



# Foster Program Manual

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Dear Foster Home,

Thank you for opening your heart and home to a pit bull type dog in need. Your generosity will provide a homeless dog a chance to grow to become a breed ambassador before finding his/her forever home.

Brew City Bully Club Rescue and Adoption (R/A) program is part of an effort to create a community where pit bulls & people live together safely, respectfully and happily. The program is designed to bring homeless pit bulls from animal shelters to adoptive homes. The foster process is what makes this goal achievable. Foster homes not only provide a safe and loving environment prior to adoption, but also provide essential training and socialization to prepare the dogs to be ambassadors for their breed. It is with these skills that the dogs in the R/A program will be adopted and will continue the mission of *changing minds and saving lives*.

This manual is designed to provide foster parents with a comprehensive overview of Brew City Bully Club's foster dog program and is meant to be a helpful resource for foster parents and should answer many of the questions that may arise before and during foster care. Please note that BCBC R/A staff are on hand to help you in any way possible and can provide additional information and support as needed.

As a BCBC foster home you will gain fulfillment by knowing that your efforts are helping to save the lives of many pit bulls who would otherwise never get a chance to have a safe, loving, forever home.

The BCBC cannot continue our mission of Changing Minds and Saving Lives without the dedicated support of our Foster Homes – THANK YOU for being part of the solution!

Sincerely,  
Brew City Bully Club Leadership

## **Brew City Bully Club Contact Information – www.brewcitybullies.org**

### **BCBC Mailing address:**

Brew City Bully Club  
6669 S. 76<sup>th</sup> Street  
Greendale, WI 53129

### **Rescue Program Director and Vice President – Victoria Hohlfeld**

Email - [adopt@brewcitybullies.org](mailto:adopt@brewcitybullies.org)

### **BCBC Trainer – Jennifer Pratt**

Email – [info@wagthedogandcompany.com](mailto:info@wagthedogandcompany.com)  
Website – [www.wagthedogandcompany.com](http://www.wagthedogandcompany.com)

### **Executive Director – Michelle Serocki**

Email - [michelle@brewcitybullies.org](mailto:michelle@brewcitybullies.org)

## **Approved Veterinarians**

Norwood Animal Clinic  
5345 N. Lovers Lane Rd. Milwaukee, WI 53225  
(Please contact the Rescue Director to schedule an appointment)

Mayfair Animal Hospital  
11619 W. North Ave. Wauwatosa, 53226  
(Please contact the Rescue Director to schedule an appointment)

## **Emergency Veterinary Services**

Milwaukee – North  
Wisconsin Veterinary Referral Center – Grafton  
1381 Port Washington Rd. (262) 546-0249

Milwaukee – East  
Lakeshore Veterinary Specialists – Glendale  
2100 W. Silver Spring Dr. (414) 540-6710

Milwaukee – South  
Milwaukee Emergency Center for Animals (MECA) – Greenfield  
3670 S. 108<sup>th</sup> St. (414) 543-7387

Milwaukee – West  
Wisconsin Veterinary Referral Center – Waukesha  
360 Bluemound Rd. (866) 542-3241

## **HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

BCBC places dogs that are currently in high-kill shelters or other reputable rescues as transfers on rare occasions. BCBC rarely accepts dogs that are currently in another person's care or owner surrenders. There are an overwhelming number of dogs in shelters and it is our rescue mission to foster and place those adoptable dogs into qualified, trained and loving homes. Dogs will have at least one distemper shot, be de-wormed and have a Rabies vaccination before coming to your home. Dogs will also be spayed/neutered as soon as possible (depending on age, health, etc.) BCBC requires all foster dogs to be altered prior to placement in a forever home.

Brew City Bully Club volunteers work with local shelter staff to determine homeless pit bulls in need of rescue. The BCBC Rescue staff evaluates animals to determine if they would be a good fit for the program. If we decide to commit to a dog, the dog will come to the BCBC Rescue Retreat to decompress from shelter life. Each dog will come to the Rescue Retreat before going into a foster home. The length of stay at the Rescue Retreat will vary based on the needs of each dog, however the average will be about 3 - 4 weeks. This time allows us to learn more about each dog and get a jump start on training.

