

Terrebonne Parish Animal Shelter

Volunteer Manual



Introduction

Welcome! We are excited that you have chosen us to give your time and talents. This handbook is filled with information to help you learn about us and will serve as your guide as you begin your volunteer journey with us. Volunteers are a vital and valuable component of our mission. As such, volunteers are expected to adhere to our policies and procedures. Please read this manual carefully and ask staff members if you have any questions.

Our Vision

To build a community where all animals are valued, and family life is enhanced through relationships with their pets.

Services

TPAS serves the entire parish of Terrebonne and handles approximately 5,500 animals annually. Our services include adoptions, fostering, low-cost spaying/neutering, lost and found tracking, intake of strays/owner surrenders, dog/cat licensing, bite cases, parish ordinance enforcement, animal cruelty investigations, etc.

TPAS is an open admission shelter which means we accept all animals from Terrebonne Parish. During peak season, the shelter takes in as many as 35-40 unwanted cats and dogs in one day!

TPAS holds stray dogs for three (3) days unless the dog is ill, injured, etc. There is no stray hold for cats and stray puppies under the age of thirteen (13) weeks. Healthy strays can be returned to their homes, adopted, transferred, or euthanized at the end of the holding period. Community cats are sterilized, vaccinated, ear-tipped, and returned to their outdoor homes. Any and all animals owned animal(s) could be returned to their home, adopted, transferred, or euthanized at any time after it is surrendered as there is no legal holding period for owned animals.

Our shelter has a veterinarian on-site who performs in-house spay/neuters for the shelter animals. All adopted animals are spayed/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated, dewormed, tested for internal parasites, tested for feline FIV/FeLeuk or heartworms, and given a brief exam before leaving the shelter. The veterinarian also oversees the medical care of sick/injured animals in our care.

Shelter Facts

The shelter has many visitors every day. Reasons for visiting range from adoption, surrendering an animal, searching for a lost pet, scheduling a surgery with our Lost Cost Spay/Neuter Program, volunteering, etc. The shelter houses 75-150 animals on a regular basis, but can see over 250 during peak season. The shelter employs 19 full/part time employees, 6 of which are Animal Care staff.

Shelter Hours

Monday – Friday - 9:00am - 5:00pm

Saturday 10:00am – 2:00pm for adoption ONLY (no intakes)

Volunteer Services Include:

- Laundry
- Dishwashing
- Dog & Cat housing cleaning
- Socializing cats
- Walking dogs
- Transporting animals
- Clerical work
- Sweeping and mopping
- Cleaning of carriers
- Restocking of food and cleaning supplies
- Offsite adoption events
- Bathing dogs
- Photography

Adoptions

TPAS adopts hundreds of animals each year to loving families. We work to create lifelong relationships between people and pets with each and every adoption. We also work with animal rescue organizations across the country to help place as many animals as possible.

Adoption fees:

- Dogs - \$50
- Cats - \$25
- Animals in the shelter's care for over 30 days - \$5

Humane Education

Working with residents of the parish and our youth creates outstanding pet owners. We offer ongoing education for area classrooms that focus on pet care and ownership, as well as preventing dog bites and other animal related injuries.

Animal Foster

Fostering is a way to give an animal a wonderful quality of life outside of the shelter until it is adopted or transferred. TPAS offers short and long-term fostering options. Ask about our Dog Day Out and Pajama Party programs!

Disease Control

All incoming non-aggressive animals are given vaccinations, dewormer and flea treatment. The majority of diseases that we see in a shelter environment include respiratory infection and parasites. That is why we practice good hygiene, sanitation and use gloves as often as possible.

Dress Code

TPAS is a professional organization that deals with members of our community on a daily basis. Volunteers are required to present a clean and neat appearance. In addition, we ask that you wear closed-toed shoes (no flip-flops/sandals/etc.). Clothing should be appropriate length, without offensive language and should not be form fitted or too revealing. Please wear clothing that can get dirty or furry. We also require volunteers to wear aprons.

Volunteer Orientation

After signing in, all new volunteers will watch a 9 minute orientation video to become familiar with policies/procedures of the shelter.

Safety

- Wash hands frequently with soap, especially after handling ANY animal.
- Use gloves when washing food and water dishes, litter pans or cleaning up animal excrement.
- Any accident or incident, whether involving an animal or not, MUST be reported to a supervisor immediately.
- Never handle an animal whose disposition is unclear. Safety should always come first!
- If you observe a safety hazard at the shelter, please notify a staff member immediately.
- Observe ALL signage

General Information

- You must sign in and out on our electronic tablets each time you volunteer.
- Wear a volunteer apron
- Smoking is not allowed at the shelter or on shelter property
- We request that volunteers refrain from using inappropriate language
- TPAS volunteer applicants who act against the mission of TPAS or any activity or program shall not be accepted to serve or will be terminated as a volunteer.
- TPAS will terminate a volunteer who harasses (verbally or physically) or threatens any animal or person
- Volunteers should refrain from posting info referencing any staff member on any form of social media
- Volunteers are prohibited from taking photos or videos of any kind (including via cell phone) of TPAS animals unless you have explicit permission from shelter leadership
- At no time should a volunteer falsely represent themselves as an employee of TPAS.
- Volunteers must refrain from loitering in any areas of the shelter especially the front office/reception.

