



Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the St. Augustine Humane Society!

As a volunteer, you are a valuable part of our organization and to the many animals in our community. Being a volunteer is extremely rewarding, educational, exciting, and fun! You will have a lasting impact on the lives of pets and their owners in our community and will get to see how our efforts help keep pets with their loving families.

The St. Augustine Humane Society promotes responsible pet ownership and strengthens the human and animal bond through education and training. We operate as a resource center for the citizens and animals of St. Johns County. We work to reduce the relinquishment rate of pets to shelters through assistance services, such as our low-cost veterinary clinic, our effective and affordable spay/neuter program, Pet Food Pantry, and positive dog training classes. The time and energy contributed by volunteers is imperative to the success of these programs.

Because your support as a volunteer is so important, your decision to participate must be made with the full understanding of the commitment and responsibility it demands. This manual has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our policies and procedures, tools for working with our clients, and how to safely handle animals. Please read it carefully so you will be well equipped to answer questions knowledgeably and provide valuable information through our resource center.

Thank you for giving your time and energy to the St. Augustine Humane Society! We hope that the time you spend here will be as rewarding to you as it is to the animals receiving your care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carolyn Smith".

Carolyn Smith
Executive Director
St. Augustine Humane Society

Our Mission

The St. Augustine Humane Society promotes healthy, responsible, lifelong pet ownership by serving the medical and rehabilitative needs of companion animals in our community. Our programs are designed to strengthen human-pet relationships by reducing the need for pets to enter shelters. Our goal is to encourage the humane treatment of animals, prevent overpopulation, and end animal cruelty.

Volunteer Positions and Program Descriptions

The need for talented volunteers is growing with our expanding programs. As a volunteer, you will be supporting and assisting our staff in various capacities. Please understand that you may be asked to perform tasks beyond the service descriptions listed below as the needs of the organization demand. Our most valuable volunteers are dedicated to being helpmates and enjoy the variety that an evolving environment presents.

Wellness Clinic

We are proud to offer a low-cost veterinary clinic designed to assist pet owners who cannot afford regular veterinary care due to economic hardship. Our clinic offers preventative care only, so severe illness and injury cases may be referred out. The clinic operates every Wednesday, Thursday, and every other Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm, with an hour break for lunch at 12:30pm.

There are several volunteer positions required to successfully run these programs. **Advocates** guide pet owners through the clinic process from check-in to check-out while recording notes and relaying important information. **Animal Handlers** assist owners with the handling of their pets, guide pets through the clinic process, and maintain a safe environment.

Spay/Neuter Clinic

We are proud to provide the only ASPCA Humane Alliance compliant spay/neuter surgery program of its kind in St. Johns County. We endeavor to provide access to this lifesaving surgery to all cats and dogs through a low-cost and fee-free structure. Spay/neuter surgeries are performed every Tuesday from 9:00am to 4:00pm. **Recovery Techs** monitor the pets after their surgery and routinely check the vitals of the pets during the recovery period.

Pet Food Pantry

Our Pet Food Pantry provides temporary assistance to families who are experiencing economic hardship and cannot afford to feed their pets. We provide **over 1,600 pounds of pet food each month** to these families. **Pet Food Pantry Volunteers** are needed to help distribute food, coordinate pet food drives, and establish and maintain business partnerships to secure consistent food donations.

Events and Fundraising

Throughout the year, there are many opportunities for volunteers to use their personal and professional skills to assist the Humane Society through special events and fundraisers. Some of events we need volunteer assistance with include our annual Pin Up Paws Party Fundraiser and humane education events, such as Adventures In Pet Care. Because volunteers involved in the planning of these events will be representing our organization in such a public manner, they must be dedicated and passionate about our mission and be able to represent us professionally in the community. As we continue to grow and expand our services and programs, this position will be vital to ensuring that our resources grow with us. These volunteers must be highly motivated, capable of listening to instruction, and able to work on their own.

Dog Training

Because behavioral issues are one of the most common reasons that owners relinquish their pets, providing positive dog training courses is an important part of our mission. **Dog Training Volunteers** are needed to help set up and take down training equipment for each class. We are also looking for a **Dog Training Assistant** volunteer. Dog Training Assistants do not need to be certified as a dog trainer, nor do they need previous dog training experience as they will receive on-the-job training. These volunteers **must** abide by the force-free and fear-free methods used by the licensed dog trainer.

