



# **Lehigh Valley Humane Society**

## **Volunteer Handbook**



## Welcome to the Lehigh Valley Humane Society ("LVHS")

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with LVHS and provide you with information about working conditions, employees, volunteer expectations and some of the policies that govern our volunteers.

### Our Mission

To provide a safe haven for ALL animals in the Lehigh Valley. To be the leading advocate for breeds such as Pitbulls that often are left behind or ignored by other shelters. To provide state of the art medical care for all animals and to offer financial assistance to those pet owners that cannot afford services at for profit veterinary clinics. To match responsible pet seekers with their next best friend in order to find the perfect home for the animals in our care.

### Vision Statement

We strive to become the best animal welfare organization in the Lehigh Valley. We seek to break down any and all financial barriers for those who seek to become forever companions for the animals in our care. We will work to reduce the number of homeless animals in the Lehigh Valley by educating the community, offering low cost medical services and through our adoption processes. We will continue to support prosecution of any and all reported animal cruelty cases and rescue and rehabilitate all animals that suffer from cruelty situations.

### Managed Admission Shelter

The LVHS is a managed admission facility, which means we take in as many animals as we can humanely care for. We do not euthanize animals for space! We believe that our mission statement and vision statement clearly and honestly represent who we are and what type of organization we strive to become.

### Statement of Purpose

The Lehigh Valley Humane Society is concerned with the welfare of all animals - in our community and around the world. On a day to day basis, we are responsible for:

- The sheltering and care of unwanted, homeless, lost, abandoned, and abused animals
- The education of the public regarding proper animal care, responsible pet ownership, and respect for all living things
- The enforcement of the anti-cruelty laws of the state
- The responsible placement of adopted animals or the return of lost animals to their proper owners
- The humane disposition of unadoptable, sick, and injured animals
- The promotion of animal protection legislation and other activities which will better the quality of life for all creatures

## Some important things we do for the citizens and animals of the Lehigh Valley:

- Provide food, medical care and a safe haven for abandoned and owner relinquished animals
- Rescue sick or injured animals - 24 hours each day - 7 days each week
- Find life-long, loving homes through our adoption program
- Provide affordable, high-quality veterinary care to owned pets in our community
- Perform 30 spay/neuter surgeries per week on feral and free-roaming cats as part of Trap-Neuter-Return efforts across the Lehigh Valley
- Reunite lost pets with their human companions
- Provide annual dog licenses to Lehigh County dog owners
- Work in partnership with other animal welfare agencies to serve animals in need both locally and nationally

LVHS can only do the work we do for animals with the help of the over 600 volunteers who donate their time, expertise, and love every single day. We welcome volunteers to help us make Pennsylvania the most humane state in the nation!

Whether it's **animal care** or **dog walking, committee participation, laundry**, or any other of the many volunteer opportunities we have to offer, every volunteer job is part of our success.

The LVHS values our volunteers, donors and supporters as important contributors to the work we do and it is thanks to the generously donated time and assistance of volunteers that we can offer many high quality programs and services to Lehigh Valley pets and residents! We have a variety of volunteer opportunities at the shelter, in the community, and from home! Everyone plays an important role in making sure all animals have a loving, safe home to call their own - thank you for becoming involved!

## The Volunteer Process: Getting Started

The first step to volunteer is to pay the volunteer registration fee. on our website. Once the fee is paid, you will receive a confirmation email with a link to fill out the online volunteer application on VolunteerHub. Volunteers will then schedule their orientation date through VolunteerHub. Once the orientation is completed and you have received the necessary training, you become an approved volunteer and can schedule your desired volunteer shifts independently.

**As of January 1st, 2023- Paper volunteer applications are no longer accepted and all volunteer applications must be submitted through the online application form.**

- A \$10 application fee will be due upon applying to become a volunteer. This fee helps us to support our volunteer program.
- One application fee per individual applicant. Business and school groups are exempt from this fee.
- All application fields must be completed. Incomplete applications will not be processed.
- Members of business or school groups that would like to begin volunteering individually must sign up for and complete an orientation online. Groups do not receive the same training as individual volunteers and must receive that training before getting started as an individual volunteer.

If you have questions or need additional information about volunteering for the Lehigh Valley Humane Society, please contact our Lead Customer Experience Team Member, Elena Feliciano, at [elena@lehighhumane.org](mailto:elena@lehighhumane.org).

\*For those required to complete COURT-ORDERED community service, your application will be reviewed by the Lead Customer Experience Team Member and if an appropriate opportunity is available, you will be contacted and informed on when you can expect to start your required hours.

## Qualifications

- You must be 14 or older to volunteer at the LVHS.
- You must complete a volunteer waiver. If you are under 18, your parent or legal guardian must complete the volunteer waiver.
- You must attend a volunteer orientation. If you are under 18, your parent or legal guardian must attend the orientation with you.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Dog Walking

Walk and exercise shelter dogs on our grounds and in our play yards. Volunteers will also provide enrichment opportunities and follow training plans for specific dogs as designated by our Dog Trainer.

### Cat Care

Assist with morning cleanings within our three free-roaming cat rooms and our cat intake and cat isolation areas. Volunteers provide hands on care for our felines by cleaning cages, litter boxes, feeding and placing a toy in each cage.

### Cat Socialization

Spend time socializing, playing with, and reading to the shelter cats in our cat rooms and getting to know their purr-sonalities.

### Small Animal Care

Assist with morning cleanings of our small animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, and ferrets. Volunteers provide hands on care for our small animals by cleaning cages, litter boxes, feeding and placing a toy in each cage. Please be advised that the LVHS may or may not have small animals on site at any given time.

