



Job Description

Animal Experience Manager

DEPARTMENT: Behavior & Sheltering

REPORTS TO: Director of Animal Behavior and Sheltering

DIRECT REPORTS: Animal Care Supervisors (2)

INDIRECT REPORTS: Full/part-time Animal Care Technicians and Leads (10-14)

STATUS: Full-time, exempt

SCHEDULE: 40 hours, variable, at least one weekend day is required

MISSION

Foothills Animal Shelter's mission is: Providing support to our surrounding community through education, services that strengthen the human-pet bond, and humane care for the animals we serve.

VALUES

All employees and volunteers are expected to embody the Shelter's Values which are to have honesty and integrity in all that we do, with the following values as our guide:

- **Stewardship:** Assume responsibility and ownership for our actions within our shelter and our community;
- **Positive Culture:** Create a safe, supportive environment for the health, wellbeing, and development of staff and volunteers;
- **Openness:** Nurture an innovative, inclusive, and creative environment that cultivates conversations and relationships that actively work towards the future; and
- **Team Oriented:** Build relationships, embrace teamwork, and foster collaboration in pursuit of our Mission.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Animal Experience Manager provides strategic leadership for the experience of animals throughout their time at Foothills Animal Shelter. This position oversees shelter population management, animal movement, housing strategy, and cross-functional initiatives that support exceptional welfare, efficient progression through the shelter, and successful outcomes.

Leading the Animal Care Supervisors and partnering closely with Veterinary Services, Behavior, Shelter Services, Volunteer Services, and other teams, the Animal Experience Manager works to remove barriers that impact an animal's journey while ensuring the Animal Care department delivers exceptional daily care. As a member of the organization's leadership team, this position contributes to operational improvement, organizational initiatives, and strategic planning that advance Foothills Animal Shelter's mission and goals.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Animal Experience

- Oversees shelter population management strategies that support animal welfare, capacity for care, operational efficiency, and timely progression through the shelter.

- Leads strategic decisions regarding animal housing, kennel placement, pairing, and movement in collaboration with the Behavior and Veterinary Services teams.
- In conjunction with other operations leadership, regularly evaluates barriers affecting an animal's progression, including housing location, medical or behavioral holds, adoption availability, photography, biographies, pricing, and other factors that may influence placement.
- Uses shelter data, operational trends, and daily observations to identify opportunities to improve length of stay, animal welfare, and organizational efficiency.
- Partners with organizational leaders to balance individual animal needs with population health, shelter capacity, and organizational priorities.
- Promotes practices that support Fear Free principles and provide a positive experience for animals throughout their shelter stay.
- Supports efficient kenneling and movement of animals daily, including handling animals of varying sizes and temperaments.
- Performs all duties with continuous direct contact with animals and animal-related materials including food enrichment items, bodily fluids, cleaning agents, and bedding materials.

Department Leadership

- Maintains regular and reliable attendance in accordance with the Shelter's attendance and punctuality policy to ensure adequate coverage for essential daily operations including daily animal care, feeding, enrichment, and kennel maintenance.
- Provides leadership, coaching, and support to Animal Care Supervisors while fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, continuous improvement, and employee engagement.
- Oversees departmental staffing, succession planning, and leadership development to ensure a strong and resilient Animal Care team.
- Supports supervisors in hiring, onboarding, coaching, recognition, performance management, and employee development.
- Establishes departmental goals and performance expectations aligned with organizational priorities.
- Leads regular department meetings and ensures organizational priorities are effectively communicated throughout the team.
- Allocates departmental resources to meet changing operational needs while maintaining excellent standards of animal care.

Budget Management

- Compares prices, maintains vendor contacts, reconciles deliveries, and codes receipts for proper accounting of department expenses.
- Analyzes departmental expenses and identifies cost-saving opportunities while maintaining care quality.

Employee Development

- Develops onboarding, training, and continuing education programs for Animal Care employees.
- Supports supervisors in identifying professional development opportunities and building future leaders within the department.
- Promotes cross-training and collaborative learning opportunities across shelter departments.
- Creates an environment that encourages feedback, innovation, and continuous learning.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Develops, implements, and maintains standard operating procedures that reflect current best practices in animal welfare and sheltering.
- Regularly evaluates shelter operations and recommends improvements that enhance animal welfare, employee effectiveness, and organizational efficiency.

- Leads implementation of new operational initiatives and supports organizational change management.
- Ensures Animal Care practices remain compliant with PACFA, organizational policies, and Fear Free principles.
- Develops systems that promote consistency while maintaining flexibility to meet the individual needs of animals in care.