- TPAS as a zero-tolerance policy for drug and alcohol use while volunteering
- For the safety of animals and people, cell phone use while handling any animal is forbidden
- Certain areas of the shelter are off-limits to volunteers, unless explicit authorization is given by a supervisor. These areas include the Veterinarian office/clinic, Isolation rooms and personnel offices.

Work Assignments

Volunteers are assigned to various duties according to the needs of TPAS. Training will be provided for each volunteer position. If a volunteer is interested in a particular area, they should notify staff.

Safe Dog Handling

Why are shelter dogs different? Dogs in a shelter are not the same as your dog at home. Your dog knows his surroundings and is familiar with your moods and expectations. Dogs in a shelter are in a confusing situation. They are in an unfamiliar setting, surrounded by other dogs constantly barking and handled by strangers. With staff and volunteers working together, we can reinforce good behavior that will help our dogs find forever homes. Always follow the guidelines of the staff. Our animal care staff are trained to handle dogs. As a volunteer, you must accept the judgment of the staff to ensure the safety of all.

Always use caution when dealing with dogs. Be alert to your surroundings. Be aware of what each dog is telling you. If you pick up signs that a dog is nervous or fearful, remove it (or you) from the situation immediately. They are not your family pet and can be easily misinterpreted. Hugging a dog may be viewed by your family pet as affection whereas a shelter dog may view it as a challenge. This could invoke bad behavior from the animal, including a bite.

Remember, the role of our volunteers is to keep the animals in our care as stress free as possible and to avoid situations that promote inappropriate behavior.

A few tips:

- Always check signage: if a sign indicates a dog is in quarantine or will bite, then it should not be handled
- Only one dog should be handled at a time
- Only handle dogs with which you are comfortable; you must be able to always maintain control of the dog
- Before removing a dog from the kennel make sure that the leash you are about to use is in good repair.
- When removing a dog from a kennel, open the door and have your leash ready to slip over the dog's head. Keep your voice soft. Always approach the dogs calmly and encourage them to be calm and quiet before you remove them from the kennel.
- Do not allow dogs to jump up. Correct them calmly. Never HIT a dog. Remember, we want them to learn good habits, so that we can find good homes for them.
- NEVER leave a dog unattended. Whether you are walking, bathing or playing with a dog, you must be with the dog at all times. Do not turn the dog over to someone else, instead take it back to the kennel. When you take a dog out of the kennel you are responsible for that dog until it is returned to the kennel.
- Never take a dog out of the kennel for a member of the public without first checking with a staff member.

Safe Cat Handling

Volunteers are critical in helping cats be happy and well-adjusted during their stay.

Felines are social animals. Domestic cats form bonds with their owners, as well as with other cats and species in their household.

Cats have expressive body language. Arching the back and puffing up the tail are warning signs: the cat is telling you to stay away! Hissing, flattening ears and backing away are defensive signs.

Vocal communications also clue us into what a cat is thinking. A hissing, growling, or spitting cat should NOT be handled. Purring is generally associated with contentment but can be signs of stress as well. Sick or injured cats also purr.

When cats first arrive at the shelter, they are often stressed. They are in an unfamiliar, frightening environment. Volunteers can help reassure the cats and put them at ease. Speak softly. Move slowly around them. Handle them firmly and with confidence, but carefully. If you are assigned to work with a cat and you notice the cat exhibiting frightening behavior, alert a staff member.

A few tips:

- Reinforce good behavior. Don't tolerate things that you might tolerate from your personal cats (play biting, etc.)
- Discipline by tone of voice or by placing two fingers on the cat's forehead with a gentle push - NO hitting or yelling!
- If a cat escapes from his cage follow it and say "loose cat" as you walk (not run). Others will join you in catching the escapee
- Pay attention to the cat's body language. Cats aren't always predictable.
- Wash hands between cats.
- Report observed behavior or health problems.
- Fill water bowls if empty.
- Give toys or treats.

**Receipt and Acknowledgement
of Terrebonne Parish Animal Shelter's Volunteer Manual**

This is to acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of TPAS's Volunteer Manual. This manual sets forth the terms and conditions of my volunteer service as well as the rights, duties, responsibilities, and obligations of volunteering with TPAS. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with any TPAS policies and procedures referred to herein. I further understand and agree that I am bound by the provisions of this manual.

TPAS reserves the right to amend, modify, rescind, delete, supplement, or add to the provisions of this manual as it deems appropriate from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion.

I understand that nothing in this manual creates or is intended to create a promise of representation of my volunteer service. My signature below certifies I understand that the duration of volunteering and the circumstances under which my volunteer service may be changed or terminated. I understand that my status as a volunteer may be terminated by TPAS at will, without notice or cause. This agreement supersedes all agreements, understandings and representations concerning my volunteering with TPAS.

Volunteer (signature)

Animal Shelter Staff (signature)

Volunteer (printed name)

Animal Shelter Staff (printed name)

Date

Date