### Maintenance

Help us meet the needs of daily operations in our shelter. Assist with laundry, dishes, cleaning and sorting donations is a GREAT way to give back. Opportunities to help with grounds maintenance such as weeding and trash pick up are also available.

*We welcome volunteers to consider joining one of our organization's committees or the Board of Directors if interested! For more information, please contact Elena Feliciano at [elena@lehighhumane.org](mailto:elena@lehighhumane.org).*

## Policies and Procedures for Volunteers

### Importance of Volunteers

Our organization could not exist without volunteers. Volunteers are an important part of our team and are essential to providing the best possible care for our animals. Volunteers who work directly with animals can increase an animal's chance of adoption by providing additional human contact, thus making them more sociable, content and happy. Volunteers can help rebuild the lost trust in humans that many of our animals have experienced. Volunteers also help us to inform the public of the mission, values and objectives of LVHS.

As a volunteer you have the **responsibility** to:

- Meet your time commitments or provide adequate notice so that other arrangements can be made
- Be trusted with confidential information that might be necessary to do your work
- Perform assigned work to the best of your ability
- Follow organizational policies and procedures
- Be open-minded and respectful of all people
- Accept reasonable tasks with a positive attitude
- Maintain a positive attitude toward LVHS at all times

As a volunteer you will:

- Know that your efforts contribute to the organization's mission
- Receive the necessary orientation, training and supervision
- Learn how to improve your skills in the work you are doing
- Be treated with respect
- Be appreciated for your work you have done
- Be encouraged to ask questions and make suggestions

### Attendance

Volunteer shifts should be scheduled. If you volunteer regularly for a designated shift, please be punctual and reliable. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, please contact the Lead Customer Experience Team Member.

### Waiver and Release Form

An appropriate waiver and release form must be signed before you begin volunteering. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have their waiver signed by a parent or legal guardian before beginning volunteer work. You must be at least 14 years of age to volunteer at the LVHS.

### Accidents or Injuries

Any accident or injury that occurs while at the LVHS must be reported to a member of the staff management team and to the Lead Customer Experience Team Member immediately. Bites and scratches are considered injuries and must be treated immediately. When working with animals, there is a potential risk of injury, however LVHS is not liable and you are **not covered** under our insurance policy.

### Proper Dress

Volunteers are asked to represent LVHS in a professional and appropriate manner. Sneakers or closed-toed shoes must be worn when walking dogs.

### Volunteer Personal Property

LVHS is not responsible for loss or damage in any way of personal items. Volunteers are advised not to bring cash, valuables or any other personal belongings with them.

### Unauthorized Areas

Volunteers are not allowed in any unauthorized area at any time. This includes quarantine, isolation and the medical center areas unless trained and assigned to those areas.

### Cross Contamination

There is an inherent risk of cross contamination when working with animals. It is always a possibility that contact with a shelter animal may result in you bringing an illness home to your personal pets. LVHS is not liable for cross contamination between shelter pets and your personal pets.

### Cell Phones

Working with live animals requires your focus and attention. The distraction that cell phones create can be dangerous to you and the shelter animals. As such, there should be no cell phone use while volunteering at LVHS.

### Photography & Videos

Whilst volunteering with our organization, you may be photographed or recorded in a video from time to time. By signing this handbook, you hereby to allow the LVHS to use your name and likeness in photos and videos to be used for the LVHS website, social media accounts, and printed materials without expectation of confidentiality or financial compensation and acknowledge and agree that publication of said photos confers no rights of ownership or royalties whatsoever.

## Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment

LVHS is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as a harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples:

- Unwanted sexual advances
- Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances
- Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters
- Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, note, or invitations
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace, report it immediately to a member of the management team and to the Lead Customer Experience Team Member.

All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated. To the extent possible, your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment must immediately advise the Director of Operations and CEO so that it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## Mistreatment of Animals

There will be no mistreatment of animals. If a volunteer is found to be mistreating any animal in any way, the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

## Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Use

LVHS will not tolerate the use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs while you are volunteering. Use of these substances can adversely affect the health, welfare and safety of the animals in our care.

## Termination and Resignation

As a volunteer, you are under no contractual obligation to continue services at LVHS. Should you decide to resign please notify the volunteer coordinator of your decision. Under certain circumstances some volunteers may have their volunteer privileges terminated. Some of those reasons may include:

- Distribution of any defamatory or slanderous comments about LVHS (including, but not limited to emails, Facebook, Twitter or other social media sites, and verbally)
- Abuse of animals
- Sexual harassment of any kind
- Not adhering to our drug, tobacco and alcohol policy
- Utilizing LVHS property for any illegal purpose
- Theft
- Frequent no shows
- Non-compliance with rules of LVHS or failing to follow staff instructions or safety rules

## Reporting Medical or Behavioral Concerns

- If you notice a medical concern during your time with a dog, such as limping, blood in stool, vomiting, etc. scan the QR Code located in the on the Volunteer Communication Board and fill out a report. Our Shelter Animal Wellness Manager will examine the animal.
- If you notice a concerning behavior during your time with a dog, such as jumping, leash-biting, or growling, scan the corresponding QR Code located on the Volunteer Communication Board and fill out a report. Our Certified Dog Trainer will evaluate the animal.
- If you are bitten or scratched by an animal, scan and submit the Incident Report QR Code on the Volunteer Communication Board.

## Your promise to the resident animals of LVHS

- To always treat every animal with kindness, love and respect.
- To report any illness, injury or concerning behavior of an animal to a staff member immediately.