



Volunteer Handbook

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Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at Rockingham Harrisonburg SPCA (RHSPCA). We could not carry out our lifesaving mission without the thousands of hours of help our volunteers give each year, so we are happy to have you join the team. Just as we hope you are committed to helping fulfill our mission, we are committed to making your experience as an RHSPCA volunteer enjoyable and rewarding.

This volunteer guide has been created for your reference as you begin or continue your experience as a volunteer at RHSPCA. Please take the time to read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have questions. If you have questions that are not covered in this manual, please don't hesitate to ask a staff member.

OUR MISSION

To create a community free of pet homelessness and animal suffering through adoption and advocacy.

OUR VISION

To create a united community that values animal welfare.

HISTORY

Rockingham Harrisonburg SPCA got its start in the area thanks to two local women - Eulaila Higgs Simmers and Debbie Drenzo.

Eulaila Higgs Simmers was a lifelong animal lover who understood the need to improve the welfare of animals in Rockingham County. She left a large portion of her estate to meet this need. At the time of her passing in 1971, there wasn't anyone to carry out her wishes.

Debbie Drenzo began helping homeless animals in our area in the 1960s. As word of Debbie's efforts grew, soon so did the need for her work. What started as a small group of dedicated volunteers working out of Debbie's garage led to something much greater. In August

1973, Debbie was able to fulfill Eulaila's wishes, and those of many others, with the creation of the Rockingham Harrisonburg SPCA.

We moved into our current facility in 2005, offering space to house 88 dogs and 104 cats onsite. RHSPCA is now the largest animal welfare organization in the Shenandoah Valley. As an open-admissions shelter, RHSPCA cannot turn away any animals brought to our shelter. We adopted a lifesaving model in 2019, and have proudly held a live release rate of over 90% since March 2020.

Hours of Operation

Monday - Saturday

10am - 4pm

Wednesdays

10am-4pm & 5-7pm

Additional hours for volunteers are offered
M-F until 7 pm & Sunday from 8-11.



Contact Information

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RHSPCA

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Shelter Services

The RHSPCA exclusively serves Rockingham County and Harrisonburg City as the municipal animal shelter. As such, we are obligated to accept all pets coming from this area. We are not allowed to turn pets away for any reason.

Adoption

Our adoption program strives to find the perfect match for our homeless pets with families from our community. There is no time limit for animals in our adoption program. Behavioral and health concerns are handled on an individual basis, treating the concern as often as we can. We even offer adoption for our Barn Cats!

Lost Pet Reunification

Members of the community that find or lose a pet can report it through our website and we work diligently to reunite lost pets with their families.

Foster

Our foster care program allows those without the time to commit to adopting or volunteering to help our pets by taking them home and allowing them to adjust to life in a home. This program allows us to collect vital information which we can use to make excellent matches between pets and adopters. It also gives our most vulnerable furry friends a place to live away from the stress and potential diseases they may be exposed to in a shelter. The foster care program is a very important part of the life-saving model for creating positive outcomes for pets in our community.

Community Cats

Community cats are cats that have been living outdoors and may or may not be friendly to humans. The RHSPCA has developed a voucher program to help members of Rockingham County and Harrisonburg City spay or neuter community cats on their property at no charge to them.

Volunteer Roles

Volunteers are absolutely essential to our mission and help in every area of the shelter. There are too many volunteer roles to list below, but here is a cursory glance at some of the roles our awesome volunteers fill. Any volunteer under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Animal Care Team Volunteers

This team is responsible for caring for the animals living here in the shelter. These animals need to be fed, cleaned up after, snuggled, walked, and kept happy. They need photos and bios to help draw in adopters. They need counselors that can help match them with their perfect family! You can even take dogs offsite for field trips!

Client Services Team - Remote Opportunities Available

Volunteers on this team work at the front desk or behind the scenes. This team helps with greeting clients and getting them to where they need to go, adoption follow up calls, filing, reporting, sharing information about lost/found pets, and even processing adoptions!

Foster Care Team - Remote Opportunities Available

Our foster care team is responsible for ensuring each animal in a foster home is healthy and happy. Volunteers with the foster team can help with application review, foster send-outs, foster check-ins, stocking and distributing supplies and other tasks to support the foster program.

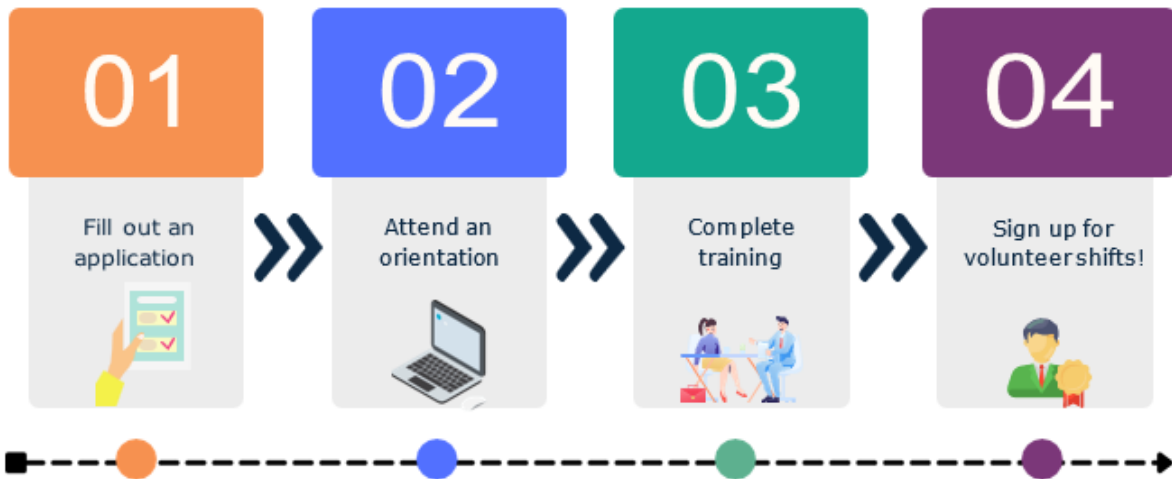
Animal Health Team - Remote Opportunities Available

