

Foster Guide to Cat Marketing

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INTRODUCTION

Fostering is hard work! The Cat Marketing Team appreciates all you do to care for our cats and kittens; keeping them happy, healthy and safe. When it's time to find them a forever home we are here to help! Our goal is to present each of your fosters individually on the APA! website, so each one is irresistible to their perfect adopter.

Together we can make this happen!

SUBMITTING MARKETING MATERIALS:

You are **required** to submit photos and personality/health information for each of your fosters. Please do this promptly. The number one way to market your foster is to get him/ her on the APA! website as soon as possible! Our site gets thousands of hits a day and is widely marketed so it is the most likely way for your foster to find a home.

Each cat or kitten can have a written profile, three photos, and one short video. The better/more marketing you have, the faster your fosters will be adopted!

Kitten & Cat Information Forms

There are two main forms for submitting marketing materials:

1. The Cat Information Form - This form enables you to enter important details quickly. Completing this submission thoughtfully should take only 15-30 minutes per cat.
2. The Kitten Information Form - This form allows you to submit a few key points and photos for your foster kittens. It allows you to enter up to 5 kittens at a time and has been abbreviated from the Cat Form. It is possible to complete your marketing requirements for your entire foster home in 30-45 minutes, depending on how many kittens you are caring for.

PLEASE NOTE: If photo files are too large, the form may not be able to accept them. If you submit your form and do not receive a confirmation that it was processed, please submit ONLY the written information through the form and email or share your photos with cat-marketing-manager@austinpetsalive.org

Which form to use is determined by the cat/kittens age:

- If you are fostering neonatal kittens, please provide marketing materials when they are between 5-6 weeks old using the Kitten Information Form.
- If you receive a foster kitten who is from 5 weeks - 3 months old, please submit materials within 1-2 weeks using the Kitten Information Form.
- If your foster is 3 months or older, marketing materials are expected within 1-2 weeks using the Cat Information Form.

If you are hoping to adopt your fosters out through Adoption Events or on your own using DIY Marketing, you are still required to send materials to APA! for promotion.

If your foster is recovering from an illness (such as ringworm), you are still required to send these materials. Often adopters are willing to wait until they are recovered, or are willing to continue treatment at home. Similarly, materials are required for shy/socialization cats and

kittens. Some adopters are experienced with these kitties and are looking for the special bond they can give.

Marketing materials for neonatal kittens

Kittens are placed on the website when they turn 6 weeks old, but only if you have submitted materials. The Marketing Team will email you to request photos and information when the kittens are between 5-6 weeks. Please respond promptly and provide the most recent photographs possible. At 8 weeks, they will become available on the website regardless of whether or not we have photos and information for them. Don't let your kittens be the ones who are overlooked because they have nothing up!

Kittens grow so fast! If you wish to provide updates, please submit new stories or details to the Kitten Information Form and we will be happy to edit his or her online profile. Updated photos and video are also always welcome, too!

If you happen to foster a kitten longer than 2 months, please send updated photos of them monthly until they are adopted or come into the cattery.

Marketing materials for cats and kittens older than 3 months

Cats and kittens of this age are placed on the website as available for adoption as soon as they are taken into APA!. The Marketing Team expects to receive photos and information for these cats within 2 weeks. We realize this is an introductory period in your home. Please submit information to your best ability.

Updating your foster's profile

You are welcome to update your foster's profile page at any time. Your cats may change in personality as they become comfortable in your home. Shy kitties may turn into cuddlebugs. You may discover your foster has a funny trick or really loves to hang out with dogs. All of these things are important! We are happy to keep their pages up to date, supplying all the right details to find their perfect adopter. For cats over 3 months, just submit your updates through the Cat Information Form and we will edit his/ her profile page online. We are always happy to receive updated photos and video as well!

Guides have also been created for your use in successfully marketing your fosters through APA! and on your own. These guides provide helpful instructions on how to submit good profile information, take attractive photos, and show off to adopters through social media. Find the links to these guides throughout this document.

Cats in foster are rarely seen by the public without proper marketing. Foster cats benefit the most from compelling photos and detailed written profiles online. Because they are not available to visit anytime at an adoption site, introducing them to potential adopters online is their best chance for their forever families to find them.

Our goal is to move our fosters into their permanent homes as quickly as possible; so they can become a loving part of their forever family sooner *and* to empty out your house so you can save new lives! We also are doing our best to minimize the stressful time our cats and kittens spend at adoption centers, or relieve them of it completely.

Thousands of potential adopters view the APA! site every day. The Marketing Team is committed to creating a unique profile for each of your fosters, attracting just the right person for them.

