

Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center

SVASC Volunteer Handbook



**Shenandoah Valley Animal
Services Center**
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Road.
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SVASC Mission Statement

Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center is the open-admission municipal animal shelter for Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro. We take in all stray, abandoned, and owner-surrendered animals from these localities. Our staff strives to improve the lives of people and pets in our community.

SVASC Volunteer Policy Statement

The Shenandoah Valley Animal Services Center (SVASC) Volunteer Services Program is designed to support and enhance SVASC's public service to the community. Volunteer support supplements the efforts of SVASC staff and serves as a method for area residents to become familiar with SVASC, while creating opportunities for individuals to perform a valuable service for the community.

Definition of a Rescue Person/Group

A rescue person or group is someone that a cat or dog has been transferred to so that they may handle the adoption operations of that animal. The point of contact for a rescue person or group will be an Animal Shelter Designee.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who performs tasks for SVASC without wages, benefits, or compensation of any kind. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by SVASC prior to performance of any tasks and shall not be considered an "employee" of SVASC.

Eligibility for Volunteering

SVASC promotes an equal opportunity volunteer policy. Volunteers are recruited and offered volunteer positions without regard to religion, gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other condition. Volunteers who are under 18 years of age must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. SVASC does not accept volunteers under the age of 14.

Definition of the Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator is to be appointed by the Shelter Director. This position is to oversee all volunteer operations and to ensure volunteers are following policies and procedures in place.

Process to Become a Volunteer

All interested individuals must fill out SVASC's Volunteer Interest Application and submit it in person or by mail to the Volunteer Coordinator. The application is available at the front desk and on the SVASC website for downloading. All applications must be fully completed and signed by the applicant, and the Parental Consent portion for applicants under the age of 18 must be completed and signed by the applicant's parent or legal guardian. All incomplete applications will be removed from consideration for SVASC volunteer program.

All applicants will then be contacted by the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss the application and a possible volunteer assignment that is beneficial to both SVASC and the volunteer. All applicants will have an informal telephone or in-person interview regarding their credentials and possible placement. A volunteer's skills and qualifications must match the volunteer needs of SVASC. The SVASC, therefore, does not accept everyone who applies for a volunteer position. If there are no suitable volunteer opportunities for an applicant, the Volunteer Coordinator will keep the application on file for one year. The applicant will be called if a suitable volunteer position becomes available.

By submitting and signing the volunteer application, applicants have agreed to have their references checked. During this initial application review process, all applicants should be specific about their required hours, due dates for such hours, and their expectations for confirmation of volunteer hours by the Volunteer Coordinator.

The name and contact information for each volunteer is maintained at the shelter. The volunteer coordinator keeps control of all volunteer applications and signed waivers. The volunteer coordinator communicates regularly with shelter staff regarding the need for additional volunteers to assist with new activities. The volunteer coordinator provides the staffing of volunteers for offsite events and special events or as needed by shelter staff.

Once the Volunteer Coordinator offers an applicant a volunteer position with SVASC, the Coordinator will draw up a Volunteer Contract containing a written description of the volunteer position. This description will outline the scope of the volunteer assignment and the schedule for the volunteer. This contract must be signed by the volunteer before the volunteer begins his or her assignment, and by signing the contract, the volunteer has accepted the offered position and has committed to the outlined work schedule.

All volunteers will be given an initial orientation of SVASC by the Volunteer Coordinator or Designee and will receive an additional orientation and/or all necessary training by SVASC personnel. Prior to beginning their assignments, all volunteers will receive the Volunteer Handbook and identifying attire and/or a name tag to wear when working at SVASC. All volunteers must sign the acknowledgment at the end of the handbook to confirm that they have read and agree to all SVASC volunteer policies.

Process for Single-Event/Group Volunteers

SVASC welcomes volunteers for single events or special programs and projects. When a group volunteers for SVASC, a Group Volunteer Application should be used instead of the Volunteer Interest Application. The Group Application can be completed on the date of the event sign-in sheets should also be used to track specific hours during the event. The SVASC staff member in charge of coordinating the event should obtain these forms prior to the event and should return the completed forms to the Volunteer Coordinator. When group volunteers are under the age of 18, they must also have a parental consent/medical waiver form completed and on file prior to volunteering. This additional Permission Slip for Minors should be obtained from the Volunteer Coordinator by the staff person in charge of scheduling and supervising the event.

