



# **Humane Society of the Ohio Valley Volunteer Handbook**

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**Humane Society of the Ohio Valley**

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90 Mt. Tom Rd.  
Marietta, Oh 45750

Shelter Phone:740-373-5959

Website: [www.hsov.org](http://www.hsov.org)

Business Hours: Tuesday – Saturday: 11:00 to 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
Monday: CLOSED

**Organization Information & Hours**

## Opportunities

There are many ways to be of services to the homeless animals in our community at the Humane Society of the Ohio Valley. While some volunteer jobs involve the animals themselves, there are many other ways too.

### **Inside the shelter**

- Socializing with the dogs and cats in our shelter
- Helping with shelter maintenance and cleaning
- Office work
- Helping keep our grounds attractive
- Assisting with events and fundraisers in our shelter – such as special adoption events, open houses, evening dog walks, etc.

### **Outside the shelter**

- Working at fundraising events that happen outside the shelter – such as Walk Your Paws, the Furball, Bingo & Quarter Auction events, adoption events at other locations
- Fostering animals in your home
- Gathering auction or raffle items for fundraising events
- Taking animals to events outside the shelter – such as school carnivals, safety fairs, animal related events in our community, etc.
- Taking pets to nursing homes
- Driving animals to other shelters or rescue organization or even to adoptive homes in other cities/states
- Advertising events or selling tickets to our events
- Making food items or baked goods for events such as Bingo
- Driving shelter animals to vet appts., delivering/picking up donations & supplies
- Calling a list of adopters for follow up

## What We Do

It is important regardless of whether you are a volunteer who handles our animals in and about the shelter or a volunteer who chooses to support the animals through helping with events, helping care for our facilities and grounds or baking cookies for a fundraiser. In all cases, you are a representative of our organization and as such it's important that you understand about our mission, our values and our challenges are. Before becoming a volunteer, you should be sure that you understand these and are able to support them.

Our mission:

- Provide shelter, rehabilitation, and adoption for homeless animals,
- Prevent cruelty, neglect and abuse,
- Promote responsible pet ownership,
- Inspire compassion and respect through education, and
- Reduce pet overpopulation by promoting spay/neuter services and targeted wellness services.

In addition to our mission, we strive to meet animals needs and wants. Shelter, food, water, medicine is needed. Mental stimulation, love, walks and play are enrichment activities we strive to meet. ASPCA recommends that shelters give animals in their care the "5 Freedoms".

### **1. FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST**

by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigor.

### **2. FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT**

by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

### **3. FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE**

by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

### **4. FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOR**

by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

### **5. FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS**

by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

## Representing the HSOV

Volunteers are an integral part of the Humane Society of the Ohio Valley. They are vital in so many ways to the success of our organization and our ability to provide the best possible care for the homeless animals that find their way to our shelter. Whether volunteering inside or outside the shelter, you are a representative of our organization and as such, it is essential that just like our staff, management and Board, you too observe the same expectations to ensure that the Humane Society is represented accurately and positively. We expect that as a volunteer you will -

- Represent us in a positive and professional manner.
- Be courteous, respectful and accurate in representing our organization.
- Recognize that just like our staff and Board, how you act and what you say could affect whether animals are adopted or not adopted, whether donations are made or not made, and whether the public views our shelter in a positive or negative light.
- Realize that misrepresentation and misinformation can be very damaging and as such, communicate accurately our values, policies and procedures.
- Refer questions or issues that you are not prepared to resolve to a staff member, management or a Board member.
- Understand that using your position as a volunteer as a threat or in a manner that is inaccurate or unbecoming to our organization will not be tolerated.

## How We Communicate

There are several ways that we will communicate with our volunteers what is going on around and about the shelter. Our website is always a way to learn more about what we do and what is happening but remember it provides information available to the general public and may not contain all information pertinent to volunteers. Please watch for Facebook posts on our HSOP Group page for upcoming events, areas where we need help, etc.

