



Safety Net Foster Program FAQ

Q: What is the Safety Net Program?

A: The Safety Net Foster Program will provide foster care of owned pets for owners who are temporarily unable to care for their pet(s) due to housing crisis, medical procedures requiring hospitalization, leaving a domestic violence situation, or other emergencies. This program is intended to be a last resort for pet owners who have exhausted all other options. The program helps keep people and their pets together instead of permanent surrender. It helps provide the pet owner with community-based support and keeps animals in homes, out of the shelter, where they belong.

Q: Will the pets accepted into the program have behavior and medical assessments?

A: Yes. All pets accepted into the program must and will meet our regular intake requirements. In fact, we will receive much more information on the pets needing to come through this program than we normally do for our general intakes since we can ask the owner's any questions we need to.

Q: Will I be responsible for communicating with the pet owner?

A: No. The Community Solutions staff will be responsible for communicating with the pet owner. Fosters will not interact with pet owners to protect boundaries and privacy. Foster parents are encouraged to share regular updates and photos/videos with the Foster department to pass along to the owners.

Q: Will pet owners be able to visit their pet(s)?

A: No. Michigan Humane will provide weekly updates to pet owners but we will not allow visitation while participating in the program to allow for pet owners to focus on reclaiming their pets and protect privacy of foster caregivers and respect of Michigan Humane staff time.

Q: What is the timeline given to pet owners to reclaim their pet(s)?

A: Each pet owner is given a timeline of up to 90 days to reclaim their pet. Pet owners are responsible for checking in weekly with Michigan Humane staff. Extension will only be granted under extreme circumstances that will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Foster caregivers are not expected to house the animal during the extension but are welcome to continue fostering if they can.

Q: Can the owner reclaim their pet before the expected return date?

A: Yes! We encourage pet owners to reclaim their pet before the timeline expires. Michigan Humane will coordinate pick-ups as we do with our regular foster program. All pick-ups by owners will happen onsite at Michigan Humane.

Q: What are the qualifications for a pet owner to participate in this program?

A: This program is for community residents who are undergoing a life-altering circumstance that leaves them temporarily unable to care for their pets. This could be caused from an eviction, needing medical care, or fleeing a domestic violence situation, etc. This program operates on a limited basis, depending on the availability of foster homes.

Q: What are the qualifications to foster for this program?

A: Any current and active foster caregivers can participate. Becoming an active foster caregiver with Michigan Humane is easy, you can apply online at michiganhumane.org/foster.

Q: Can I foster for this program if I have pets of my own?

A: Yes. Just like our regular foster program we do recommend that foster pets are housed separately from resident pets for an initial quarantine period. We still recommend that your resident pets are current on vaccinations, including Bordetella. Just remember, as with fostering, these animals do not belong to you.

Q: Can I foster for this program if I have children?

A: Yes. As with our regular foster program, we will make sure the animal is an appropriate match for the household with children in the age category of your home.

Q: What happens if the owner is unable to reclaim their pet?

A: If an owner is unable to reclaim their pet by the end of the timeline, the animal(s) will become permanent property of Michigan Humane. The animal(s) will return to the shelter from foster care to be placed up for adoption. All pet owners sign a surrender form at the time of entry into the program. This allows for Michigan Humane to provide medical care in the event of an emergency.

Q: What does a pet owner have to do to apply for the program?

A: Pet owners who are looking to use the program must complete an initial Safety Net application on our website or with assistance over the phone with Michigan Humane staff. All pet owners are heavily counseled before acceptance into the program on what is expected of them and how the program operates. Pet owners are required to sign a release of liability waiver, and program agreement form before participating.

Q: Can I share a Safety Net foster on my social media pages?

A: No. To protect the pet owner and animal, as these animals are not available for adoption you are not permitted to share them on your social media pages. You may share them on the Michigan Humane Fosters Facebook group as it is a private group that only contains active Michigan Humane personnel.

Q: What if a Safety Net foster becomes ill or shows symptoms of possible illness?

A: You will follow the same procedures and protocols as outlined in the foster care Handbook.

Q: Can I adopt a Safety Net foster?

A: No. They have loving owners who have chosen to make a tough, but necessary choice to be able to keep their pet. These foster pets are not available for adoption, and we will not accept adoption inquiries for them. If the owner is unable to reclaim their pet and it becomes Michigan Humane property, we will then let you know, and at that time, you can inquire about adopting that pet.