Once the dog is ready for foster care, we will assess our open foster homes and make the best placement for the Rescue Retreat dog and the foster home. We will provide you with all the necessary supplies for fostering, support you throughout the entire process, and will be available to address any questions or concerns. We will also schedule training session(s) with our trainer to help you along in training your foster dog.

## **BCBC PROVIDES FOSTER HOMES WITH THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES**

- Medical care, vaccinations, spay/neuter and de-worming
  - Collar and BCBC identification tag
  - Leash and walking harness\*
  - Crate\*
  - Adopt me bandana\*
  - Blanket\*
  - Toys\*
  - Heartworm treatment\*
  - Flea & tick treatment\*
  - Private in home training and/or group training classes
- \*Items that should be returned to BCBC when foster dog is adopted

## **FOSTER HOMES MUST PROVIDE**

- High quality dog food
- Food/water bowls
- Transportation to and from BCBC adoption/social events
- Socialization (family & pet interaction, leash walks)
- Exercise
- Basic positive reinforcement training (come, sit, off, leash walking, taking treats gently, food manners, potty training, crate training, etc.)
- Love, patience and companionship

## **IMPORTANT RULES AND REMINDERS REGARDING YOUR FOSTER DOG**

In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Foster Dog Contract, and throughout this manual, foster homes **MUST** abide by the following rules:

1. Positive training must be used at all times. **Use of dominance or forced based training will result in removal of your foster dog.**
2. Arrangements must be made to have in home training sessions with a BCBC Trainer.
3. Any current pets must be kept up to date on all vaccinations including Bordatella.
4. Collar and ID tags must be worn at all times.
5. No off-leash park visits.
6. Foster homes agree to bring their foster dog to adoption events regularly.
7. BCBC must be contacted if the foster family is traveling and need care for their animal while away. Any animal care must be pre-approved by the BCBC F/A staff. **In addition, if traveling with the foster dog, BCBC staff must be notified at least one week in advance.** There are requirements for traveling with dogs over state lines and there are communities that do not allow pit bulls in their municipality.
8. Any aggressive behavior must be immediately communicated to rescue staff.
9. Rescue staff must be alerted of any health issues and animal must be taken to an approved veterinarian.
10. Foster homes must respond within 24 hours to communications from BCBC rescue staff.
11. Foster homes cannot foster for another organization while fostering a dog with BCBC.

## **PREPARING TO FOSTER A DOG**

Once approved as a BCBC foster home, we will work with you to determine the best Rescue Retreat dog that would flourish in your home. Before you bring a foster dog into your home, we suggest you prepare yourself, your family, and your home for a new canine companion.

### ***Being physically and mentally prepared***

Fostering is a family job, so make sure that everyone in your household is ready, willing and able to provide a loving home for an orphaned dog. Many adults and children have a difficult time adjusting to a new schedule or routine, and also have a difficult time “giving up” an animal to his forever home. Be sure to talk to your family and ask the BCBC rescue staff any questions or concerns you may have.

### ***Allow time for his adjustment***

While it usually takes about 24 hours for a dog to settle in, it will take much longer for his overall adjustment to this new environment. Watch his behavior closely. Remember that it will take up to a month before your foster dog bonds with you, so keep your expectations realistic. You are not expected to teach a foster dog everything he needs to know in the short time to have him in your home. But it will be enough time to give him a good foundation for his forever family. Your foster may have been traumatized before coming to you – you’ll be teaching that people are good and can be trusted. You should handle and work with your foster dog every day. If he shows any signs of aggression or fear (growling over food or toys, snapping or hiding), contact rescue staff for guidance.

### ***Where to keep your foster dog***

Planning where you will keep your dog before you bring your foster dog home will make the process easier for everyone. You may want to block off entrances to certain rooms using baby gates. It is

important to have a separate area for all dogs if you are bringing a new dog in with other dogs in your home. It will be a big adjustment for all, and even dogs need some alone time!

