



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

MARCH 2021

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Welcome to the Palm Valley Animal Society Family

We are honored to have you volunteer with us here at Palm Valley Animal Society (PVAS). The purpose of this volunteer handbook is to introduce you to PVAS and to provide an overview of procedures for volunteers. As the program grows, our department may change, and there may be modifications to the practices and procedures in this handbook. However, any changes made to this handbook will be communicated to all volunteers.

As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to be familiar with and abide by the guidelines in this handbook. If you have any questions about the volunteer program's policies and procedures, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator.

Palm Valley Animal Society's purpose is to provide care and treatment of animals in need of protection, to return lost animals to their owners, to maintain an adoption program, to provide a variety of programs and activities aimed at reducing the overpopulation of abandoned animals, and to educate the public on the proper care and responsibility for animals. Volunteers are the backbone of our organization and lifesaving initiatives. Our shelter can only run with the care, dedication, and support of volunteers like you. PVAS relies heavily on volunteers from the community, and it is through your support that we are able to carry out our goals, mission, and programs.

Mission Statement

Palm Valley Animal Society's mission is to provide lifesaving care, comfort, and compassion to animals in need by engaging the hearts, hands, and minds of our community.



Facilities

Palm Valley Animal Society has two facilities at which you can volunteer. PVAS Trenton Center is located at 2501 W Trenton Rd, Edinburg, TX 78539. You can contact that facility directly at (956) 686 - 1141.

PVAS Andrews Center is located at 2451 N Expressway 281, Edinburg, TX 78541. You can contact that facility directly at (956) 720 - 4563.



Volunteer Hours

Palm Valley Animal Society is open to the public from 11 am - 7 pm every day of the week. Volunteer hours are from 10 am - 7 pm daily, with the exception of monthly volunteer events and departments that start operations at 8 am.

Please refer to the Volunteer Portal for shift start and end times.

Contact Names and Numbers

Your volunteer coordinator is Lilia Murray. She is your point of contact regarding all of your volunteer needs and questions. Lilia can be reached via call and text at (956) 478 - 9881. She can also be reached via email at volunteer@pvastx.org. Lilia is available Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 am - 5 pm. If you need assistance outside of those hours, please send a text message or email, and she will get back to you as soon as she is back in the office. For general questions outside of these hours, please feel free to contact one of our facilities to speak with a PVAS employee.

Volunteer Opportunities

Cat Department (Training Required)

Cats at PVAS need your love and care! Volunteer with our team in the cat department with cat crew and cat socialization. Prior to volunteering with our PVAS cats, you **must** complete the **mandatory** Cat Care Training. During this training, a PVAS staff member will teach you how to clean kennels, how to feed, hold, and interact with kittens, how to monitor their behavior, and more! You can register for this training in the Volunteer Portal.

Cat Crew

Volunteers who sign up for this assignment will take care of cats! They will clean kennels, feed cats, replace litter, give clean blankets, and perform any additional cat care tasks that our team may ask of you.

Cat Socialization

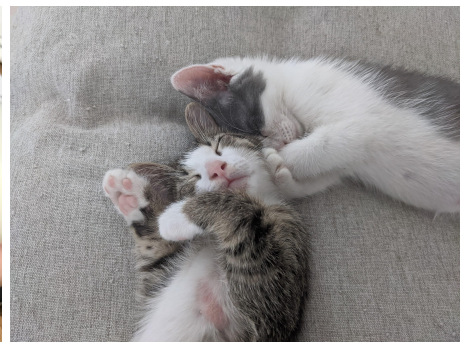
In cat socialization, volunteers will interact and play with the cats to get to know their special personalities! Volunteers will also write notes about the cats' personalities and behaviors in order to provide potential adopters with pet bios.

Baby Bottle Squad

Volunteers who sign up for a Baby Bottle Squad shift will assist with bottle-feeding orphaned kittens. Training is required, and access to training and shifts are available upon request. Please email your Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

Fungus Fighters

Our Fungus Fighter volunteers will assist with medically treating cats with fungal infections under a medical staff member's supervision. This treatment includes administering both oral and topical medication to the pets in need.



