Mission Viejo Animal Services Center

Foster Assessment System (FAST-15)

01/28/2021

The Foster Assessment System (FAST-15) is a diagnostic tool developed in partnership between the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Maddie's Fund. This report presents the results of the survey provided to your current foster caregivers to understand their engagement, perceptions, and experiences at your organization. Review the Report Instructions for more information about how to read and interpret your results.

Report Instructions

This report summarizes the responses from the users surveyed by Mission Viejo Animal Services Center. A total of 23 surveys were completed, yielding a 49% response rate for all fosters. The response rate is calculated as the number of survey respondents divided by the total number of fosters reported in application survey. The report contains the following sections:

Section 1: Foster Demographics
- Summarizes the characteristics of fosters who completed the survey

Section 2: Your FAST-E Score
- Provides an overall engagement index for your volunteers
- Based on the average of 4 items related to pride, enthusiasm, attachment, enjoying work

Section 3: Item-level Results
- Red/Yellow/Green Ratings – Red indicates lowest rated items, yellow indicates middle of the road items, and green indicates highest rated items. Recommendations will be provided for items in red or yellow. Green indicates areas where the organization should maintain current efforts
- Average Scores – the averages (sum divided by total respondents across all respondents for each item, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate more favorable ratings
- % Favorable – calculated by adding together the % of respondents who chose 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) for an item, or in other words, the percent of people who rated the item high
- % Neutral – calculated by adding together the % of respondents who chose 3 (neutral) for an item
- % Unfavorable – calculated by adding together the % of respondents who chose 2 (disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree) for an item, or in other words, the percent of people who rated the item low

Section 4: Word Cloud
- Shows a graphic representation of answers to the question "How would you describe your foster program in one word?"

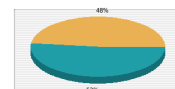### Section 5: Recommendations & Best Practices
- Presents potential ways to improve in lower rated areas based on best practices and survey results

Section 1: Foster Demographics

What is your level of foster activity with this organization?

	ANSWER	RESPONSE	%
	Currently Active	12	52%
	Currently Inactive	0	0%
	Taking a Break	11	48%
	Total	23	100%

How often have you had a foster animal in your home in the last 12 months?

	ANSWER	N	%
	A little of the time (1 to 20%)	7	35%
	Some of the time (21-40%)	7	35%
	Around half the time (41-60%)	0	0%
	A majority of the time (61-80%)	4	20%
	Most of the time (81-100%)	2	10%
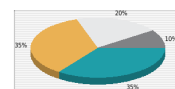
How long have you fostered with this organization?

	ANSWER	N	%
	Less than 1 year	6	26%
	1-3 years	6	26%
	4-6 years	6	26%
	7-9 years	2	9%
	10 or more years	3	13%
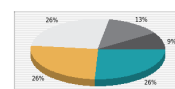
Section 2: Your FAST-E Score

Understanding your Results Summary

Table #1 shows the 4 engagement questions and Table #2 shows the 11 questions rated by your fosters with their _average score_ and the _% favorable_. The questions are _ranked_ highest to lowest based on the % favorable.

'% Favorable' refers to the percentage of respondents who 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree.'
'% Neutral' refers to the percentage of respondents who are 'Neutral.'
'% Unfavorable' refers to the percentage of respondents who 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree.'

Color Coding indicates your areas of strength and opportunity based on the following criteria:

Green indicates your areas of strength (% favorable = 85% or above) - keep it up!

Yellow indicates your potential future strengths, some opportunity for improvement (% favorable = 70 to 84%) - lots of opportunity!

