



# NEW VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

November, 2017

## Contents

WELCOME!.....	2
ABOUT OUR SHELTER.....	2
WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS DO? .....	3
THE VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT.....	4
VOLUNTEER DOS & DON'TS .....	4
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.....	5
DOG VOLUNTEER LEVELS .....	6
FOSTERING .....	7
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS .....	8

# WELCOME!

---

Welcome to the Quincy Animal Shelter! As an all-volunteer organization, we rely on people like yourself to enable us to serve the animals in our area. QAS (Quincy Animal Shelter) is a no-kill shelter for cats and dogs in Quincy, MA. We work to find homes for stray or surrendered animals from the Quincy area, and provide medical and basic care for those still needing homes from our facility near downtown Quincy. We hope that you will find your experience here rewarding and educational.



## ABOUT OUR SHELTER

---

The Quincy Animal Shelter is a volunteer-run organization. The Shelter relies completely on our volunteers and the community for support. Incorporated in November 1999 as a non-profit Massachusetts charity, we are also a recognized charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code. Since 1999 the Quincy Animal Shelter has placed more than 7,500 cats and dogs into loving and forever homes throughout MA and New England.

As a “no kill” shelter, we make every effort to find the right home for every adoptable animal in our care. This means we exercise the same ethical and humane treatment of animals in our facility that you would for your own family feline or canine friend. Every animal receives age-appropriate vaccinations and, if old enough, is spayed or neutered before finding its forever family.

On average, we adopt out over 600 cats and kittens annually and over 80 dogs.

# WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS DO?

---

There are many volunteering opportunities, each one with its own duties. Here is a list of some of the things volunteers can do at the shelter.

- Walk dogs and continue the training or behavior modification set in place by the Canine Manager and Dog Trainer.
- Foster a dog or cat at your home.
- Clean cat housing areas and socialize with the cats.
- Become a greeter for individuals interested in adoption of one of our pets.
- Help at off-site fundraising events and do event planning.
- Maintain our social media sites and quarterly *Scoop* magazine.
- Provide professional photographs of our adoptable animals for posting on-line by the Marketing team
- Run TNR programs for feral cats (Trap - Spay/Neuter - Release)

These are just some of the things that need to be done on a regular basis at the shelter. There is always something to be done, so please ensure that your time volunteering with us maximizes your positive impact on shelter operations.

# THE VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

---

We ask our volunteers to:

- Commit to a minimum of three months, working at least one shift a week of 2 hours.
- Bring the same level of responsibility for showing up for assigned shifts and performing your work as you would for any paid position. Paid or unpaid, the animals deserve the same level of care from the staff.
- Be polite and courteous to members of the public and each other
- Respect the policies that we have in place for the care of the animals as well as those meant to ensure the safety of the volunteers.

## VOLUNTEER DOS & DON'TS

---

- SIGN IN & OUT ON THE VOLUNTEER LOG AT THE VOLUNTEER STATION
- WEAR A NAME TAG IF WORKING AS A GREETER OR ADOPTION REP, OR AT A FUNDRAISING EVENT
- DOG WALKERS KEEP POOP BAGS WITH THEM & CLEAN UP WHENEVER NEEDED
- WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND SHOES (NO FLIP-FLOPS, SANDALS, OR OPEN-TOED SHOES). NO LONG FLOWING CLOTHING THAT ANIMALS MAY GRAB (SCARVES, DANGLING JEWELRY, ETC).
- DO NOT ENTER THE PARTS OF THE BUILDING THAT ARE MARKED FOR RESTRICTED ACCESS, SUCH AS THE MEDICAL ISOLATION ROOM
- SHOW UP TO WORK RAIN OR SHINE! THE ANIMALS DEPEND ON YOU FOR THEIR CARE.
- PLEASE DO NOT USE THE SHELTER AS A PLACE TO SOCIALIZE WITH YOUR FRIENDS. FOCUS ON HELPING THE ANIMALS WHILE YOU ARE HERE. ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS TO BECOME VOLUNTEERS TOO!
- USE COMMON SENSE; IF YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE OR AFRAID TO DO SOMETHING, DON'T DO IT. ASK FOR HELP.

- REPORT ANYTHING THAT CONCERNS YOU TO THE SHIFT LEAD, MEDICAL TEAM, OR SHELTER DIRECTOR. (MEDICAL ISSUES, INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR, ETC.)
- SMOKING IS PROHIBITED IN THE BUILDING
- REPRESENT YOURSELF AND THE SHELTER PER THE VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT INCLUDED IN THIS MANUAL.
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, REMEMBER WHY WE ARE ALL HERE – TO HELP THE ANIMALS FIND HOMES AND HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE QUALITY OF LIFE WHILE IN OUR CARE! STAY FOCUSED ON THAT GOAL AND USE YOUR TIME WISELY. VOLUNTEERS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THAT PROCESS & WE NEED YOU!