Dog Department (Training Required)

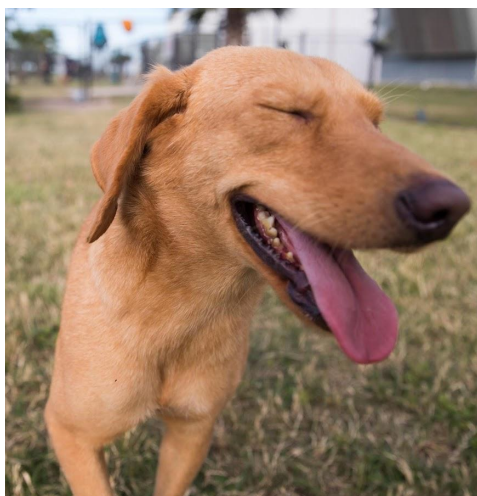
Dogs have plenty of energy and want your company! Help out in the dog department by ensuring that they are fed and walked. Dog Care Training is **mandatory training** that all volunteers must complete in order to interact with our dogs. During this training, volunteers will learn how to clean kennels, feed dogs, interact with them, walk them, monitor their behavior, and more! You can register for this training in the volunteer portal.

Dog Crew

Volunteers who sign up for this assignment will take care of dogs! They will clean kennels, feed the dogs, clean up after them, and perform any other dog care tasks that our team may ask of you.

Dog Socialization

In dog socialization, volunteers will interact with, play with, and walk dogs to get to know their special personalities! Volunteers are also encouraged to write notes about the dogs' personalities and behaviors in order to provide potential adopters with pet bios



Medical

Palm Valley Animal Society's shelter veterinarian and medical technicians need your help in the medical department. Are you a pre-vet student or interested in the medical field? Join our medical volunteer team today!

Laundry

Providing PVAS pets with clean towels, blankets, and pet beds is a small, yet important duty here at PVAS! In this department, you will be running laundry loads and organizing clean items into their proper compartments.

Pet Bowl Washing

There are several pet bowl washing stations available at both locations. We need help ensuring that our furry friends have clean bowls to feast out of!

Department Support

We have various departments that you can volunteer with, including our Adoption, Volunteer, Foster, and Maintenance teams!

Adoption Support

Assist the Adoption team in making appointments, answering phone calls, and assisting in the facilitation of pet adoptions.

Volunteer Support

Assist the Volunteer Coordinator with any additional duties, including event planning, assistance with office duties, and more.

Foster Support

Assist the foster department with building foster kits, contacting foster registrants, conducting foster parent follow ups, marketing foster pets, and more.

Maintenance Support

Assist the Facilities department with landscaping, simple construction, woodworking, and more!

Rescue Transport Support

Our rescue department is always looking for extra support from volunteers with their biweekly transports. The rescue team needs volunteer assistance with cleaning vans, loading up animals, and even driving!

Freedom Drivers

Depending on the specific transport planned, volunteers that offer to be freedom drivers assist the rescue team by transporting pets in urgent need of rescue placement either locally or long distance. While we typically need drivers for these trips, passengers are occasionally needed as well. Court-appointed volunteers are not eligible to complete hours by transporting. Please contact your Volunteer Coordinator directly if you are interested in being a freedom driver!



Fostering

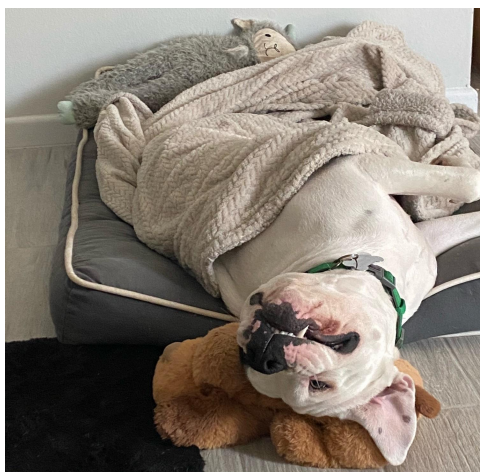
Volunteers can receive volunteer hours by fostering a pet(s) in need! You must first register online at www.pvastx.org/foster, and your hours will start accumulating the day you pick up your foster pet. Volunteers must abide by all foster program policies in order to receive their hours at the end of the fostering period. Contact either your Volunteer Coordinator or the foster team at foster@pvastx.org if you have any questions. Volunteers are also able to participate in our short-term foster programs, Tails Around Town and Pawjama Party. While court-appointed volunteers are welcome to foster, we unfortunately cannot grant service hours for participating in these programs.