\*Note - BCBC requires crate training for all dogs to assist in potty training and to give them a comfortable and safe place to rest. This is also for the safety of the dog so that it doesn't get into something dangerous.

### ***The Do's***

- Do keep your foster dog indoors in a location with a crate available.
- Do keep your foster dog on a 6' leash at all times when outdoors unless in your secured, fenced yard.
- When in a secured yard, you must supervise the dog at all times. It is very common for a shelter dog to try and escape.
- Do keep your dog in a common area for socialization purposes.
- Do provide strong (pit bull proof) toys and interactive toys for your dog. Ask a BCBC staff person or pet store employee for toy recommendations for heavy chewers.

### ***The Don'ts***

- Do not place your foster dog around other strange dogs as we often do not know the dog's past history. Foster dogs should not be put in a position of possibly fighting with a strange dog.
- Do not leave your foster dog unsupervised with children or other dogs. EVER.
- Never take your foster dog to an off-leash dog park.

### **WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU BRING HOME YOUR FOSTER DOG**

1. Give the foster dog some alone time to become familiar with his new environment. Introduce him to his room and crate and spend some time petting and calming the dog away from any distractions.
2. Be alert and make introductions gradually and calmly. Some dogs become very territorial and can become easily agitated for a while. In addition, the foster dog may have additional fear reactions depending on his previous situation. Many stray dogs become resource aggressive because of having to scavenge for food. These types of reactions can diminish with time and training.
3. Give your own dog LOTS of love and praise.
4. Leave leashes on your dogs when you are in the home, so that you can get immediate control if needed. You may only need to do this for a short time.
5. Talk normally and calmly. Letting the dogs know that you are fine; they are fine; everything is fine!
6. Be patient and go slowly with your foster dog as he may have been through a stressful surgery, abusive situation or a lot of recent changes.
7. NEVER leave your foster dog unattended with your resident dog. Even if they seem to get along well in your presence, you should separate the dogs when you leave your house. In time, you may determine that this is no longer necessary, **but to be safe, always remove all toys, food, treats, etc.**

### **INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO A FOSTER DOG**

BCBC R/A staff will assist you with introducing your dog to a foster dog. It can be a stressful situation for some pets if a new addition is added to the home. *We urge you to understand that there is an adjustment period with each foster placement.* Typically dogs of the opposite sex do better together. And even if your dog has many different canine playmates, each dog/dog relationship is different. You

will be bringing in a foster dog that has had endured a lot of stressful situations and therefore may react differently until he has settled into your home and routine.

### **Feeding**

The food you feed your foster dog is important because, as the saying goes, “You are what you eat,” and this applies to dogs as well as humans. It especially applies to dogs that have been sick, injured or found as strays. High quality dog food is preferred, rather than grocery store dog food. You will also need to transition your foster dog to any new brand or flavor of food. Some dogs react to a change in diet with diarrhea. If this happens, feed them cooked rice mixed with cottage cheese (two cups rice to one cup cottage cheese) for a day or two. Then re-introduce the dry kibble.

### ***Feeding Schedule and quantity***

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster dog. Feed him at the same time every day. Create a separate space for your foster dog to eat so he will be comfortable. If you have other dogs at home, feed your dogs separately, this will help prevent arguments over food.

### ***Quantity of food will depend on the age and size of your foster dog.***

- Adult dogs (1 year and older): dry adult dog food twice a day in the morning and evening.
- Adolescent dogs (4mo – 1 yr): dry puppy food twice a day in the morning and evening.
- Weaned Puppies (6-8 weeks): dry puppy food three to four times per day. Kibble can be moistened with water or puppy formula.