Volunteers on the medical team help to ensure all the animals in our care are healthy and treated for any illnesses that may arise. This team helps with restraining animals, sanitation, medicating, and keeping animals' records up to date. Volunteering with this team is wonderful experience for anyone who is interested in veterinary care.

Events Team

Our Events team is bustling with activity from late spring all the way through fall. We have events almost every weekend during this time. Some events require us to bring a few pets and all our RHSPCA knowledge out and spread information about our mission!

Volunteer On-Boarding



The on-boarding process is designed to give you all the information you will need to select the correct volunteer path for you. In your orientation we will tour the building and discuss your interests and talents to see where you fit best into the program.

Volunteer Commitment

We request that volunteers commit to contributing 8 hours per month. Our staff puts a lot of effort into making sure each volunteer is trained and comfortable in their role. Some roles will require more of a time commitment. If you are unable to commit to volunteering 8 hours a month, the volunteer tasks that you are able to help with may be limited.

Volunteer Training

Most Volunteer roles require some amount of training. We work hard to ensure each volunteer feels properly equipped to carry out the duties described in their role. Once you have some experience in your volunteer role, there are opportunities for further training and involvement!

Volunteer Policies

Confidentiality

Do not release confidential information. We must protect our clients, animals, and any other agencies that we work with.

Age Requirement

Volunteers under 18 are allowed to volunteer if they have a signed waiver and are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Volunteers under 18 will not be able to assist in all activities. Parents and children may handle one animal together and not two animals independently.

Dress Code

We ask that each of our volunteers comes in with a volunteer T-shirt and closed-toed shoes. T-shirts can be purchased at the front desk for \$10. We also have volunteer hoodies available for purchase for \$25. Please don't wear clothing that is offensive or revealing. It's best to wear long pants.

Animal Care

While you are volunteering with a shelter animal, you are responsible for their care and well-being. Volunteer activities are expected to be performed in a manner that always ensures humane safety and minimal stress on animals.

Personal Property

You are welcome to leave belongings in the volunteer manager's office. Please don't bring any valuables to volunteer. RHSPCA will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen property.

Holiday Policy

The RHSPCA is closed for the following holidays. The staff may request help from volunteers on holidays so watch your email for help requests.

- New Years Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day



Safety

Safety is of the utmost importance. If you are injured, report it immediately. If it is a bite, get the pet back in their cage (ask for assistance if you need it), place a STOP sign on the animal's cage, and report to an available manager or the front desk staff. If it is a bite that has broken the skin, a report will need to be filed with the Virginia Department of Health. The staff member assisting you will ask for some information regarding the bite and for some of your personal information.

Restricted Areas

Please do not go into the restricted areas of the shelter unless specifically asked to by a staff member. There will be some positions that will require you to be in a restricted area. Those volunteers will receive additional training about how to safely move through those areas.

Attendance Policy

Your volunteer commitment is essential to the well-being of the animals here at RHSPCA. If you are scheduled to work a specific shift, we ask that you always attend that shift. If, for some reason, you can't make that shift, please let us know as soon as possible so we may have enough time to appropriately cover those shifts. Volunteers who do not report that they will not be here and have 3 or more unreported absences will be removed from the volunteer schedule so others may step in to help out. We ask that you please commit to 8 hours of volunteering a month. This helps us keep you aware of any changes and up to date on training. If you have not volunteered in 3 months, you may be asked to complete training again.

Substance Abuse

We are a drug, alcohol, and smoke-free workplace. The RHSPCA reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave if they are under the influence while volunteering here. Smoking and other tobacco use is strictly prohibited on our grounds.

Harassment

Sexual Harassment, harassment and intimidation on other grounds, including race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability is prohibited. Harassment includes jokes, verbal abuse and epithets, degrading comments, the display of offensive objects and pictures, and other conduct that the individual might reasonably find to be offensive.

Inclement Weather

In the case of snow in the winter, people are still needed to care for the animals. If you are able to make it into the shelter to help in instances of snow, please let us know. Due to the need to still be here to care for the animals, the RHSPCA rarely closes in the event of snow. In the case of thunderstorms in the summer, if you are out walking dogs and hear thunder, please return the dog you have to its kennel and wait in the lobby or conference room for the storm to pass.

Volunteering With Friends

Individuals who have not completed a volunteer application and appropriate training are not permitted to engage in volunteer activities. Please do not bring others with you to volunteer. Groups of people will be limited in how they can interact with animals in order to limit the amount of stress these interactions have on the animals



Volunteer Portal

The volunteer department tracks everything through the myImpact app. It is available for Android and iPhone.

Volunteers will use myImpact app to:

- Schedule shifts - look under the opportunities tab
- Clock in/out - from the home page
- Track hours and accomplishments - you can view your previously logged hours under the hours tab
- Complete online trainings - go to my profile then trainings