Tails Around Town

By participating in this program, volunteers can receive hours by taking shelter dogs on field trips that can last from a couple of hours to half a day. Participants need to be 18 years of age or older, bring a valid piece of photo ID, and sign an agreement. Tails Around Town only happens at our PVAS Andrews Center. Visit www.pvastx.org/tails-around-town for more information.

Pawjama Party

Palm Valley Animal Society offers this two-night foster care program to the public on Fridays and Saturdays at our PVAS Andrews Center. Volunteers can receive hours by taking one of our long-stay shelter dogs home for a sleepover! Visit www.pvastx.org/overnight-foster-program for more information.



Events

We always need volunteers to help out at our monthly events such as Palm Valley Animal Society's Community Clinic, Pet Pantry, Spay & Neuter events, and more!

Community Clinic

On the second Saturday of every month, PVAS hosts a low-cost vaccine clinic for community pets. Volunteers will assist our team in greeting families, directing traffic from entering and exiting the clinic, payment facilitations, pet registrations, pet check-ins, and more!

Pet Pantry

On the third Saturday of every month, PVAS hosts a drive-through food pantry in which we give back to the community and distribute free pet food to any family in need. Volunteers help direct traffic, distribute pet food, and greet families.

Spay & Neuter Events

Occasionally, PVAS will host a large spay & neuter event to provide those services to people who have adopted pets from the shelter! Volunteers are needed at these clinical events to assist veterinary staff in post-operative procedures, sanitizing surgical tools, client registration, and more.

Thrift Store

Palm Valley Animal Society has a thrift store, located at 2901 N 10th St Suite M, McAllen, TX, and would love your assistance with keeping it running! Thrift store volunteers assist with sorting and organizing donations, cleaning, and helping with sales.

At-home Volunteering

Did you know that you can volunteer and make a difference without even coming to the shelter? Ask your Volunteer Coordinator about our at-home volunteer opportunities, such as:

- Donating items
- Neighborhood fundraising
- Virtual fundraising
- Social media
- DIY crafts
- DIY treats
- More upon request



Donations and Fundraising

We are always in need of donations, and volunteers can receive hours for donating items! Ask your Volunteer Coordinator for a list of items and their volunteer hour equivalence. For volunteers interested in donating or fundraising, we suggest hosting a community donation drive or a donation box collection for funds or items that the shelter needs!

How to Register

1. The first step to Volunteering at Palm Valley Animal Society is to register online at www.pvastx.org/volunteer. You will provide some general information as well as watch an orientation video.
2. Once you have completed the registration, your Volunteer Coordinator will activate your volunteer account.

3. When your Volunteer Coordinator activates your account, you will receive an **activation email**. **The activation email will contain further information on how to start your first day** along with reminders of volunteer guidelines and a copy of this handbook.

When you receive the activation email, you are ready to start volunteering!

IMPORTANT: It is important to enter a valid email address and look in your inbox for instructions to proceed with your volunteer registration process. **Please check your spam folder if you cannot find emails from your Volunteer Coordinator.**

Volunteers 6-15 Years of Age

The minimum age to volunteer is 6 years old. Volunteers in this age range **MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT (parent or legal guardian)**.

- The parent and child must **both** go through the registration process (see: How to Sign Up).
- The parent must sign and submit a Volunteer Service Agreement section Junior Volunteers, which will be emailed to them upon registration.
- The parent must accompany the child at all times onsite.

Volunteers 16-17 Years of Age

- Minors must register to become a volunteer (see: How to sign up)
- A parent or legal guardian must then sign and submit a Volunteer Service Agreement section Minor Consent Form, which will be emailed to them upon registration.

Court-Appointed Volunteers

Court-Appointed Volunteers are volunteers and are held to the same standards as every other volunteer. They will be treated with respect and held in the same regard.

Court-Appointed Volunteers must:

- Abide by the Volunteer Handbook
- Schedule an appointment with a Volunteer Coordinator to get their yellow card signed
- Wear the volunteer t-shirt and badge
- Volunteer onsite
- Sign in on the iPad

Since Court-Appointed Volunteers are required to volunteer onsite, they unfortunately, **CANNOT** foster, donate, volunteer from home, participate in transport, or participate in the Tails Around Town and Pawjama Party programs in exchange for hours.