## **BEHAVIORAL ISSUES**

Some foster dogs will have specific needs regarding behavior, training and socializing. The BCBC Rescue Director will advise you if your foster dog has a behavioral problem that may require your help, such as an abused or fearful dog who needs socializing or confidence-building with other dogs or people. BCBC is committed to providing you the resources and support you need in working through any issues that arise. **An initial training session with the BCBC Trainer will be scheduled after 1 – 2 weeks with your new foster dog. Follow up visits will be scheduled as the Trainer and Rescue Staff see fit.**

*It is important to note that dogs are not humans with fur! Many of the behaviors that we find problematic, such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals are really just normal dog behaviors. We should keep in mind that these behavioral ‘problems’ are really only problems to us as humans. The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide outlets for their instinctive behaviors.*

### ***Some of the most common behavioral issues include:***

- Barking
- Mounting
- Digging
- Begging
- Attention seeking
- Garbage hunting
- Leash pulling
- Greeting manners
- Destructive Chewing
- Puppy nipping and rough play
- Submissive and/or excitement urination
- Urine marking behavior
- Fearfulness
- Separation anxiety
- Resource guarding
- Prey drive

**If your foster dog is exhibiting any behavioral issues, ask yourself these questions:**

1. Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
2. Is he being left alone for long periods of time?
3. Does he have interesting toys to keep its mind engaged and stimulated?
4. Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
5. Am I reinforcing bad behavior? An example includes verbally scolding a dog when they are seeking attention.
6. Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?

BCBC requires the use of positive reinforcement training your foster pit bull. Pit bulls are energetic, very trainable and eager to please. Despite what the media or various other trainers or television shows portray, pit bulls can be well trained using positive reinforcement and praise. **The keys to success are consistency, dedication and timing.**

### **Become a Leader for your dog! What Makes a LEADER?**

What do you think of when you think of a leader? Although many people might conjure up a vision of someone powerful or authoritative, a new study shows that the best leaders are humble leaders. It's hard to imagine what it would mean for the world of companion animal training if this concept was applied there, too. The idea of being a "pack leader" with dogs has become widely mainstream all over the world, but it's a dangerous and flawed concept. When we make the decision to be the forceful, authoritative leader of our dogs, we lose the chance to build trust and bond with them. A new study was conducted on what makes the best leaders in the human workplace. Interestingly, one of the top characteristics was humility. Employees working under a leader that showed humility and altruistic or selfless behavior were not only happier, but also performed better in the workplace.

When dogs are constantly pushed around, "corrected," or forced into submission, something terrible happens. They lose their ability to focus, to learn, and are ultimately pushed to breaking point. For some dogs, this may show itself as aggression or a fearful response. Other dogs shut down completely and enter a state of "learned helplessness." Just like an employee might lose focus, get burned out, or become less productive due to poor management, dogs also suffer at the hands of poor and punitive leadership.

We owe it to our dogs to be good leaders. Unlike most human employees, dogs don't get a say in who their leader is. If dogs are miserable with the "management", they don't have the option of finding a new leader. Studies have shown that dogs trained using forceful, punishment-based techniques are more distracted, have less ability to learn and focus less on their handler. Is that the kind of leader you want to be?

**If you can build a bond with your dog based on mutual trust rather than trying to dominate or force your dog into submission, the odds are that your dog will love to work for you and with you.**

**When you work as a team with your dog as a humble leader, the possibilities are endless.**

(Source: <https://positively.com/>)

### **BCBC cannot be held responsible for loss, damages or medical costs and expenses incurred by foster homes as a result of fostering a dog. This includes but is not limited to:**

- Damages to the foster home's personal property (such as furniture, woodwork, flooring, vehicle, yard, fence, etc.).
- Damages to another's personal property.
- Personal medical costs as a result of the foster dog including but not limited to bites, scratches, etc.

- Veterinary costs to personal animals or other animals as a result of the foster dog including but not limited to bites, scratches, etc.
- Veterinary costs associated with pet care negligence.
- Other miscellaneous expenses as determined by the BCBC Rescue Director.

## **VETERINARY AND MEDICAL CARE**

All veterinary care must be pre-authorized by BCBC staff. Once a visit has been authorized, BCBC staff will work out a time with you for scheduling an appointment with our approved veterinarian. BCBC staff will accompany the dog to the vet visit.