Red indicates your areas of greatest opportunity (% favorable = <70%) - focus improvements here!
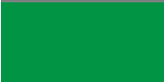
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Average % Favorable: 98%

Based on fosters' ratings of 4 engagement indicators (pride, enthusiasm, attachment, enjoying work), your FAST-E score, out of 5, is:

5

TABLE #1

COLOR CODE	RANK	QUESTONS	AVERAGE SCORE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	FAVORABLE
	1	Pride - Overall, I am proud to work for this organization.	5	0%	0%	100%
	2	Enthusiasm - I am enthusiastic about my foster role.	5	0%	4%	96%
	3	Attachment - I feel attached to this organization.	5	0%	0%	100%

COLOR CODE	RANK	QUESTONS	AVERAGE SCORE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	FAVORABLE
🟩	4	Enjoying Work - I enjoy my fostering work quite a bit.	5	0%	4%	96%

Section 3: Item-level Results

TABLE #2

COLOR CODE	RANK	QUESTONS	AVERAGE SCORE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	FAVORABLE
🟩	1	Appreciation - Overall, I am proud to work for this organization.	5	0%	0%	100%
🟩	2	Appreciation - I am enthusiastic about my foster role.	5	0%	4%	96%
🟩	3	Appreciation - I feel attached to this organization.	5	0%	0%	100%
🟩	4	Appreciation - I enjoy my fostering work quite a bit.	5	0%	4%	96%
🟩	5	Appreciation - I feel appreciated by my organization.	5	0%	0%	100%
🟩	6	Satisfaction with Communication - I am satisfied with the communication I receive from this organization. *(e.g. About the pets I foster, other info about the program, etc.)*	5	0%	0%	100%
🟩	7	Role Clarity - I know what is expected of me as a foster volunteer.	5	0%	0%	100%
🟨	8	Voice - Before the organization makes decisions that affect my foster pets, they often ask us for our thoughts and ideas.	4	4%	22%	74%
🟩	9	Fostering Balance - I feel I'm able to take a break from fostering when I need to.	5	0%	0%	100%
🟩	10	Basic Training - My organization provides me with necessary training on basic handling and behavior issues. *(e.g. house training, aggression, shy pets)*	5	0%	4%	96%
🟩	11	Healthcare Training - My organization provides me with necessary training on healthcare/medical. *(preventative care, identifying/caring for medical problems)*	5	0%	0%	100%
🟩	12	Fostering Process - The process to become a foster in this organization is reasonable/efficient.	5	0%	4%	96%
🟩	13	Standard Operating Procedures - Our processes for animal intake to adoption are reasonable/efficient.	5	0%	4%	96%

COLOR CODE	RANK	QUESTONS	AVERAGE SCORE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	FAVORABLE
	14	Coordinator Support - I receive the support I need from my foster coordinator to adequately perform my duties.	5	0%	0%	100%
	15	Peer Support - I receive the support I need from others in my organization to perform my duties.	5	0%	4%	96%

Foster Comments:

- Much better than other experiences with other organizations! :)
- I'm ready to foster again when you need me... I prefer cats and kittens.
- I am a "foster fail"! When someone showed interest in my foster dog, I couldn't handle the idea of not having her around and I ADOPTED HER!!
- Very organized. Animals are number one priority. Excellent background checks and training. Always diligent responding to my Foster needs. I feel very appreciated and part of the team. Great leadership by Brynn and very capable in her role.
- Love to foster bunnies from Mission Viejo Animal Service Center.They truly care about the animals and all the volunteers.They always check if we need anything or if we have any questions or concerns.
- My experience since I began fostering in March 2018 has been very positive. I feel trusted to care for and make the best decisions for my fosters but have the balance of getting the support I need whenever I contact anyone in the shelter. They have always been available to me when I've had a question or concern. Working with the program makes me feel like I am contributing to the greater good for these animals and helping them get ready for their forever homes.
- MV Animal Shelter is a wonderful and dedicated organization that I feel is very close to my heart. The coordinators and staff are absolutely wonderful.
- I love the foster program and have referred several friends to be fosters as well.
- I think the animals are accessed once at the shelter and moved to a foster situation that will benefit the animal so they are in the best setting until they are adopted.
- Program is well-organized and staff clearly appreciates their volunteers and foster parents.

Section 4: Word Cloud

How would you describe your foster program in one word?

