Job Description
Shelter Services Specialist

DEPARTMENT: Shelter Services
REPORTS TO: Shelter Services Supervisor
NUMBER OF DIRECT REPORTS: 0
STATUS: Full-time or Part-time, hourly, non-exempt
SCHEDULE: 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.
- **Team Oriented**: Build relationships, embrace teamwork, and foster collaboration in pursuit of our Mission.

POSITION SUMMARY
The shelter services specialist is the face of Foothills Animal Shelter and will be the first point of contact for most patrons of the Shelter. They are responsible for providing excellent customer service to the community and to animal protection officers within Jefferson County and its municipalities. The shelter services specialist facilitates animal adoptions, admissions, adoption visits, Jefferson County License purchases and the reunification of lost pets with their owners.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendance and Reliability

- Maintains regular and reliable attendance to ensure adequate coverage for essential daily operations including time-sensitive animal care duties, adoption services, admissions, and lost & found services.

Patron Reception and Administration

- Provides quality customer service by greeting the public, answering questions in a courteous and friendly manner, and providing accurate guidance, clear directions, and other help as needed, including assistance in handling animals in the lobby or other shelter areas.
- Coordinates lobby traffic and incoming appointments, directing patrons, animals, and deliveries to appropriate areas and personnel.
- Provides quality customer service when answering phones, retrieving and responding to messages, returning calls, and routing inquiries to the appropriate department or personnel.

- Processes payments and ensures responsible cash handling.
- Maintains and operates the shelter retail space, including assisting with inventory management, stocking, and processing sales transactions.
- Accepts in an appreciative manner all in-kind donations and distributes them appropriately for shelter needs.
- Triages and problem solves patron concerns respectfully, involving shelter leadership as needed.
- Ensures a neat and clean appearance for all front office areas by cleaning, disinfecting, and prepping all public areas. This includes the reception area, visiting rooms, and bathrooms assuring that these areas are neat and stocked with supplies throughout the day.
- Maintains workspace and related equipment.
- Accurately processes and records adoption holds, including holds taken by phone.
- Provides patrons with information about shelter programs, services, events, and community resources.

Adoption Services

- Facilitates dog, cat, and small animal adoption visits with potential adopters, including handling of dogs of all sizes on leash, and coordinates dog to dog introductions for potential adopters.
- Uses best judgement to facilitate adoption visits in an appropriate meeting space or by allowing the patron to walk an animal outside.
- Conducts conversational adoption counseling with patrons interested in adoption, suggesting potential matches based on adopter preferences and animal characteristics.
- Shares medical and behavioral history with potential adopters. Collaborates with veterinary and behavior teams to address animal and adopter needs and provide appropriate adoption counseling and education.
- Reviews and completes adoption paperwork. Verifies accuracy of animal records and ensures completion of pre-adoption requirements, including medications and counseling, prior to finalizing adoptions.

Animal Care

- Cleans, disinfects, and maintains small animal and barnyard areas daily following Shelter cleaning procedures, safety protocols, and PACFA standards.
- Ensures each animal has a clean, dry, comfortable kennel with appropriate nutrition and enrichment.
- Assists with cleaning and maintenance of dog and cat kennels as needed.
- Stocks, organizes, and manages supplies, enrichment materials, and feed in small animal and barnyard areas. Communicates supply needs to the department supervisor or manager.
- Reports observed medical or behavioral concerns to the appropriate teams for follow-up.
- Treats all animals humanely and with respect, in line with Fear Free sheltering philosophies.
- Receives, handles, and supports animals of varying species, size, and comfort levels, including animals experiencing acute stress that may respond unpredictably or erratically.