Overview of Volunteer Opportunities at SVASC

Volunteer assignments at SVASC may be short- or long-term positions. SVASC offers a variety of short-term volunteer opportunities for students and young adults who wish to fulfill community-service requirements for classes, social organizations, and scholarships. The SVASC also offers numerous long-term volunteer opportunities to members of the community wishing to volunteer on a permanent basis.

Training

Volunteers who wish to interact with dogs, i.e. dog walking, bathing, playgroups, are instructed to follow SVASC policy. SVASC policy is designed to uphold the safety and well-being of the animals, staff, volunteers and all visitors to the shelter who may come in contact with the animals in their care.

Volunteers are instructed to “sign in” and check the volunteer board for news and updates.

Volunteers who interact with animals are instructed to sanitize their hands before touching an animal and to sanitize their hands after each animal they handle. They are shown where the leashes are stored and asked to pick up a poop bag before leaving the building for dog walks. The volunteer coordinator provide instruction regarding the dogs that may be walked and those animals that may only be handled by staff. Instruction is provided regarding the opening and securing of cages. Each volunteer in training is then assigned a dog to walk. The trainer accompanies the volunteers on a suggested walking route around the shelter building. Instruction is provided regarding how to safely navigate a dog past visitors, other animals and other dogs being walked. All dog walkers must carry poop bags and properly dispose of waste from the dogs in their care.

This hands-on training continues until the potential volunteer and trainer agree that the potential volunteer is comfortable and capable of moving dogs safely through the shelter and on walks.

After a required background screening, the volunteer coordinator coordinates a date and time for the new volunteer to begin his/her first day of volunteer work. The volunteer coordinator or staff meets all new volunteers as soon as they arrive for their first volunteer session to provide guidance and answer questions or concerns that arise. Similar volunteer training is provided for volunteers who wish to work with cats.

Conduct and Dress Code

Volunteers of SVASC are representatives of SVASC, Augusta County, Staunton and Waynesboro and should present a positive image to the public in both their conduct and dress during their volunteer assignments. Volunteers should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and dress in attire appropriate for an appropriate setting. Volunteers should be cordial, polite, and respectful to staff, patrons, and other volunteers of the SVASC at all times, and volunteers should present a neat, clean image with their appearance. Clothing with wording or logos that could be deemed offensive, obscene, or controversial is inappropriate, and clothing used to promote political preferences should be avoided. Volunteers should keep in mind the scope of their assignments, and clothing should be worn that is both safe and appropriate for the type of work the volunteer has been assigned. Clothing that is not permissible during volunteering includes, but is not limited to, the following: shorts of any kind, flip-flops, spaghetti-strapped shirts, dingy or “worn out” styled clothing, micro-mini skirts, low-cut blouses, clothing that reveals undergarments, and undergarments worn as outerwear. Volunteers assigned the receptionist desk or front facing position should avoid wearing jeans and T- shirts/sweatshirts, except on casual Fridays. In

addition, obtrusive body jewelry should not be worn during volunteering. Volunteers should be easily identified within the SVASC and should wear their name tags during the course of their volunteer work. Volunteers should report lost or damaged name tags to the Volunteer Coordinator for immediate replacement.

SVASC is a drug-free workplace. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs on SVASC property is strictly prohibited. Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of drugs or alcohol is grounds for immediate dismissal from SVASC's volunteer program.

Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

While working at SVASC, volunteers may come in direct or inadvertent contact with information regarding SVASC patrons and/or staff. All information pertaining to patrons or staff members is strictly confidential and should be treated as such. Such information may include, but is not limited to, the following: all records, forms, fines and bills, animal euthanasia, court cases, or any information regarding Animal Control. Volunteers who fail to uphold the expectations of SVASC will be immediately dismissed from the SVASC volunteer program.

