**Short-Term Emergency Placement Program: FAQ**

Part of KHS’ vital mission is to keep pets in their homes and with the families that love them. The Short-Term Emergency Placement (STEP) program offers a safety net of foster care to people facing temporary housing difficulties, medical emergencies, and other situations that would otherwise necessitate the surrender of their pets to a shelter or rescue.

**What is the process?**

You may fill out the request for assistance at any time. Once we receive your application our team will review it and assess our current foster availability. Depending on the urgency of your request, the kind of animal, and any medical or behavioral needs, we will reach out within 72 hours to either request more information or offer you alternative resources if KHS is not able to accommodate your pet. If accepted, your animal will be sent to foster care for an agreed upon length of time and will only return to the shelter for medical needs, placement with a new foster family, or when you are ready to take them home.

**Can my pet be adopted by somebody else?**

Though STEP requires you to surrender your pet to KHS, we do not consider them adoption candidates. This means that nobody is able to adopt, place a hold, or otherwise keep your pet during their time in foster. Our foster parents all sign yearly contracts agreeing to abide by this policy.

**What if I can’t take my pet back?**

If you are unable to reclaim your pet we will place them for adoption, barring any medical or behavioral issues that would stop them from being adoption candidates.

**May I visit my pet while it’s in this program?**

While we do not allow in-person visits, we do ask our foster parents to send us regular updates, including pictures, of your pet. The foster is never told about your situation and none of your personal information is disclosed, though we may share whether your pet has lived with kids or other animals.

**What about medical care for my pet?**

All pets entering STEP will be vaccinated, microchipped, given flea/tick treatment, and spayed or neutered if necessary and appropriate. Basic medical care and medication are provided as needed. In the case of emergency, our team will do our best to contact you, but if you are not available or a timely decision is required, our vets will make the best choices possible for your pet’s health, comfort, and safety. KHS will never ask a STEP pet owner to cover the cost of treatment, though we may require vet records if available before accepting the pet into the program.

**Where will my pet stay?**

Our foster team will locate a foster facility or foster family before officially accepting your pet into STEP, so your pet will spend minimal time in the shelter. Once your pet has been vaccinated and spayed or neutered, they will go into a home that is carefully matched to their needs.

 **How long can my pet be in the program?**

If your pet is accepted into the program, we offer initial placement for two to four weeks. Due to the high number of requests for STEP care and our shelter capacity we may not be able to extend the foster period, but each situation is addressed on a case-by-case basis. The total stay in STEP will not exceed 60 days.

**Can I pick up my pet before the end of the contract?**

Yes! We have staff onsite 7 days a week that can return your pet to you; however, we ask for at least a 48 hour notice that you wish to reclaim your pet. Please bear in mind your pet is in a foster home and the family may be less flexible with timing, so an appointment is required.

**What pets are allowed in STEP?**

We view all pets as important members of the family, but KHS is limited by the availability of suitable foster homes or facilities. Generally, cats are our main focus, but we do accept dogs as space allows, and some of our fosters love to help rabbits, birds, reptiles, and even farm animals. You are always welcome to reach out if you need assistance with an atypical pet.

**Who should I keep in touch with?**

The foster team will be your main point of contact; anybody in that department can assist you, though our Foster Manager is currently spearheading the program. We do our best to communicate often and have a variety of outreach methods including texting.

**I have more questions!**

Please don’t hesitate to contact us! Our email is foster@kitsap-humane.org, or you may call 360-692-6977 ext. 1207.