Admission and Lost & Found Services

- Facilitates owner relinquishment, adoption returns, and redemptions in a respectful, kind, and judgement-free manner.
- Performs data entry to create or update animal records.
- Gathers relevant information from patrons during admissions, including home history, intake questionnaires, and stray circumstances, and communicates shelter processes and philosophies.
- Connects patrons with shelter programs and community resources, including pet retention support services, to explore alternatives when appropriate.
- Handles, identifies, and processes animals for admissions, including kenneling or appropriate processing of deceased animals.

- Determines and assigns breed and color designations to aid in the likelihood of reunification of lost pets with their owners.
- Actively pursues reunification of lost pets with their owners by scanning for microchips, checking identifying information, reviewing and updating stray records, contacting potential owners, and coordinating with outside organizations.
- Coordinates with Animal Control partners to facilitate compliance requirements, redemptions, and patron communications related to stray, court hold, and bite quarantine cases.
- Communicates with intake, assessment, and veterinary teams regarding incoming animal needs, kenneling plans, and safety considerations.
- Maintains confidentiality of patrons' personal information and circumstances.

End-of-Life Services

- Coordinates end-of-life appointments, including scheduling, patron communication, and completion of all related administrative processes.
- Participates in euthanasia services, including veterinary restraint for sedation or euthanasia.
- Manages cremation services, including processing orders, coordinating with service providers, and handling related payments and logistics.

Organizational Wellness

- Performs all duties in an environment requiring continuous direct contact with animals and animal-related materials including food enrichment items, bodily fluids, cleaning agents, and bedding materials.
- Interacts with volunteers in appreciative and respectful ways, providing training, guidance, and 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.
- Makes recommendations and leads initiatives to improve processes and procedures.
- Provides cross-departmental support to assist other teams as operational needs arise.

Safety

- Follows all safety guidelines to ensure a safe work environment.
- 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.

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

- Prior customer service experience in a fast-paced environment preferred
- Experience in animal welfare or other professional animal care field preferred

Licenses and Certifications

- Must obtain Fear Free Shelter certification within 60 days of employment

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Demonstrated aptitude for providing excellent customer service to a diverse clientele
- Strong interpersonal and written communication skills
- Working knowledge of common animal breeds and colors
- Demonstrated organizational skills
- Ability to utilize effective problem solving/decision making skills
- Ability to extend compassion and empathy to patrons under a variety of circumstances
- Ability to multi-task and maintain composure in a fast-paced environment while providing courteous service to potentially difficult, emotional, or frustrated clients
- Ability to maintain the highest levels of confidentiality when dealing with proprietary information and sensitive situations
- Ability to communicate and collaborate with a variety of people and personality types
- Ability to leash and manage animals of all sizes
- Computer proficiency in Microsoft Office including word processing, spread sheets, meeting software and email; proficient with animal management software and databases

Physical Requirements

- Ability to stand and walk for the majority of scheduled shift 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 physically restrain and handle animals of all sizes and temperaments, including dogs weighing over 100 pounds
- Ability to work outdoors in all weather conditions year-round including heat, cold, rain, and snow
- Ability to respond quickly to emergency situations requiring immediate physical intervention
- Fine motor skills and manual dexterity for handling leashes, animal handling equipment, processing paperwork, and providing veterinary restraint
- Ability to push and pull kennel doors, carts, and equipment

Working Conditions

- Ten-hour shifts with at least one weekend day required; schedule may include holidays
- Regular exposure to noise, odors, chemical fumes, and animal hair/dander due to equipment and animals
- Regular 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)
- Regular exposure to cleaning chemicals, disinfectants, and sanitizing agents used in animal care and facility maintenance
- Regular exposure to emotionally challenging situations including sick, injured, or deceased animals; euthanasia procedures; end-of-life decision-making; and interactions with grieving or distressed patrons
- 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
- Fast-paced, high-volume environment with frequent interruptions

Equipment Used

- Computer using Internet based animal management software
- Maintenance equipment and tools

- Cleaning equipment, hoses, and laundry machines
- Animal handling equipment
- Occasional need to drive a vehicle on behalf of the Shelter