



ESSENTIAL CAPABILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

There are many volunteer opportunities available at the Foothills Animal Shelter (FAS), some of which are fulfilled by volunteers who work directly with domestic animals. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer at FAS, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities if they plan to work directly with animals. We have plenty of “non-contact” roles that are a great help to the shelter, too! *Please note: some accommodations can be made – please contact the Volunteer Department if you would like to have an accommodation taken into consideration.*

Essential Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling animal).
- High level of manual dexterity to manipulate kennel doors, slip leashes and other equipment used.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to pick up animals, carriers, containers, etc.
- Ability to stand/sit for significant periods of time.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely around the Shelter, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, and to be able to read notes on animals’ paperwork.
- Average sense of smell and touch in order to assess body condition of animals, and to note signs of illness or injury.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- 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 animals from escaping (example: ability to quickly pursue and retrieve help to assist with an escaped animal).
- Ability to handle animals of small to large size with extreme caution and care. This requires average vision, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, quick reflexes, physical strength, and mental alertness.
- Ability to capture loose and escaped animals with quick and quiet movements, if needed. The ability to calmly use leash for capture and strategize in the moment to ensure the safety of both the animals and humans in the area.
- Must not have strong allergies to chemicals used in cleaning, or to animals in our care that can’t be managed by medication.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odors, feces and possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.
- Ability to judge an animal’s reaction and to change voice to a soft tone in order to change an animal’s response.

- Ability to reach cabinets and cages at least six feet in height, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to lift move, and/or transport items weighing up to 25 pounds with reasonable accommodation.
- Average strength to assist with lifting small to medium size animals (up to 25 pounds) into a cage, which is approximately five feet high, using a step stool as needed.
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.

Essential Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- Ability to differentiate the needs of adoptable animals and stray animals and adjust working mannerisms around each type of animal.
- High level reading, writing, spelling and communication skills (example: understand words such as quarantine, euthanize and other common industry-related terms), and a mastery of the English language.
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Ability to observe and evaluate response to handling, as well as health and behavioral problems that are revealed during socialization.
- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals; ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Ability to work independently for long periods of time, as well as work in a professional manner within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

Essential Emotional Capabilities

- Able to control the urge to play with or pet the stray/unavailable animals.
- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally-charged environment with some animals that are unviable or abused, as well as the reality that some of the animals in our care may be euthanized.
- Ability to understand FAS's policies and positions regarding animal care, animal control, and other key animal welfare issues and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing FAS.

Please speak with a staff person in the Volunteer Department regarding any reasonable accommodation(s) you may need in order to meet the essential capabilities of your volunteer position at FAS.