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

---

Email is our primary method for distributing information about important animal updates, shift changes, or other volunteer information. Volunteers will need to join the QAS email distribution group and be willing to check their email regularly.

The volunteer Observation log should also be used to let other volunteers know of important animal behavioral or medical issues, as well as general shelter issues with any QAS equipment.

# DOG VOLUNTEER LEVELS

---

## GREEN

- Has completed initial training
- Walks only green-coded dogs
- May participate in other volunteer activities as designated by the shift leader

## YELLOW

- Has been assessed by the Canine Manager or Dog Trainer and is ready to handle more difficult dogs
- Walks only green or yellow-coded dogs
- May participate in other volunteer activities as designated by the shift leader

## RED

- Has been assessed by the Canine Manager or Dog Trainer and is ready to handle the most difficult dogs.
- Walks Green, Yellow, or Red-coded dogs.
- Serve as a mentor/trainer to other volunteers.
- May participate in other volunteer activities as designated by the shift leader.



**Volunteers should walk only the dogs they feel comfortable handling and should not walk any dogs that are designated for special handling. Shelter management reserves the right to change the volunteer level downward or upward if it is believed to be in the best interest of the shelter and, most importantly, the animals.**

# FOSTERING

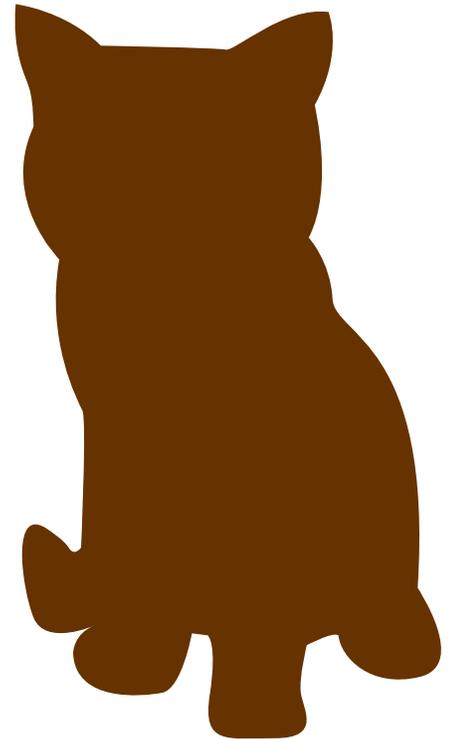
---

One of the most important things a volunteer can do to help save animal lives is fostering. There are several reasons we need fosters:

- Kitten care
- Controlled environment needed for medical treatment
- Hospice care
- Legally required hold or quarantine period

We provide all the basics the animal will need such as crate, food, and medicine. It is important to note that all animals released into the temporary custody of QAS approved foster homes are the legal property of QAS and remain the property of QAS while in the foster home. QAS makes the final determination of all decisions concerning the animal, such as adoption approvals and medical treatment.

To be considered as a foster, please request a Foster Application. If approved, you will be placed on file as a potential foster and will be contacted as needs arise. The application allows you to specify preferred size, age, species, and so on.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

## **How old do I need to be to volunteer?**

To work in the shelter or on the Events or Marketing teams, volunteers need to be at least 18 years old. To help at fundraising events on the day of the event, volunteers need to be at least 14 years old and have a written waiver from their school.

## **What should I do if a shelter animal bites me?**

Please report it right away to the shift lead. If the skin is broken, we will provide first aid or recommend that you see a doctor. Be sure to explain the circumstances of the bite accurately so that we can properly assess the behavior of the animal. By State law a bite report must be completed.

## **What should I do if I have a health concern about an animal?**

Please report it to the Meds volunteer on your shift, as well as note it in the Observations log.

## **Do I have to come at the same time every week?**

Once you have agreed and committed to be available for a particular shift or shelter sponsored event, we count on you to be there. We understand that emergencies do come up, at the same time, we ask you to understand that last minute cancellations of a volunteer who has committed to a shift or event can negatively impact our care of the animals. If you are unable to make a shift, please provide as much advance notice as possible.

## **How long should a dog walk last?**

Typically, a fifteen or twenty minute walk is adequate, but smaller or older dogs may need less and high energy dogs may need more. If there are enough volunteers to easily walk the dogs in a shift, spend more time if you want to. If we are short of volunteers in a shift, the focus needs to be on getting all the dogs out so the walks may have to be shorter. Time spent outside in the play yards and working on training are also equally necessary.

## **Should I try to teach basic commands like sit and stay?**

Absolutely. You don't need to become a professional trainer, but remember your main job is to make the animals more adoptable. That includes helping them become better leash walkers and at least learning basic commands.

## **Can dogs play together in our play yards?**

Not unless it is noted on their cage sheet. If it is, it will specify which dogs can play together.