In order to be fiscally responsible, BCBC has a policy that will not reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster dogs if pre-approval is not received and/or if the vet seen is not on the approved list. Emergency clinics are extremely expensive and should only be used in cases of dire emergencies. **If you need to take your foster dog to an emergency vet, contact the Rescue Director immediately (leave a message if necessary) and then proceed to the closest animal emergency care facility (indicated on page 3 of this manual).** Continue to call the BCBC rescue staff until you are able to speak with someone, medical arrangements will be made at that time.

### ***A note about parasites***

Parasites can cause diarrhea, stomach bloating or vomiting. All foster dogs have received de-worming medication. Many, many puppies have intestinal parasites – it’s very normal. If you see of the symptoms below, move forward with contacting a vet for treatment.

Tapeworms: Look like pieces of rice coming out of your foster dog’s anus or stool.

Round and Hookworms: May be vomited and roundworms look like spaghetti. Hookworms are not visible to the human eye.

Mange: This is an infestation of tiny mites that cause intense scratching, reddened skin and loss of fur. If in doubt about ANY medical condition, contact the R/A staff.

## **GETTING YOUR FOSTER DOG ADOPTED**

While it is not your responsibility to find a forever home for your foster dog, foster homes are **THE BEST** resources we have in our adoption efforts. No one knows your foster dog like you do and therefore we count on your help!

### **ADOPTION EVENTS**

BCBC schedules numerous adoption and social events year round. All event information will be posted on the BCBC website and all foster homes will receive an email asking them to attend events. **We ask that you commit to bringing your foster dog to as many as possible for as much exposure as possible.** This is our main outlet to feature our adoptable dogs. If you are unable to join us for an event, we may be able to have a BCBC volunteer to bring your dog to the event. We will let you know as soon as possible if we are able to find somebody.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

BCBC is happy to have you share your foster dog on social media sites, a very easy way of doing this is to link to the dog’s petfinder page. Please direct any adoption inquiries to the rescue staff.

### **OTHER PROMOTION**

BCBC is happy to provide you fliers to distribute for your foster dog! We do require that our fliers include important BCBC info. If you have other ideas to advertise your foster dog, please contact the rescue staff and we will work with you!

### **PICTURES AND VIDEOS**

The more pictures and videos we have of your foster dog, the better off we'll be! We will schedule professional photo shoots for your foster dog, but normal, everyday pictures are crucial to marketing, too!

### **FOSTER FIELD TRIPS**

Socialization is very important for your foster dog. Socialization away from the foster home is just as important! Every 2 – 3 weeks, BCBC rescue staff will schedule a time with you to pick up the foster dog for a few hours. The dog will go on an adventure, you get a break, and we get to spend some quality time with the dog!

### **THE ADOPTION PROCESS**

Potential adopters must go through the BCBC Foster to Adopt process. This includes an application, a home visit, and a meet and greet with the foster dog and family, payment of the adoption fee and required medical follow up. There may be additional requirements as laid forth by the BCBC Rescue Director. Once an application has been received, the Rescue Director will schedule a date/time that works for everyone involved for a meet and greet. If, after the meet and greet, the potential adopters still want to adopt, and are approved to adopt, a date/time will be scheduled for the Rescue Director to pick up your foster dog. **The foster dog always stays with the foster family until they hear from the Rescue Director that the potential adopters want to proceed.** BCBC will need everything back that was given to you upon receipt of the foster dog.

***For more information about the Foster to Adopt process, contact the Rescue Director.***

### **ADOPTING YOUR FOSTER DOG**

Of course you can consider adopting your foster dog. It is human nature to become attached to a family pet. But before making this decision, it is important to remember the goal is to save more lives of homeless animals. In most cases, people who foster already have one or several "forever" dogs. They probably don't have many extra slots for new dogs in their packs, either because of time and space constraints, or because their municipality allows only a certain number of pets per household. If a foster family adopts a dog, that "slot" is no longer available for the next needy dog. This means that a family may need to give up fostering all together, which could mean that fewer animals can be pulled from shelters.