- **Website:** We list upcoming events and general information of ways to help.
- **Email everyone:** As events approach or special needs occur, we will reach out to our volunteer base via a broadcast email to the entire group letting you know of a need for your help.
- **Contact a specific person:** If there is a specific need that we know aligns with a skill or only one or two people are needed to fill a need, we will commonly reach out directly to those who we know can and will help. For instance, if you're an electrician and we need electrical help, we will come directly to you rather than a broad message sent to all. This contact may come by email or phone and may be from our volunteer coordinator OR depending on the need, you may hear from our Executive Director, Shelter Manager or a Board Member.
- **HSOV Facebook Group:** is used daily to share happenings in and about the shelter.
- **Volunteer Bulletin Board:** For those that are in the shelter, we sometimes will use the Volunteer Board in the Volunteer room to inform you of news and needs specific volunteering in the shelter.

## Volunteering in the Shelter General Guidance

### **Hours for volunteers:**

- Tuesday thru Saturday – 11:00 to 5:00 (normal business hours)
- Sunday – 11:00 to 4:00 (normal business hours)
- Monday (and observed holidays) – 11:00 to 3:00 (Shelter is closed but open for volunteers)
- After hours dog walking – Hour depends on the evening hours scheduled by the volunteer Walk Leader but usually are between 5:00 and 7 p.m. Tues & Thurs, Sundays 12 to 3:00 p.m. Dog pick up time for First Friday's is 5:30, return 8:30

**Parking:** During Shelter business hours, park as far away from the front door of those buildings as possible so as to not interfere with customer parking.

**Sign in:** ALWAYS sign in and sign out at the volunteer desk. We track hours quarterly to apply for grant funding to help the shelter animals.

**Lanyards:** ALWAYS wear your lanyard so that the staff and public recognize you are a trained volunteer. We also recommend you wear a Volunteer t-shirt to stand out even more and help people recognize you are a volunteer and not an employee. Please only walk dogs coded to your lanyard color and easier.

### **Dress code:**

- We recommend long pants and clothes you don't mind getting ruined or dirty.
- Wear non-skid shoes to avoid slips and falls. Absolutely no sandals or flip flops. The floors are often wet from mopping and slippery. The grounds are often muddy.
- If you have a very young animal at home, or one with a health problem, we would recommend that you change your clothes AND of course wash your hands before handling your own pets. Those with compromised immune systems may be sensitive to some of the germs picked up on your "shelter clothes".

**Injuries:** If you receive an injury of ANY type, no matter how minor, please notify the staff, ask for help and/or the first aid kit and treat the injury. Cleaning out scratches and/or bites as soon as possible is extremely important.

### **Signage in shelter:**

Please take notice of the signage in and about the shelter that provides instructions and warnings.

- Such as reminders about washing your hands, doors that may be entered or not, Contagious or Not Available to be Handled signs on cages.
- Everyone must adhere to all medical, dietary or other instructions placed on cages and kennel doors.
- If a cage is covered, do not disturb the animal. Do not lift the cover and look at the animal. The cover is there for a reason.

**Handwashing:** – handwashing is VERY important to limit the spread of germs between animals. Antibacterial wash and regular sink/soap are available throughout the shelter.

**Waste Disposal-** Please dispose of animal waste in appropriate areas. Scoop dog waste and place in a bag, then in the outside dumpster.