Volunteer Policies & Procedures

Age Requirements

All volunteers interested in assisting with the Wellness Clinic must be at least 18 years old. Due to liability concerns, anyone under the age of 18 will only be accepted as volunteers in a limited capacity and only with express permission from the Operations Manager.

General Conduct and Behavior

As a volunteer of the St. Augustine Humane Society, you are seen as a representative of our organization by family, friends, clients, and community members. This is an important responsibility, and it is important that you familiarize yourself with our policies, procedures, and mission. When dealing with clients you must always be polite, courteous, and helpful. You are expected to treat staff members and your fellow volunteers with the same courteous respect. Integrity, morality, strong work ethic, and good citizenship should be your guide to acceptable conduct.

Workplace Conduct and Standards

The St. Augustine Humane Society is a professional organization, and we hold our staff and volunteers to high standards. While volunteering with our programs, you represent us to the community and may affect other aspects of our organization, such as grant funding, donations, and partnerships. Please respect your fellow volunteers and the positions to which they have been assigned.

Always follow directions given by the Veterinarian, Dog Trainer, or other program supervisor. **Never interject with your own comments or question the advice given by our professional staff while in the presence of the pet owner.** If you have questions or concerns, please address them with the program supervisor privately. While serving the pet and owner, volunteers are primarily there to assist in delivering information or care. Maintaining a quiet presence is very important, because it ensures that the pet owner receives the proper information.

Attempting to “take over” or by-pass standard procedures disrupts the process and limits the number of pets we are able to serve. Our procedures are in place to ensure the safety of volunteers, staff, pets, and their owners. Repeated disregard of our procedures will result in removal from our volunteer program. St. Augustine Humane Society staff members may ask you to perform different tasks depending on the needs of the program. It is your responsibility to follow their directives and requests. Please consider staff members as your supervisors. Failure to respect their directives may result in removal from the volunteer program.

Maintaining situational awareness is very important to keeping everyone safe. You are expected to help keep a calm and quiet environment. No loud laughing or talking is permitted. Please do not wander around the facility or property. Direct supervision should not be needed. Personal smart phones should not be used while volunteering. Watch for potential negative interactions between pets and intervene as instructed by your supervisor.

Animal Care and Handling

If required, volunteers will be educated through on-the-job training about correct and appropriate ways to handle animals. Volunteer Animal Handlers will be chosen based on skills and previous experience. *Please see Addendum A*

Dress Code

Clinic volunteers must provide their own set of **wine-colored scrubs**, which can be found online or at other retail locations. *Dog Training volunteers* may wear athletic clothing so long as it is modest and free of any offensive content. *All volunteers* must wear shoes with closed toes and heels at all times. No sandals or flip flops are allowed. All volunteers should keep jewelry and other accessories to a minimum for their own safety and the safety of the pets.

Volunteers assisting with special events and fundraising are expected to dress appropriately for their responsibilities. When meeting with members of the community, the volunteer’s appearance should reflect the professional quality of the St. Augustine Humane Society.

A nametag will be provided to each volunteer after an initial training period. Nametags must be worn at all times while volunteering. One nametag will be provided, and it is the volunteer's responsibility to maintain it. In the event a nametag is lost or damaged, a replacement will be provided at the volunteer's expense. Nametags are to be relinquished upon separation from the organization.

Time Commitment and Attendance

We rely on our volunteers for the success of our programs. Therefore, it is important to be dependable and effective. By fulfilling your commitments, our programs operate smoothly and we can serve the maximum amount of pets in our community. We ask that you commit to specific days and times that you plan to volunteer. Volunteer positions should be taken seriously and considered as important as regular employment. It is the responsibility of every volunteer to live up to their commitments.

Use of Services

Volunteers are eligible to participate in services that are in accordance to the same guidelines and requirements as the general public. However, volunteers are not permitted to participate in these services during their scheduled shifts. If volunteers utilize our services, they must schedule an appointment on a day or time when they do not have an existing commitment to volunteer. If you are volunteering, please do not bring in your pet for services on that day.