A particularly charming photo or short video could get them posted on our Instagram account (with close to 16,000 followers), our APA! Cat Program page with over 3,000 followers, or the main APA!

Facebook page with over 94,000 followers. With every one of these people there is a potential for adoption, whether they are looking for a cat of their own or tell a friend.

Additionally, with compelling, quality photos and interesting details we are able to promote cats for adoption to the community in a variety of ways including social media and popular newspapers online and in print. With proper materials they could be featured as 'Pet of the Week' or highlighted in an APA! adoption promotion.

But we can't do it without you! Remember that *you* are the best salesperson for your foster kitties! You know them best, love them the most, and are the most invested in them.

You are the key to finding your fosters their perfect forever family.

WHAT WE WILL NEED

Remember, you know your fosters better than anyone. Do your best to show them off!

REQUIRED: INFORMATION FORM/ WRITTEN PROFILE

While photos may serve to immediately attract a potential adopter, what is said about your foster in his profile will likely be the determining factor for a Meet and Greet.

Just like people, every cat has his or her own distinct personality. The written profile is our opportunity to present *who* your foster is, so a potential adopter is able to gauge their compatibility.

Your input will be our primary source of information used to find him or her a forever home.

Not every cat is right for every person, but there is a person for every cat! Before filling out the form, take a moment to think of the things that make your foster stand out to you. Physical attributes, personality traits, silly or sweet behaviors; what characteristics make your foster special? Now imagine the perfect home environment and family for this particular cat. Write or fill out the form with these things in mind.

The Cat Information Form asks a variety of questions about your foster, from his/her physical characteristics to their temperament and health. Please be as honest and thorough as you can to show him off while giving him the chance at a lasting relationship and home.

You can choose to fill out the information form and allow our Writing Team to create a profile for your kitty, or you may write one yourself for us to post.

If you choose to write your own profile, please refer to Cat Marketing's [Profile Writing Guide](#) to learn the APA! profile format and be sure all necessary information is included for your foster. Take a look at the sample profiles to get an idea of how to present him/her. You may enter your completed profile in a box at the bottom of the Cat Information Form.

The Kitten Information Form is short and sweet! Most kittens like to play and nap in equal measure, and are simply adorable! What makes *your* kitten stand out?

Each kitten's online profile will be based on three descriptive features that make him or her uniquely attractive.

The important thing here is to identify truly distinguishing characteristics about each kitten, from how they look to who they are. Physical attributes, personality traits, silly or sweet behaviors; what characteristics make your foster special? Now imagine the perfect home environment and family for this particular cat. Fill out the form with these things in mind.

Here's a few examples:

1. She's the tiniest kitten in her litter, but purrs like a diesel engine!
2. She'll show off her acrobat skills if you bring out the wand toy
3. Her face is half black and half orange with beautiful tortie markings.

This and just a few other details is just enough to create an appealing profile.

Remember, the more descriptive and colorful you are, the more attention your kitten will get!

Please be thoughtful and enter full sentences. Feel free to use a [thesaurus](#) for help.

REQUIRED: PHOTOS

Attractive images inspire adopters to click on your foster's profile and learn more about them. This click could be their first step to adoption. Whether tender and cuddly or silly and rambunctious, a good photograph can really show off a cat's personality and attract the perfect person to adopt them.

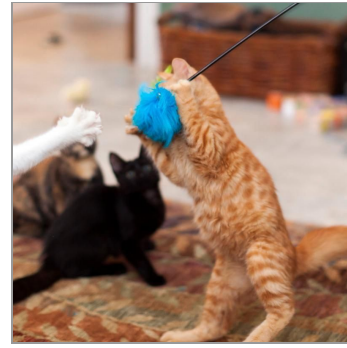
Remember also, cats with the best photos are the ones featured in APA!'s widely viewed social media accounts and submitted to local media for spots like Pet of the Week. A feature like this could quickly lead to an adoption.

You know your foster's unique physical features and cute or funny behaviors better than anyone. You have the ability to make them stand out!