Following signs, safety procedures and animal handling procedures are important because not doing so can result in:

- Putting animals at risk of illness and injury
- Putting yourself at risk of being injured
- Risking the loss of your privileges as a volunteer
- Losing a scared dog or cat, which could cause them to escape and be injured or killed

**Remember that your top priority while working with or handling an animal in our shelter, is THAT animal! To ensure the safety of the animals, the visiting public and yourself, this is a must.**

### **General Animal Handling**

- Volunteers should generally not feed the animals (except for a few treats for the dogs) unless otherwise instructed by the Staff. Please do not refill food bowls or overfeed treats to the dogs. You may refill empty water bowls if you find them.
- Cats should not be fed treats at all as they can cause some cats stomach problems AND the staff use treats to socialize scared cats. Overfeeding of treats can make these efforts more difficult, so we ask that you do not give treats to the cats when you visit with them.
- In general, the staff is responsible for cleaning cages and kennels.
  - In order to minimize the spread of disease, we do not use litter scoops. Instead using plastic gloves that are thrown out between every box to remove dirty litter from the boxes.
  - If the box is very dirty and the litter is older, we will empty the entire litter pan into the trash.
  - If you choose to clean out a litter box make sure you are disposing of dirty litter in the correct trash can to reduce the odor in the shelter.
- Never hit, strike, yell at or roughly handle any of our animals.
- Read the animals cage cards on the front of their cage before opening their door and add positive notes about the animal when learned. Be honest and write legibly.
- Pay attention to the cage you remove an animal from so that you can make sure and return the animal to their cage or kennel.
- If you have someone accompanying you while you're handling our animals, the animal must be your top priority and cannot be handled by any untrained guests.
- Photos of animals are encouraged and help them get adopted. Sharing on social media is encouraged. Please respect any signs asking an animal not be shared- this is usually due to a pending court case.

### **Cat Handling Basics**

- Cats that are plainly sick, on medication or have a sign on their kennel (designating them as sick) should not be handled at all! DO NOT touch the bars of the cages of these cats as it is highly likely they are harboring germs as well. See more information below about safe handling.
- Again, no treats for cats or canned food.
- Be careful when opening cages. Cats will sometimes jump out or fall out. Also ensure the cage is properly latched when you close the door.

- Don't put cats on the floor.
- Be calm and relaxed when handling the cats, speaking softly. Volunteers with small children – please supervise your children closely and ensure they are paying attention to this policy closely. High pitched voices can sometimes frighten the cats especially.
- Note the cat's behavior. If the cat seems frightened or nervous, don't pick it up. If this happens while you are holding the cat, calmly return it to its cage as quickly as possible. Never force a cat out of their cage.
- ALWAYS read the notes on the cage and the cage card and follow their guidance. If a cage is covered, do not disturb the animal. Do not lift the cover and look at the animal. The cover is there for a reason.
- Do not let cats from different cages interact or touch each other. This can spread germs and disease.
- If you notice that the cat is sneezing, has runny eyes, fleas, is scratching or appears ill, please inform a staff member immediately or leave a note on the cage.
- Watering cans are in the rooms to top off cat water dishes.

**The spread of disease with cats is affected substantially by handling by people, we have some very specific and strict procedures about how they are to be handled. Please read below.**

1. When petting the cat's in their cages, which most would prefer over being held, please wash your hands between each cat.
2. In general, it is suggested that you choose two or three cats to hold during your visits to again limit the potential spread of disease.
3. Bringing toys to leave with each cat you visit is encouraged- milk rings, toilet paper tubes, etc.

### **Dog Handling Basics**

- Dogs kennels marked 'No Volunteers' or 'Not Available' cannot be handled by volunteers.
- Dogs under 6 months of age are not to be taken out by new volunteers.
- Puppies should be carried, not placed on shelter floors or grass- clean concrete is ok.
- Dogs over 6 months that have two (2) DHLPP vaccinations are considered vaccinated/healthy dogs and may go on the grass and in the play yards.
- One dog in a yard at a time only unless they are living together or approved playgroup partners.
- All dogs must always be securely restrained when outside of their kennel or a play yard.
- Slip leashes are NEVER left on a dog in a cage or kennel. And never left on a dog in a play yard unattended.
- If you ever have trouble removing a leash, please ask a Staff member or Walk Leader for assistance.
- Be cautious when entering/exiting rooms not to collide with another dog walker. Yell loudly "Coming out!" Before exiting.
- If a dog gets loose, ask for help.
- Please clean up after your dog.
- Please be sure to read the Dog Volunteer Boards to see what dogs in your color code need to go outside. Mark the Dog Volunteer Boards with the time you took them out and whether or not they went 1 or 2.
- Again, please be sure that you return the dog you have taken out to its proper kennel or cage. Make sure the kennel door is securely closed and latched.