Parking

Volunteers should park in the field to the left of the facility during their scheduled shifts.

Smoke and Drug Free Workplace

This facility strives to be a smoke free work environment. There is absolutely no smoking indoors, including the use of vaping devices. Smoking is only permitted in designated outdoor areas. The following activities are prohibited on premises or while conducting Humane Society business: the consumption of alcohol or non-prescribed controlled substances; and the unlawful manufacture, distribution, and/or possession of a controlled substance. Volunteers should not abstain from the program if they are on legally prescribed medications which impair their mental or physical capabilities.

Discrimination and Violence in the Workplace

The St. Augustine Humane Society provides a workplace which is free from discrimination, and promotes equal opportunity and equitable treatment. The St. Augustine Humane Society does not tolerate the harassment of its employees, volunteers, or visitors. The display of violent, aggressive, or threatening behavior while in the facility, work sites, or vehicles is not permitted. Harassing behavior may be, but is not limited to, physical, verbal, or visual harassment. Anyone experiencing harassment should **immediately** address this with the Volunteer Program Manager, Operations Manager, or Executive Director. Any volunteer who detracts from this safe environment will be immediately removed from the program.

Conflict Resolution

Clinic volunteers with concerns or issues regarding a fellow volunteer, staff member, or client should address the situation with the Operations Manager in private. Volunteers with concerns or issues regarding volunteering in general should address these with the Volunteer Program Manager in private. Please deal with these matters in private, not on the clinic floor or in front of customers, and at an appropriate time, not in the middle of an extremely busy day.

Injury or Illness

The liability waiver in the Volunteer Manual releases the St. Augustine Humane Society from all liability for injury or illness occurring during, or as a result of, your volunteer work with the organization. All work-related injuries/illnesses must be reported immediately to management and the appropriate paperwork must be completed. Volunteers should seek medical treatment at their own expense. In many cases, the volunteer will be required to carry their own health insurance as an eligibility prerequisite to volunteering in certain positions in accordance with the facility's insurance

policies. Please keep safety in mind at all times while on the premises. Do not place yourself in any position in which you are uncomfortable. If you are concerned or see unsafe practices, contact the Operations Manager immediately.

Zoonotic diseases are those which can be spread from animals to humans. Frequent hand washing, especially between contact with different animals, greatly reduces the risk of contracting disease, which helps keep both humans and animals healthy. If you are working directly with animals in the clinic, it is strongly advised that you seek rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis regimen before starting your volunteer service. *Please see Addendums B & C*

Privacy

Absent express permission from the St. Augustine Humane Society, primarily regarding the use of web-based databases (i.e.: AVImark), volunteers shall not post any information on the internet or commercial online providers, databases, and social networking sites while volunteering. Volunteers shall not post any of the company's information on the internet or commercial online providers, databases, and social networking sites at any time without express permission. Any information pertaining to records and cases to which you may become privileged (including names, addresses, phone numbers, financial information, etc.) as a result of your volunteer position, is confidential and may not be disclosed in any capacity.

Public and Media Communication

Volunteers may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the St. Augustine Humane Society except as specifically approved by the Executive Director. Interactions with the public, the media, or other entities are subject to this limitation. Volunteers shall understand and respect the mission and values of the St. Augustine Humane Society, and agree to not interfere or undermine that mission. No volunteer, except those approved to do so, may speak on behalf of the St. Augustine Humane Society to any media or public entity. Likewise, no volunteer may offer individual judgment on the actions of the St. Augustine Humane Society, its Executive Director, management team, or any staff member, unless approved to do so by the Board of Directors or Executive Director.

Ending Volunteer Service

Volunteers who have not responded to our contact efforts for six months will be removed from the volunteer program. Volunteers temporarily unable to volunteer due to an emergency, vacation, school, or other temporary reason should notify the Volunteer Program Manager and request to be put on a temporary leave of absence.

Volunteers seeking to end their service should notify the Volunteer Program Manager and state their desire to do so. They will be removed from the volunteer program.

