

Estate Planning Questions & Answers

1. What are my options for Estate Planning to protect my parrot in the event of my death?

You will want to consult an estate planning attorney to prepare your will. Your will should include instructions for the future care of your parrot, and an endowment to cover his care. If you have chosen Foster Parrots & The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary as the “retirement” home for your parrot, Foster Parrots, Ltd. will be named as a beneficiary in your will. Endowment values are based on the age and species of each bird and are detailed in our “Life-Long Care” packet of information, which can be found in the “Life-Long Care & Estate Planning” section of Foster Parrots’ website at www.fosterparrots.com.

If one’s estate is not sufficient to cover the endowment values required by Foster Parrots, an alternative arrangement can be made through the establishment of a life insurance policy that names Foster Parrots, Ltd. as a beneficiary in the event of an unforeseen tragedy. Some insurance agencies will not allow an organization to be named as a beneficiary to a life insurance policy. If this is the case, one of Foster Parrots’ executive officers can be named as a beneficiary and will transfer the funds to the organization.

2. Are there records, forms or documentation of my estate planning required by Foster Parrots?

People who have chosen Foster Parrots in their estate planning are asked to file a “place saver” contract. This agreement does not legally bind you to entrusting your parrot to our care. You can change your mind at any time and cancel the tentative arrangement by writing an email and letting us know that you’ve decided to go in a different direction. It does, however, bind *us* to the agreement. This contract ensures that your parrot will not be turned away when the time comes. We keep these contracts on file so we know what we can expect in the future.

Many people opt to “pre-establish” a file for their parrots at the sanctuary. This file would contain detailed information about the parrot(s), medical records, hatch or acquisition records, and written instructions on desired care. Copies of legal, estate planning documents are encouraged but not required. However, these documents must be made available to Foster Parrots at the time of placement.

3. Would a Pet Trust be acceptable, or is a straight beneficiary arrangement be preferred?

While we *can* honor a Pet Trust, we prefer a direct beneficiary arrangement. All estate/retirement funds go into the general pool that maintains a strong foundation under our organization.

4. I have chosen to place my parrot in sanctuary, but am interested in the "Monitored Adoption" option. What kind of an arrangement is this?

Sanctuary can be a difficult place for birds who are strongly human bonded and desire a high level of human companionship. Sanctuary works best for birds who know they are birds, and either prefer avian companionship or are capable of transferring bonding behavior to other birds. We have an amazingly dedicated staff and a volunteer crew of 50+/- people who are the heart and soul of the organization, and do everything possible to fulfill human-bonded birds socially, but there are always limits on time. For this reason we offer a "monitored adoption" option. This is an arrangement where, in your estate documents, you would provide permission to enter your bird into a "fostering" situation if such an opportunity presents itself. This means that, if your parrot were to form a strong bond with a staff member, volunteer or other person with strong ties to the organization, we would have your written permission to let that person take your bird home. We would receive regular updates and photos about your bird, and Foster Parrots would remain financially responsible for any vetting. If, at any time during the life of your parrot, the foster home cannot continue care, your bird would be returned to the sanctuary. All of our "adoptions" are essentially "long-term fosterings". Applicants are interviewed and home-checks are conducted. Adoptions are governed by contracts that bind adopters to a high quality of care, and require the birds to be returned to Foster Parrots if/when the adopter is unable to continue care at any time during the life of the bird. Social support is our highest priority. Adopters must be able to offer ample out-of-cage time and consistent companionship. We will not adopt single birds into homes where people work all day and are not available. If that is the case, otherwise desirable adopters must adopt bonded pairs of birds.

5. Do you keep sanctuary birds in cages or are they placed in aviaries?

We work to transition all sanctuary residents out of standard caging and into large aviaries with bonded mates or compatible communities. These transitions can be a lengthy process. Occasionally, despite our best efforts, the loss of a cage represents a loss of security to a bird and can cause extreme anxiety. Although this is a relatively rare situation, when it occurs we must allow that parrot to keep its cage. The well-being and the individual needs and experience of every resident parrot under our care is a priority at the NEEWS.

6. Do you provide transport for my bird if I provide sufficient funds to cover the cost of travel?

Yes, we are prepared to travel to pick up your parrot at a moment's notice. As noted in our "Estate Planning Guide", one of the most important arrangements you can make is to inform close family and friends of your wishes in regards to the care of your bird, and ensure they have contact information for Foster Parrots. In the event of an unforeseen tragedy, it's important that there is no interruption in the care of your bird. If no one is available to assume care in the interim, we will come immediately to retrieve your parrot.