This word cloud has been created based on your fosters' responses.
The bigger the word, the most frequently fosters used it to describe your program.

Rewarding Excellen!
Necessary Wonderful
Amazing Excellent
Exceptional Efficient
Compassionate
Awesome
Exceptional
Essential Rewarding Fun!
Rewarding Amazing!
Rewarding Awesome!
Good Fabulous! Excellent

Section 5: Recommendations & Best Practices

Understanding the Recommendations

Based on the results of your FAST-15, you have been provided with recommendations for your lowest 3 areas as well as any recommendations that fell in the red color code - % favorable below 80%. These recommendations are based on best practices in Foster Program management and operations. Recommendations are only provided for your lowest rated questions - these are the areas where your program has the greatest opportunities for improvement! In many cases, a little effort can have major payoffs.

Implementing the Recommendations

- Choose just 1 recommendation for 3 questions to focus on - these can be your 3 lowest questions and/or any questions that fell into the "red." You can always try other recommendations later!
- Use your energy and resources to implement these changes, then observe if and how changes occur as a result. Keep in mind, change takes time so don't expect drastic differences over night.
- After several months, ask for feedback from your fosters to see how the new practices are working out.
- After 12 months you are eligible to repeat the FAST-15, which is a great way to gauge how your organization is progressing.

It's also important to communicate the high-level results with your fosters. We don't recommend sharing the entire report, but rather tell them that you received their feedback and have identified several key areas to focus on improving. Share the 3 key areas you have identified in step 1 and ideas you have for implementation. Use this as an opportunity to recognize concerns, seek clarification, and create an open dialogue about foster experiences.

Recommendations

CATEGORY	SAMPLE QUESTION / INTERPRETATION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Appreciation	Refers to how appreciated fosters feel by the organization. **Overall, I am proud to work for this organization.** **I am enthusiastic about my foster role.** **I feel attached to this organization.** **I enjoy my fostering work quite a bit.** **I feel appreciated at my organization.**	• *Make recognition timely, meaningful, and in proportion to the contribution or achievement.* Also, involve paid staff in recognizing foster contributions whenever possible. • *Use handwritten thank you cards* and special shout outs in newsletters or on social media to show how appreciative you are of your fosters' work; praising specific behaviors is particularly powerful. • *Celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Week* in April. Do something small for your fosters each day. Remember to tailor these activities to your foster program! • *Share the Bigger Picture.* Thank fosters by giving them perspective about what they're doing. What is the larger context – what's the greater mission, how is the organization doing. This demonstrates that you respect and appreciate them. • *Feature Foster Stories* on your Social Media / Website / Newsletter. Feature one foster (and their animal!) each month – let them share their story and demonstrate that they are appreciated.
Satisfaction with Communication	Refers to the effectiveness and timeliness of information shared with fosters. Different forms of communication will get your message out to fosters with different needs & preferences **I am satisfied with the communication I receive from this organization. (e.g. the pets I foster, other info about the program, etc.)**	• *Reach out to fosters regularly.* If possible, use a combination of face-to-face interaction, social media, and hold in-person gatherings to communicate what's going on in the org. Using multiple mediums of communication will allow you to reach all your fosters. • *Use monthly newsletters to share the information that matters to fosters.* Include information about the organization (good and bad) and features about fosters (will help with recognition too!). • *Make social media a central communication hub* for fosters. Use the newsletter to hit the highlights and use social media to expand on this information. It can also offer an platform for foster-to-foster communication, as well as collecting foster feedback. • *Update fosters about major decisions or changes in the organization.* Fosters care about what happens to their animals and organization. Inform them via email, newsletters, or personal communication about things that matter most to them. If you don't know what they care about most, ask! • *Hold face-to-face meetings or events* for fosters, when possible. Communicating important messages, showing appreciation, and getting to know your fosters in-person can enable better communication in the future.