Interdepartmental Collaboration

- Partners with Veterinary Services, Behavior, Shelter Services, Better Together, Volunteer Services, and other departments to support exceptional animal care and organizational effectiveness.
- Collaborates with the Volunteer Program Manager to develop volunteer opportunities that advance animal care operations while supporting a positive volunteer experience.
- Coordinates with leadership teams to identify and resolve operational challenges that impact the movement or wellbeing of animals.
- Works closely with the Director of Municipal Relationships and Safety regarding operational planning for municipal animal intake, emergency response, and other shared initiatives.

Organizational Wellness

- Interacts with volunteers in appreciative and respectful ways, providing assistance as needed.
- Promotes teamwork by demonstrating a cooperative, flexible, adaptable, and helpful attitude with all staff and volunteers.
- Maintains a positive, solutions-oriented approach to the work environment, looking for the opportunities within each challenge.

End of Life Services

- Performs euthanasia as dictated by the policies of the organization in a timely and compassionate manner, ensuring that all appropriate safety procedures are followed, and appropriate documentation is completed per DEA requirements.
- Ensures proper handling and disposal of euthanized animals.

Safety

- Promotes and follows all safety guidelines to ensure a safe work environment.
- Conducts injury and accident investigations and reviews accident reports for deficits in training, facility safety, or noncompliance with safety protocols.
- Takes immediate action to address any safety concern or noncompliance with OSHA safety rules that could put an employee, volunteer, client, animal or the organization at risk.
- Ensures that OSHA labeling is present on all secondary containers and that SDS sheets are available for all necessary items.

OTHER DUTIES

This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

JOB QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience

- 2 years of experience in a supervisory role required
- Prior experience in animal sheltering or similar professional animal care field required
- Prior experience in a physical work environment preferred
- Prior experience training and leading a team

Licenses and Certifications

- Must obtain and maintain euthanasia certification within six months of hire
- Must obtain and maintain rabies pre-exposure vaccination series within six months of hire
- Must obtain Fear Free Shelter certification within 60 days of employment
- Valid driver license with insurable driving record preferred

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Demonstrated aptitude for safe animal handling including dogs, cats, and small animals
- High attention to detail and ability to complete work without supervision
- Strong interpersonal and written communication skills
- Ability to utilize effective problem solving/decision making skills
- Ability to extend compassion and empathy to staff and volunteers under a variety of circumstances
- Ability to maintain confidentiality when dealing with proprietary information and sensitive situations
- Ability to communicate and collaborate with a variety of people and personality types
- Basic proficiency with computers; ability to learn and use cloud-based shelter management software for daily recordkeeping
- Ability to maintain professional composure and emotional resilience when working with sick, injured, or at-risk animals

Physical Requirements

- Ability to stand and walk for extended periods on hard surfaces with minimal sedentary work
- Ability to bend, twist, kneel, and squat frequently throughout the shift
- Ability to lift, carry, and move up to 50 pounds regularly throughout the shift
- Ability to handle dogs of all sizes on leash, including dogs weighing over 100 pounds
- Ability to work outdoors in all weather conditions year-round including heat, cold, rain, and snow
- Ability to push and pull loaded carts, kennels, and equipment regularly throughout the shift
- Ability to reach above shoulder height and below knee level frequently throughout the shift
- Ability to work in confined spaces including animal kennels and housing areas
- Ability to work safely on wet and slippery floor surfaces throughout the shift

Working Conditions

- Eight- to Ten-hour shifts with at least one weekend day required; schedule will include holidays
- Noise, odors, chemical fumes, and animal hair/dander are encountered due to equipment and animals
- Exposure to common allergens including animal dander, feathers, hay/straw, latex, peanut butter, dairy products, and other food items used for animal enrichment
- Exposure to zoonotic diseases and infectious agents through contact with animals and their bodily fluids (urine, feces, vomit, blood, saliva)
- Exposure to cleaning chemicals, disinfectants, and sanitizing agents used in animal care and facility maintenance
- Exposure to emotionally challenging situations including sick or injured animals; euthanasia procedures; and end-of-life decision-making
- Frequent hand washing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required
- Subject to animal bites and scratches
- Work in areas with fluctuating temperatures, humidity, and limited climate control

Equipment Used

- Computer using Microsoft Office, e-mail, and cloud-based data management software
- Chemicals and cleaning tools to provide care for the animals
- Animal handling equipment and tools including leashes, hide boxes, shields, and gloves