### **I know how to care for cats and dogs from my own pets. How is this different?**

Many of our animals come to us with unknown backgrounds. Different animals may react differently to different situations, especially under the stress of being in a new environment. You should never feel overly confident about your ability to interact with an animal. Always pay attention to any written cage signs including dog color codes, pay attention to the animals warning signs and behavior, and above all take your time and proceed slowly. Each animal learns to trust at its own pace.

### **Can I take a dog into a public dog park?**

No, those parks are for the public. Because we don't know anything about the temperament or medical history of the dogs the public brings in, we do not allow our dogs to mingle with them. If a public dog approaches you while you are walking a shelter dog, do not allow the dogs to interact.

### **What if there are no dogs in my color?**

There are always other tasks to help with, from cleaning to laundry to dishes. Depending on the dog, a Red dog walker may be able to work with you on training.

### **What information can I tell my friends about the shelter or about animals that are not yet ready to be adopted?**

Confidentiality regarding personal information about clients and the outcome of individual animal situations must be maintained at all times. Volunteers may be exposed to information about members of the public who release and adopt pets from the shelter, or whom the Quincy Animal Control officers are working with. All information is considered strictly confidential and is not to be repeated or shared.

Additionally, volunteers are not allowed to share information outside the shelter regarding animals that are not available for adoption with the public. That includes posting photographs.

QAS is aware that many of its volunteers use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to name a few. However, volunteers' use of social media could become a problem if it:

- Divulges confidential information about our organization or our clients.
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of our organization.
- Used to harass or discriminate against employees, volunteers, or clients.

As a result, we encourage volunteers to use social media within the following guidelines:

If you choose to identify yourself as a volunteer of QAS or discuss matters related to QAS on the web, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of QAS. In light of this possibility, your communications pertaining to QAS should be transparent, ethical and accurate. Please follow the below guidelines when posting on social media and the web:

- Please make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect QAS views. To help reduce potential for confusion, QAS would appreciate it if you put the following notice, or something similar, in a reasonably prominent place on your site: The views expressed on this website/web blog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of QAS.
- Respect the fact that QAS deals with confidential and sensitive matters. No details should be released regarding any animal that is not available for adoption.
- No details should be released regarding any owner or potential owner of any animal.
- Only pictures of animals available for adoption should be posted. For a listing of cats and dogs cleared and approved for sharing online, please see the official QAS web site, Facebook page, Twitter account, or Instagram account.
- The sharing or re-Tweeting of official QAS social media content from QAS' official Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube accounts is strongly encouraged.
- Ask the QAS Shelter Director if you have any questions about what is appropriate to include in your blog.
- Be respectful to QAS staff members, volunteers, guests and other humane organizations.
- Understand and comply when QAS asks that topics not be discussed for confidentiality or legal reasons.

**Should I clean a dog kennel if I notice it's dirty?**

Yes, if you are on the Canine team. Even though Animal Control cleans and sanitizes each kennel every morning, the dogs don't use the bathroom based on our schedule.

**Should I feed and water the dogs if their bowls are empty?**

Do not feed the dogs. They are fed the full day's quantity by Animal Control and some of them may be on restricted diets. All the water bowls are checked periodically and at the end of each shift, but if you are a member of the Canine Team and are concerned, especially in hot weather, you should fill the water dish.



**Should I feed and water the cats if their bowls are empty?**

The Cat care volunteers on each shift will take of this.

**Does the shelter accept surrendered animals on the days you are open to the public?**

The best solution is to refer the person to the Canine Manager or Feline Manager as appropriate to make an appointment. Business cards for both are available in the office.

**Why do I need to record my hours when I volunteer?**

Some of the grant programs available to us require that we provide an accounting of our volunteer involvement. Also, many of our volunteers want us to track their hours for community service. The

computer sign in is how we track hours. It also helps us detect patterns and determine when we need to build up our volunteer participation.

**Does the shelter handle wildlife?**

We only take in dogs and cats. Inquiries about other animals can be referred to the Animal Control officers.

**How many animals do you generally have at one time?**

Our cat population varies but generally is around 20 animals, plus or minus five. Our dog population is more variable and may be anywhere from zero to ten.

**Do I put my own animals at risk by volunteering?**

As long as your pets are current on vaccinations there is minimal risk. We advise that they get the Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine if they are not currently getting that one. You should wash and sanitize your hands often at the shelter. Please ask if you would like more information on common shelter diseases.

**Thanks again for considering becoming a volunteer for Quincy Animal Shelter.**

**We truly appreciate your willingness to give of your time and talents for the benefit of these special creatures.**

**If you have any questions, please contact the QAS Volunteer Manager:**  
[volunteer@quincyanimalshelter.org](mailto:volunteer@quincyanimalshelter.org)

**For a copy of the full QAS Volunteer Policies and Guidelines, go to:**  
[http://www.quincyanimalshelter.org/Volunteer\\_Reference.html](http://www.quincyanimalshelter.org/Volunteer_Reference.html)