Unless otherwise agreed, Ahimsa House agrees to provide me with food, preventive medication, and other basic supplies for care of foster animals.
- In accordance with Chapter 40-13-13 of the Rules of the Animal Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Agriculture, I will maintain a functional fire extinguisher in my home at all times. I understand that Ahimsa House strongly recommends that I also have a smoke detector and carbon monoxide alarm, both for my safety and for the safety of foster animals in my care.
- In addition to the basic animal care requirements outlined in the Georgia Department of Agriculture Foster Home Agreement, I agree to provide animals in my care with adequate grooming and exercise as agreed upon with an Ahimsa House representative.
- Keeping in mind the chaotic situations from which many Ahimsa House animals have come, I will strive to maintain a calm and stress-free environment for the foster animal.
- I agree to an initial and periodic foster home inspection by Ahimsa House [and/or the Georgia Department of Agriculture].
- I agree to allow representatives of Ahimsa House to call me and/or to visit my home to discuss any Ahimsa House animal(s) I have in my care, and I agree to make reasonable efforts to stay in regular contact with Ahimsa House about the animal(s) in my care.
- If I will be out of town and unable to make alternate arrangements to care for the foster animal, I will provide as much notice as possible--a minimum of two weeks, and four weeks at holidays--to allow Ahimsa House time to arrange an alternate foster placement or boarding. I understand that in order to minimize disruption to the animal, Ahimsa House may elect to keep the animal in the alternate living arrangement even after I return.
- If I become unable to fulfill any of the above requirements, I will notify an Ahimsa House representative immediately.
- All foster animals must be returned to Ahimsa House upon request by an Ahimsa House representative.