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Foster Program in a Box

Creating a Budget



Budgeting can be easy when you have a little guidance and keep in mind that this is an important life-saving tool. If you are operating a rescue or looking to start a foster program, a budget allows you to plan for future financial needs and identify gaps in funding so that you can begin fundraising or identifying grant opportunities.

The first step is to tally how many cats you cared for last year and how many you expect to care for this year. This number may be within your control if you are a rescue or limited admission program. In this case, budget shortages may result in being able to help less cats. If you are an open admission or municipal program, you may be able to identify foster as being more affordable than a nursery or shelter based care model, or you may be able to justify a movement of resources.

Using historical payroll reports, veterinary invoices and purchasing receipts, identify the following expense items:

- Cost per vaccine and microchip
- Cost of items you provide each foster (i.e. blanket, thermometer, scale, food, litter, other supplies)
- Hours of paid labor annually
- Average hourly wage
- Average cost per spay and per neuter
- Cost per syringe and needle
- Amount spent on office supplies, printing and mailing
- Any salaries, benefits or tax expenses
- Amount spent last year on emergency medical care and special diets
- Fixed costs directly related to your program such as website hosting, Director and Officer insurance, space rental or vehicle lease
- Variable costs such as gas or mileage
- Giveaways to fosters such as shirts, manuals or awards
- Event expenses

Next, identify sources of known income:

- Adoption fees
- Grant awards
- Pledged donations

The difference between your known revenue and your projected expenses is now your fundraising goal for the year! If you think this number is unattainable, then you will need to look at how to reduce your expenses. This may involve relying on more volunteer



hours, taking in fewer cats with medical needs, or holding a supply drive. Just remember to always act in the best interest of the pets in your care and don't withhold food or delay veterinary care to meet budgetary constraints.

Our friends over at Cat Adoption Team in Oregon have put together a sample worksheet that you can customize to meet your organizational needs here:

<https://catadoptionteam.org/services/fostering-4-rockstars/>