PVAS does **NOT** do 2 for 1 hours. We do not offer two hours for one hour's work of volunteering.

Your hours will **NOT** be approved if they are signed by anyone other than the Volunteer Coordinator.

You will **NOT** be allowed to volunteer, and your hours will **NOT** count if you do not wear your volunteer shirt and badge.

We reserve the right to deny your hours or terminate your volunteer service if you do not abide by Palm Valley Animal Society's volunteer and general guidelines.

Scheduling

All volunteer time **MUST** be scheduled. Please pick up a shift and reserve your volunteer time in the Volunteer Portal found on www.pvastx.org/volunteer. Scheduling your shifts online is important to let us know who is coming in to help with which department.

Attendance

Volunteers are expected to show up to their scheduled shifts on time and complete them on time. You must remain onsite during your shift unless a department or specific task is requiring you to work offsite. Any volunteer that takes a lunch break must clock out.

If you have scheduling or availability issues, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator for accommodations.

Group Volunteers

Group Volunteers are always welcome! Please contact your Volunteer Coordinator for more information on registering your group and to schedule a date for service.

Volunteers Needing Documentation for Volunteer Hours

Any volunteer needing hours signed for any reason (school or community service) must meet with the Volunteer Coordinator. **ONLY** a Volunteer Coordinator, not another staff member, can sign off on your documentation. Please schedule an appointment with the Volunteer Coordinator to get your hours verified and signed.

Dress Code

Your personal appearance reflects the reputation, integrity, and public image of Palm Valley Animal Society. All volunteers are required to report onsite neatly groomed and dressed. You are expected to

maintain personal hygiene habits that are generally accepted in the community, including clean clothing, good grooming and personal hygiene, and appropriate attire.

The following is a list of dress code guidelines:

- You must always wear a volunteer t-shirt and badge (you will not be allowed to volunteer without your shirt and badge).
- You must always wear long jeans or pants. This is to avoid scratches from pets.
- You must always wear closed-toe shoes.
- Large rings, dangling earrings, and necklaces can get in the way or even rip out when working with animals; they are not permitted.
- Make sure you wear accessories that can be disinfected and will not rip through gloves or personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Face masks or coverings are mandatory for all volunteers until further notice.

Failure to comply with the dress code and personal appearance standards may result in being sent home to groom or to change clothes. **Volunteers will not be allowed to volunteer onsite without their shirt and badge.** Community Service volunteers will **NOT** have their card signed without their shirt and badge, or if they have not complied with other dress code requirements.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Palm Valley Animal Society is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive work environment. Consistent with this commitment, it is the intent of the organization to maintain a drug and alcohol-free environment. Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other impairing substances while onsite will not be tolerated.

COVID-19 Policy

Due to COVID-19, Palm Valley Animal Society is requiring all staff, volunteers, and guests to wear face masks or face coverings in all public areas at all times and maintain a social distance of at least 6-feet between other individuals in the facility. You will not be allowed to enter the building without a face mask. Additionally, we ask that you reschedule your shift if you are pending COVID-19 test results, if you are living with or have come in contact with someone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, is waiting on test results, or has a confirmed positive test, or if you are experiencing any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain

- Sore throat
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Thank you for understanding our need to keep fellow volunteers, employees, and community members safe.

Standard of Conduct

By volunteering with Palm Valley Animal Society, you are agreeing to support the mission, vision, goals, and efforts of the shelter. You are expected to exhibit good conduct and behavior and to not do anything to damage Palm Valley Animal Society's goodwill, whether on or off duty. This may include publicly disparaging PVAS's manner or methods of operation or engaging in conduct that could have a negative impact on the perception of Palm Valley Animal Society among donors, other volunteers, supporters, potential corporate or governmental partners, and others. Volunteers are also expected to be courteous and respectful toward each other and to treat one another as professionals. Any abuse toward humans or animals will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary Process and Actions

Violation of PVAS Volunteer policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action, including termination from your volunteer services. The Volunteer Department allows for a verbal warning, and then termination if appropriate steps have not been taken to correct violation of policy. However, when warranted, a volunteer may be terminated without prior warning.

Thank You!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Palm Valley Animal Society. It is through your support and services that we are able to carry out our mission and continue to save the lives of pets in our community. If you have any questions that have not been addressed in this handbook, please feel free to contact your Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@pvastx.org or (956) 478 - 9881.