## **Do's and Don'ts with the Dogs**

Some guidelines to follow at HSOV when handling and working with our dogs:

### **DO's**

1. DO refer to the Volunteer Dog Walking Boards.
2. DO choose dogs to walk that you are comfortable handling by yourself.
3. DO pay attention to the Level Designation on the Volunteer Walk Boards for each dog.
  - **Green** = Easy to walk, no pulling, no jumping, and generally good for all volunteers
  - **Yellow = Average** dog, may pull a little, or jump up. May be too strong for some volunteers.
  - **Black** = Experienced volunteers only. May be very strong or have issues requiring special care.
  - **Red**=Sick, stray hold or evidence (usually not in main dog area)
  - **No Volunteers** = Do not walk or interact with this dog.
4. Do take responsibility for your dog and pay close to the dog you are walking.
5. DO read the dog's cage card and volunteer board before taking a new dog out.
6. DO let the dog smell you through the cage before opening the door. Remember that direct eye contact can intimidate some dogs; avoid direct eye contact and this includes the small dogs in the upper cages. Such eye contact can cause some dogs to act out.
7. DO ask the Staff or Walk Leader for help or advice when needed.
8. DO open the door and lasso the dog as they exit the kennel or slip the leash over the dog's head while they are still in the kennel, from outside the door.
9. DO put only one dog at a time in a play yard, unless exercising dogs that are kenneled together or designated playmates.
10. DO cleanup after your dog. Dispose of stool in proper containers.
11. DO return the dog to the same cage.
12. DO work on manners and tricks for treats- this helps the dog be more adoptable.

### **DON'Ts**

1. DON'T walk a dog that you don't feel very comfortable with
2. DON'T force a dog to come out of their cage if they are afraid or cowering in a corner.
3. DON'T go inside the kennel and shut the door behind you with a strange dog.
4. DON'T allow dogs to approach other animals.
5. DON'T allow dogs to approach other people UNLESS invited
6. DON'T open a door or enter an area without having a good hold on your dog.
7. DON'T scold, yell or strike any dog.
8. DON'T roughhouse with shelter dogs while playing with them.

### **Dog Handling Benefits**

## **Philosophy**

No matter what you choose to do with your time with our dogs -- playing, walking, training or just hanging out -- all will benefit from the one-on-one interaction. Just getting out for a few minutes' walk or play can make a huge difference to them. Don't underestimate how you can help our dogs.

## **Benefits to Dog Walking**

- Exercise and one-on-one time away from noise and chaos of the Shelter
- Helps us to learn more about our dog
- Helps our dogs to learn from us
- Increases Adoptability

## **Exercise and One-on-one Time**

Even a short break from the boredom of their kennel can really be beneficial to a shelter dog. A little fresh air, exercise and play can help to keep our dogs happy and healthy. Below are just a few things that you can do in just a few minutes that our dogs would love.

1. Hanging out in the lobby with the dog. Petting, brushing or just observing the dog in that area.
2. Sitting outside on a bench visiting with the dog.
3. Playing in the play yard.
4. Walking down the driveway and around the shelter area.
5. Take a photo to share on social media

## **Helping Us Learn About the Dog**

There's more to walking a dog than just the walking. You can also help us learn more about the animal that might help us find it the best home possible. From your first meeting at the kennel, to a walk through the lobby, in the play yard and on a walk -- each provides you with opportunities to learn about the dog you are spending time with.

## **At the kennel**

- Is the dog friendly, shy, scared or aggressive at the kennel with you as a stranger upon first meeting?
- Are they barking at people walking by or other dogs?
- Do they sit quietly or jump on you when putting the leash on?
- Are they chewing their toys or bed?