Recommendations

QUESTION	INTERPRETATION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Role Clarity	Refers to how well fosters understand what they are expected to do in their role **I know what is expected of me as a foster volunteer.**	• *Clearly communicate foster caregiver expectations to newcomers.* Understanding the foster role starts with clear, consistent communication and training for newcomers. Describe their duties, expectations, processes, and goals. • *Create a list of priorities.* Have a list of what "needs to be done," "what could be done," and "what should eventually be done." Be as specific as possible. Organize tasks by when things need to be done (e.g. Monday, first of the month, etc.). • *Develop a foster handbook.* This should include key duties, policies and procedures, checklists, and any other info fosters may need to do their jobs. It's important to keep this handbook updated (yearly) and easily accessible (send it out via email periodically, post online if possible, have a physical copy on hand as well, etc.). • *Write out foster parent job descriptions* in a foster manual or handbook. Make sure all policies and procedures are written down and keep it in a place that is accessible to all fosters. • *Utilize training as part of the screening process.* Meet with prospective fosters after training to answer any questions and discuss whether or not they will continue as a foster.
Voice	Refers to how well fosters understand their role and how it fits into the broader organization. **Before the organization makes decisions that affect my foster pets, they often ask us for our thoughts and ideas.**	• *Offer online options for providing feedback.* A virtual suggestion box (for example freesuggestionbox.com) allows fosters to anonymously give input via an online website. Deal with suggestions in a timely manner and communicate decisions about changes or reasons why changes aren't feasible. • *Get immediate feedback from fosters following events.* Ask for pictures, questions, thoughts on how the event went, etc. and share results with fosters (e.g. monthly newsletter). • *Form a foster program committee* that consists of fosters and paid staff. The committee can meet quarterly to discuss foster program-specific issues and concerns. • *Create a "no, not right now folder."* When foster suggestions cannot be immediately implemented, let fosters know that it is being filed away, not discarded. Offer explanations of why the current timing will not work for the suggestion and re-visit it when possible.

Recommendations

QUESTION	INTERPRETATION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Voice (continued)		• *Share the results of the FAST-15.* The survey offered the chance for fosters to voice their feedback, now follow-up by sharing what you heard! Share the high-level themes and emphasize what your actions will be. This is a powerful opportunity for two-way communication.
Basic Training / Healthcare Training	Refers to how well-prepared fosters feel to perform their roles **My organization provides me with necessary training on basic handling and behavior issues. (e.g. house training, aggression, shy pets)** **My organization provides me with necessary training on healthcare/medical. (e.g. preventative care, identifying/caring for medical problems)**	• *Provide initial training* on key issues like basic handling and behavior issues and healthcare/medical. • *Offer training support materials* as reminders for key actions. Checklists and online resources can provide training at low cost. • *Create a fostering FAQ* about your foster program to disseminate in your community and to potential foster parents to cover such topics as, types of animals fostered, requirements and responsibilities of the foster parent and rescue group, and communication expectations. • *Create a mentor/shadow system* for new fosters where a seasoned volunteer meets a new volunteer at events, answers questions, introduces them to other volunteers, and helps with training. • *Use the materials offered by Maddie's Fund* to enhance or continue foster training. There's always more to learn and these materials provide free access to the latest and greatest in foster care.
Fostering Process	Refers to how easy the organization is for fosters to navigate and the clarity of procedures which impact overall the foster experience **The process to become a foster in this organization is reasonable/efficient.**	• *Make the process to become a foster clear, easy and quick.* A difficult process can turn away qualified fosters. Eliminate hurdles and focus on finding people who are reliable and able to be trained. • *Use foster feedback to make improvements.* Evaluate processes and programs on a regular basis to make adjustments and develop a more effective system. • *Create a FAQ about your foster program and the organization* as a whole. Include similar information from the orientation/training so fosters can reference again in the future as needed. • *Communicate the criteria the organization uses to accept new fosters upfront.* What's the process? Why are these criteria important? • *Collect information about your foster selection process regularly.* Gather feedback from new fosters about their experience. Identify which fosters work out in the long-term – why did they work out? Can this inform how you accept fosters in the future? Make changes as needed.