If a volunteer is found in violation of any policy or procedure, the Volunteer Program Manager, Operations Manager, and/or Executive Director may request a one-on-one meeting with the volunteer to end service.

Addendum A

Animal Handling Safety

This information is a general overview of safe animal handling practices. **It is not intended to replace the safe animal handling training conducted by the St. Augustine Humane Society.** When handling animals, be sure to take your time, do not over stimulate the animal, and remember that the animal may *perceive* a threat, even if you're not intending to threaten. **If you do not feel comfortable handling an animal, DO NOT HANDLE THE ANIMAL.** Get a supervisor to help you. Do not risk getting dragged, scratched, or bitten! Inform a supervisor immediately if an animal is displaying signs of aggression or may be a threat to other animals or people. Wearing protective gloves and long-sleeved shirts will reduce the degree of injury from bites and scratches.

Cats

- Read all posted caution signs before opening a cat's cage. When removing a cat from a kennel, be sure to get the cat's attention before opening the gate. Allow the cat to check out your fingers before you pick it up—the cat should come to you, not the other way around. Talk to the cat calmly and softly. Over-stimulating the cat is not effective.
- When handling a cat, control the head and neck at all times. The cat should be held firmly. One hand should control the head and neck, with the elbow supporting/gripping the hindquarters. The second hand should control the front paws. If needed, take a moment to readjust your grip. Keep the cat's face away from yourself, other people, and other animals. Always use a carrier or towel to transport the cat more than a few feet.
- Watch for signs of stress and fear: enlarged pupils, thrashing tail, growling, hissing, and attempts to hide or escape. If these signs appear, carefully remove the cat from the source of stress and into a less stressful kennel area or visitation room. If a cat is fearful, do not make direct eye contact. Approach the animal at its own level—do not reach over the cat's head—and move slowly. Rushing the animal will only add more stress, which will lead to unpredictable behavior and increased likelihood of injury.

Dogs

- Read all posted caution signs before opening a crate or kennel. When removing a dog from a kennel, enter the kennel with your leash ready. Attempting to leash a dog through the gap in the gate can lead to an escape by the dog. Approach the dog from the side instead of over the top of its head, as this will only intimidate the animal. If the dog has a kennel mate, remove it from the kennel if it is making it difficult to get the dog you need. Talk calmly to the dog. Overstimulating the animal will only make your job more difficult. The use of a noose leash is restricted to inside the clinic only. If the dog will be going outside, it must be fitted with a collar and leash.
- When moving the dog, keep it away from other kennels and break its line of vision to other animals. Use proper leash techniques: always use two hands, one to guide the leash into the hand holding the noose end. Keep the leash short. Carrying dogs over 30 pounds is not acceptable. Only small dogs and puppies may be carried, and then only as you would a cat. Carrying a dog like a baby is not permitted. If the dog won't move on the leash, coax it by moving in front and down low. Dragging a dog is never permitted.
- Watch for signs of stress and fear: ears back, hackles raised, tail down, dilated pupils, lifted lip, submissive posture, growling, snarling, barking, or lunging. If these signs appear, remove the dog from the source of the stress, away from other animals and into a less stressful kennel area or visitation room.
- If a dog is fearful, do not make direct eye contact. Approach the animal at its own level, do not reach over the dog's head, and move slowly. Rushing the animal only adds more stress, which leads to unpredictable behavior and increased likelihood of injury.

Addendum B

Transmission of Zoonotic Diseases

Working with animals involves some level of risk of transmission of diseases. Listed below is a partial list of some common diseases associated with direct animal contact, symptoms, and how to best prevent them.