One clear photo in each of the following categories is required:

1. A Head Shot - A photo with the cat looking straight into the camera can be the perfect lead photo for the website. *TIP: Be sure to include your kitty's entire head! It's better to have too much background in a photo than not enough cat!*
2. A Full Body Shot - Show off the kitty's coat length and coloring, as well as any unique markings. *TIP: Mind the background of your shot, you want your cat to be the focus of your photo, not your laundry!*
3. A Personality Shot - This lets us show off who the cat is: batting around a toy mouse, making awesome air biscuits, wrestling with siblings – whatever they do best. A pic of him/her interacting with people or other animals will also gain attention. You can also use this as an opportunity to illustrate a point made in the profile like how kitty loves to cuddle up the dog! *TIP: If you're going for an action shot, play in a bright room to avoid blurry pics.*

Here's an example of a wonderful profile photo collection:



You don't need to be a seasoned photographer to capture enticing photos of your fosters, you just need to be patient. A fancy camera isn't necessary, either. You can get nice pics with most smartphones. Try to get photos that are sharp, clear, and very well lit. Use natural light if you can, and distract the cat with a toy if need be. Taking great photos works best with two people. Call in a friend or family member to assist in your photo shoot!

When you are ready to submit your photos through one of the forms please keep in mind that if the files are not titled correctly they may become lost. It is imperative to title your files with the cat's name, a space, then a number so they are processed correctly. *Ie. Fluffy.jpg, Fluffy 1.jpg*

Please refer to the [Photo & Video Guide for Fosters](#) for helpful hints and recommendations. This guide is ever-expanding with tips, so check back often for ideas!

If you need assistance with photos, please contact the Cat Marketing Manager at cat-marketing-manager@austinpetsalive.org.

OPTIONAL: VIDEO

Whether it's a high-spirited toy chase or a purr-filled cuddle session, video always draws extra attention from potential adopters. *Video helps an adopter imagine what it would be like to interact (and live with!) your foster.*

If possible, please submit a 30-60 second video. Use your smartphone if you wish. Just keep a steady hand! *TIP: Keep your elbows tight to your sides to shoot a stable video. Send clips to cat-marketing-manager@austinpetsalive.org by using Google Drive or Dropbox.*

WHAT WE'LL DO WITH YOUR MATERIALS

Once your form has been submitted, our team of Marketing volunteers will use the information, photos, and video you've provided to craft an irresistible profile for your foster. When this content is complete his/her very own webpage will go up on the APA! site for all potential adopters to view.

If your marketing material is compelling and of good quality, we will use it to promote your fosters for adoption through our social media or community connections.

Let's show off your kitty so that their perfect family can find them!

DIY MARKETING

If your kitten is over 6 weeks old, please feel free to advertise in any way that you see fit. Just make sure that the adoption is completed through Austin Pets Alive!.

Word of Mouth

Sometimes this is the easiest way to find adopters! Be sure to tell your friends, family, and colleagues about your adorable new foster. Email them all. Remind them to adopt a cat rather than purchase one to save a life! Include a few photos, a link to the APA! website, and your social media accounts if you have them. Even if someone isn't looking for a kitten now, they might keep you (and APA!) in mind down the road.

Flyers & Posters

The "old school" methods can still do the trick! Try printing out flyers with some adorable pictures on them, and post them on community message boards in your neighborhood, school, apartment complex, or local businesses. Just remember to ask for permission before posting an ad in a privately-owned space.

- Please include 'Austin Pets Alive!' on the flyer as well as the [APA! Logo](#).
- Here is an expanding list of [community bulletin boards](#) that you are welcome to post to. Please let us know if you have a location to add!

Craigslist and Reddit

Don't underestimate the number of Austinites browsing through classified ad websites like Craigslist and Reddit for their new pet! With a catchy title and a few attractive photos, you may find a wonderful match for your foster quickly and easily. Follow the steps in [Cat Marketing's Craigslist Tutorial](#) to promote your kitties safely and successfully on this site.

Social Media

Some of our fosters have found great success in creating social media accounts specifically for their foster cats. Facebook and Instagram are two phenomenal outlets for showing off the special kitties that come through your home.

This also leaves you plenty of room to be creative. Ask friends to follow your fosters, tell lots of stories, and encourage sharing. Who knows, you might even create the next viral cat video!

The Cat Marketing Team is happy to support your efforts by including the links to your social media accounts in your kitty's APA! website profile. Just include links in your Information form.

Please be sure to read Cat Marketing's Tutorial: [Utilizing Social Media](#) so you are able to follow APA! protocols for setting up your accounts. These standards are to ensure the consistency necessary for potential adopters and other fosters easily search for and find your kitties. The Cat Marketing Team knows fostering is hard work and honors your commitment in keeping Austin a No-Kill city. We are here to help you in your efforts to find forever homes for your foster kittens.

Feel free to write to the Cat Marketing Team at cat.marketing@austinpetsalive.org or the Cat Marketing Manager at cat-marketing-manager@austinpetsalive.org for additional support.

*Thank you for fostering with Austin Pets Alive!
Together we can Keep Austin No-Kill!*