Personal Time and Personal Items

Volunteers should not conduct personal business while working at SVASC, and volunteers should never use SVASC property, such as telephones, computers, and copiers, for personal communication or activities, such as playing games or chatting on social media. Volunteers should turn off their cell phones upon entering SVASC, and personal calls, except in emergency situations, should be avoided. In addition, social visits from friends and family members are not allowed during volunteering. Volunteers should not bring their children to SVASC while volunteering.

Volunteers will be given a designated place to store coats, purses, and other necessary personal belongings while working at SVASC. Personal items cannot be stored overnight or after the volunteer leaves for the day. Volunteers should not bring gaming devices, personal computers, iPods, or other personal electronic devices to SVASC during their assignments. SVASC is not responsible for a volunteer's lost or stolen personal belongings.

Parking

Volunteers may park at SVASC, but should not park in the parking spaces in front of the building as these are for the public.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

In order to maintain accurate statistics, SVASC must record and calculate all volunteer hours. All volunteers must sign in when they report for their volunteer assignments and sign out when they leave. Sign-in sheets are kept the front desk and are examined periodically by the Volunteer Coordinator and Shelter Director.

Supervision and Communication

All volunteers will have an immediate supervisor or for specific projects or events to which they have been assigned. The Volunteer Coordinator will serve as the overall supervisor to all volunteers of the SVASC. Effective communication is essential to a successful volunteer program. Volunteers should feel free to contact their departmental supervisors or the Volunteer Coordinator with any questions, problems, concerns, or issues that arise during the course of their volunteer assignments. Volunteers should also keep the SVASC updated on their contact information and should report any changes in personal data to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Restricted Areas

The following areas are restricted from volunteers and rescue groups at all times:

- Dog and Cat Court Hold
- Dog and Cat Isolation

Attendance

Volunteers should notify their departmental supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if they cannot report for their assignments or if they have a scheduling conflict resulting in arriving late or leaving early. Volunteers should attempt to speak with a live person when calling in to report an absence. If the supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator cannot be reached by phone, then the volunteer should e-mail the Volunteer Coordinator.

Inclement Weather

Volunteers should notify the SVASC, as previously outlined above, if they cannot report for their assignments due to inclement weather. Before reporting for work, volunteers should call in or check online to confirm the SVASC's operating hours.

Termination/Resignation of a Volunteer Position

Shenandoah Valley Animal Services (SVASC) accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the SVASC. The SVASC may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the SVASC.

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: routine absenteeism, gross misconduct, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of SVASC equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of the public, or co-workers, failure to abide by SVASC policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the SVASC at any time. Volunteers who intend to resign are requested to provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision. Volunteers should inform the Volunteer Coordinator of their decision to leave. Prior to leaving, all volunteers must return their name tags and any wearing apparel with SVASC logos to the Volunteer

Coordinator.

Confirmation Letters and Recommendations

The Volunteer Coordinator will provide letters for completion of community-service hours for volunteers who have successfully completed their volunteer assignments with the SVASC. Requests for these confirmation letters should be made at the beginning of the volunteer's work for the SVASC. Volunteers must provide the Coordinator with all necessary information regarding these letters, including due dates, addresses, and telephone numbers, as soon as possible. Volunteers are also welcome to ask for letters of recommendation from the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Recognition

SVASC will recognize volunteers throughout the year when suitable occasions arise for such recognition, including receptions or events designated to honor and recognize volunteers for their many hours of service to the SVASC.

For questions, please contact

Jon Hilbert, SVASC Shelter Director, at 540-430-6454 or e-mail: jhilbert@co.augusta.va.us

Statement of Acknowledgment

I have thoroughly and completely read the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services (SVASC's) Volunteer Handbook, and as a volunteer for the SVASC, I agree to follow and abide by all policies and procedures of the Shenandoah Valley Animal Services as outlined in this handbook. While volunteering for the SVASC, I agree to conduct myself in a manner defined and described within this handbook. Failure to do so may result in the termination of my volunteer assignment and my dismissal from the volunteer program.

Print Name:

X

Signed Name:

X