- **Ringworm.** Ringworm is a fungus transmitted by direct contact with an infected animal. This is extremely contagious, and redness and hair loss at the site of infection are the clinical symptoms. The best prevention is avoiding contact with infected animals, as well as washing hands and other exposed body parts with soap and water.
- **Giardia.** This intestinal parasite is spread by ingesting the parasite, either through contact with the feces of an infected animal or drinking contaminated water. Symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, and cramping. Washing hands after handling an infected animal and avoiding contact with infected feces is the best prevention.
- **Salmonella.** This bacteria causes diarrhea and intestinal upset. It is spread by coming in contact with contaminated feces of reptiles or contaminated food. The best prevention is good hygiene and thorough cooking of food.
- **E. coli.** This bacteria can cause diarrhea, intestinal problems, and more severe symptoms. It is spread by coming in contact with contaminated feces or food. The best prevention is good hygiene and thorough cooking of food.
- **Roundworms.** Humans are abnormal hosts, but can get a condition known as visceral migrans. This occurs when an egg (larva) is ingested, and the larva migrates inside the body. Prevention includes good hygiene and avoiding contact with feces of infested animals.
- **Toxoplasmosis.** This protozoan disease, most commonly associated with cats, can cause problems for pregnant women. The parasite is transmitted through feces, so pregnant women should consult their physician about cleaning litter pans at the clinic.
- **Encephalitis and Lyme Disease.** These diseases are carried mainly by mosquitoes and ticks. Encephalitis affects the brain, and Lyme disease causes inflammation of joints and recurrent fever.
- **Sarcoptic mange and Cheyletiellosis.** These skin diseases are transmitted through mites from infected animals. Symptoms include itching, inflammation, redness, and hair loss where infected.
- **Tularemia.** This is a bacterial disease present in rabbits and rodents. Symptoms vary.
- **Bubonic Plague.** The Bubonic Plague is a severe, potentially fatal disease carried by rats and prairie dogs and transmitted to humans by fleas.
- **Rabies.** This viral disease affects the central nervous system, and, if contracted, is always fatal. It is spread by contact with the saliva of an infected animal. Prevention is mainly through vaccination of cats and dogs and avoidance of contact with wildlife.

Important Notes

Maintaining good hygiene can prevent most common diseases. Frequently washing hands and exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water will greatly reduce your risk of contracting an illness.

When an animal displays signs of illness, they should be evaluated as soon as possible by the staff and, if deemed necessary, removed from the premises.

Addendum C

Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Regimen

Pre-exposure vaccination against rabies simplifies the rabies post-exposure treatment, and it may protect in cases of unrecognized rabies exposure, or when post-exposure treatment is delayed. It does not eliminate the need for appropriate treatment following a known rabies virus exposure.

Who should receive rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis?

Veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal control officers, certain laboratory workers, and others who have regular contact with potentially rabid animal species.

International travelers to areas with endemic canine rabies who are likely to come into contact with dogs or wild animals and where access to medical care and appropriate biologics may be limited.

Pre-exposure Rabies Vaccination Series

Three 1.0 mL doses of rabies vaccine are given IM, one injection per day, on days 0, 7, and 21 or 28, in the deltoid area of adults or in the anterolateral thigh of young children.

Human diploid cell vaccine (HDVC) or purified chick embryo cell vaccine (PCEC) may be used, although it is recommended that the vaccine series be initiated and completed with the same vaccine product.

No HRIG should be given.

Antibody Titers and Booster Vaccination

Following their initial rabies vaccination series, persons in high-risk occupations should have their virus neutralizing rabies antibody titers checked periodically:

- Every 6 months in persons in the continuous-risk category
- Every 2 years for persons in the frequent-risk category.

The RFFIT (Reference 7) is the only recommended test for determining virus neutralizing antibody levels against the rabies virus. Other available titer tests (including the ELISA test) are not recommended for this purpose.

There are currently two working guidelines (or recommended “cut-offs”) for antibody titer levels below which a rabies-vaccinated person should receive a booster vaccination.

- The ACIP recommends that a single booster rabies vaccination be given when the titer falls below that corresponding to complete neutralization at a serum dilution $\geq 1:5$ by the rapid fluorescent focus inhibition test (RFFIT), a virus neutralization test. Complete viral neutralization at a 1:5 dilution is approximately equal to a titer of 0.1-0.2 IU/mL, depending on the reporting laboratory.
 - MDH generally recommends that the ACIP guideline be used.
 - WHO recommends that a single booster rabies vaccination be given when the titer drops below 0.5 IU/mL by the RFFIT.
 - Should a potential exposure occur, healthcare providers should take into consideration their patient’s risk of exposure, time until the next titer test, previous rabies titer results, health status, and accessibility to healthcare when determining when to administer a rabies vaccine booster to a patient.