Recommendations

QUESTION	INTERPRETATION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Standard Operating Procedure	Refers to how fosters perceive the processes and procedures for animal intake to adoption, specifically how reasonable and efficient they are **Our processes for animal intake to adoption are reasonable/efficient.**	• *Clarify the foster process.* Create a clear progression from animal intake to foster placement to adoption. Then communicate and enforce the process for all organization members. • *Use foster feedback to make improvements.* Evaluate processes and programs on a regular basis to make adjustments and develop a more effective system. • *Include Standard Operating Procedures in foster orientation and training.* Explain the processes for animal intake, foster placement and matching, adoption, etc. Make sure your fosters are informed about their role and how the organization runs. • *Create a FAQ about your foster program and the organization* as a whole. Include similar information from the orientation/training so fosters can reference again in the future as needed. • *Be consistent.* It seems simple, but by always using the same process and making this process very clear to fosters, everyone will be aligned in their efforts and know what to expect. If changes occur, communicate them.
Fostering Balance	Refers to how energized (or unenergized) fosters feel in their roles, and whether they are able to take foster breaks when necessary **I feel I'm able to take a break from fostering when I need to.**	• *Start new fosters out slowly* with smaller, easier tasks and assignments. Fosters start off eager to work and may overcommit, which can quickly lead to burnout. Limiting the number of tasks and hours fosters work when they start can help prevent this. • *Give fosters breaks.* Strongly suggest that fosters take breaks between foster placements if possible. By making it standard practice to take breaks between animals, they will be better prepared for fostering animals in the future, and their chances of burnout will decrease. • *Carefully match fosters and animals.* Ensure that fosters and animals are well-suited (e.g. experience, training, temperaments). Successful matching can decrease stress for the person and the animal. • *Check in with fosters at the end of each foster placement.* Have a conversation – How did it go? Was it a good match? Would they like to foster again? When would be a good time? Listen to your fosters. • *Limit number of foster animals* that a foster can have at a time to reduce the likelihood of burnout.

Recommendations

QUESTION	INTERPRETATION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Coordinator Support	Refers to how well fosters are coordinated in their efforts to serve the mission of the organization **I receive the support I need from my foster coordinator to adequately perform my duties.**	• *Have individual check-in time* with fosters, in-person or over the phone (5 minutes once a month is enough!). Leaders can't be leaders without their subordinates – it's a dyadic experience, so the more interaction with fosters, the better. • *Communicate clearly and honestly.* Keeping fosters in the loop as well as welcoming and acknowledging their suggestions is important. • *Create a list of priorities* by dividing duties into what 'needs to be done', 'what could be done', & 'what should eventually be done'; be specific & have volunteers sign up for which tasks they will complete on their shift. • *Create an organization chart* that lists all members of the leadership team and "supervisors" such as foster coordinator. Include contact information so fosters know who to contact with questions. • *Encourage Foster Coordinator/Manager(s) to participate in volunteer management training.* Take advantage of online webinars and/or formal training programs to learn more about foster management.
Peer Support	Refers to how supported fosters feel by other people in their organization **I receive the support I need from others in my organization to perform my duties.**	• *Provide mediums for foster-to-foster communication* so fosters can directly ask one another for help and advice. For example, social media platforms • *Encourage fosters to speak out* when they need help. They should know they can reach out to other fosters when they have questions, need advice, or could use an extra pair of hands. • *Create mini foster communities.* Social support can be especially necessary when people are involved in emotional work, like fostering. Encourage fosters to connect and have get-togethers to gain support when its required. This can be in-person or virtually (e.g., social media, phone calls, Skype) • *Hold social events,* like a luncheon or a picnic, where fosters, staff and other volunteers can interact with each other outside of their work. Tt may make sense for your organization to also have foster-only events. • *Encourage tenured fosters to be mentors* to new fosters and be available to answer questions and concerns. Especially during training or a first animal placement, a mentor can be a valuable resource.