



Essential Job Requirements: Animal Volunteer Programs

There are several volunteer positions within the Austin Humane Society working directly with cats and dogs. In addition to the basic job description for each position, the following is meant to indicate the essential physical, mental and emotional requirements for each of these positions. **Completion of an application indicates that the volunteer meets these requirements.** If you are unable to meet any of these requirements, please send a direct email to the Volunteer Program Manager at cgraham@austinhumanesociety.org indicating any reasonable accommodation you may need in order to meet the essential requirements of your volunteer position at AHS.

Essential Physical Requirements:

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling animal).
- High level of manual dexterity to leash/harness animals, handle small tools and to properly groom animals.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy ground while focusing on a dog that may be pulling or distracted.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to leash/harness and pick up animal.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time while walking dogs, assisting the public with visits, socializing with cats or cleaning cages/kennels.
- Average vision in order to read colors and instructions on kennels/cages. Must not have night vision problems if signing up for evening shifts, as dog walking is done sometimes with little or no natural lighting available.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to hear calls of alarm such as audible warnings from others or sirens.
- Ability to speak and effectively communicate verbally as well as in written form.
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces and react and move quickly in order to prevent dogs or cats from escaping (example: ability to quickly pursue and retrieve any cats or dogs who have escaped from a kennel or cage).
- Must not have strong allergies to dogs, cats or other companion animals that can't be managed by medication, or to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning.
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odors, loud environment due to animal noises, fleas and animals with possible wounds or injuries.
- Must have the ability to judge an animal's reaction and to change voice to a soft or strong, authoritative tone in order to calm a dog's response or to give commands.

Essential Mental Requirements:

- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals, must be able to remain calm with animals that are upset; behave sensitively and confidently; show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- Ability to receive, incorporate and sustain instruction and feedback.
- Average level reading, writing, spelling and communication skills
- Possess problem solving capability.
- Ability to observe and evaluate an animal's response to handling during socialization. Ability to evaluate and note health and behavioral problems observed during socialization.

Essential Emotional Requirements:

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally-charged environment with some animals that are homeless, abandoned and/or abused, as well as the reality that some of the animals in our care may be euthanized.
- Ability to understand AHS' policies and positions regarding companion animals, spay and neuter, key animal welfare issues, and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing AHS.
- Ability to interact with a diverse population in a respectful and engaging manner.

Level of supervision:

- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Should be able to work independently for long periods of time, as well as work within a group atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.