## **Walking through the kennel**

- How do they walk on the leash? Pulling or walking with a slack leash.
- Are they scared of the floor?
- Are they friendly to the other dogs in their kennels?
- Are they barking, lunging or growling at other dogs as you walk?

### **Lobby**

- How did they react to being outside the kennel area? Excited or calm?
- How did they react when walking by cats in the lobby and/or outside? Interested, ignored, sniffed, lunged or barked at the cats?
- How did they react to people/strangers in the lobby area or outside? Scared, excited, friendly, calm, ignored?
- How did they react to other dogs in the lobby area or being walked by others outside?

### **In the Play yard**

- Did the dog go to the bathroom soon after arriving in yard
- Do they appear playful and healthy when off leash or when running?
- Did they play ball or play with the toys in the yard?
- Did they come when called when off leash?
- Did they jump on you or run into you during play?
- How did they respond to brushing or your touch? Any areas on their bodies that they were sensitive about?

### **On the walk**

- How were they on leash? Pulling or relaxed ▪ Did you have to encourage them to walk?
- Did they jump on you while on leash?
- Did they know how to sit or lay down?
- Did they try and chase any passing cars?

As you can see from just this list of things, there are many opportunities for you to witness and learn about how the dog is doing, what they know, what they respond to, etc. that can be very valuable in not only caring for this animal during their stay in the shelter, but also in helping to place them in the best home.

### **Helping the Dog Learn**

Many dogs end up in the shelter simply because they didn't get proper training and/or discipline and their owners decided it was easier to just get rid of the dog, rather than expend the effort to train them. These problems can be corrected with a little patience, time and effort. You can help us help them get the training they need.

Two of the biggest problems we see are poor leash manners and rough play – specifically, jumping. Rehabilitating these dogs is not difficult if done properly and consistently. Additionally, dogs that know how to walk properly, sit on command, come when called and make eye contact with you, make a good first impression with potential adopters.

### **Jumping up**

### **Why we don't want to encourage this behavior:**

- Bad first impression for potential adopter
- Scares some people and small children
- Gets you dirty, scratched or knocked down
- Promotes dominant behavior in some dogs

### **What to do about it**

- Ignore them and/or turn away so they fall to the ground. Along with this, totally ignore them when they are jumping, even going so far as to turn your head away from them. Don't say anything to them or touch them. You may try turning away or step away so that they fall to the ground and feel ignored.
- Remember, don't pet them, speak nicely to them or hug them when they jump up – that only encourages the behavior. Only when they sit or stand quietly by you should they get pets and praise.

### **Leash pulling**

#### **Why we don't want to encourage this behavior:**

1. One of the first impressions potential adopters get is leading the dog from the kennel to the outside – being pulled across the parking lot is not a good first impression
2. Dangerous to the person being pulled as it could injure them or pull you down
3. Dangerous for the dog – bad for neck
4. Also dangerous as the dog could get away from the handler and get hit by a car or escape.

#### **What to do about it**

5. Stop and stand still, not allowing the dog to go anywhere until they stop pulling. The moment they are calm and quiet on the leash, take a few steps forward. If they begin to pull again, stop and start over, until they stop pulling again. Be prepared to be patient. It will get better over time, but takes consistent reinforcement for this to work.

OR

6. Quick and firm jerk on the leash and then soften. You can accompany this with a firm "No Pulling" which may get their attention focused on you rather on whatever they are pulling towards. Use the jerk and release repeatedly until the dog responds to you and puts some slack in the leash.

DO NOT let the dog pull constantly on the leash. This constant pulling is not good for the dog nor does it do anything to discourage this behavior. A jerk and release will do much more to distract them from pulling and teach them how to walk well on the leash.

**Thank you for becoming a HSOV volunteer! We couldn't do it without your help! Volunteers save shelter animals lives!**