

# Cumberland County Animal Services



## Volunteer Manual

# Welcome

We would like to thank you for choosing to participate in our program. As a Volunteer, you are a valuable asset to our organization and to the many animals that need loving homes. We sincerely hope that the time you spend at CCAS is as rewarding for you as it is for the animals you provide care for.

The goal of the CCAS volunteer program is to enhance the stay of the animals in our Adoption wing. The Shelter Staff is responsible for making sure the animals have clean environments, food and water while Volunteers fulfill the other needs of the animals by exercising and socializing them. Volunteers also directly impact adoptions by helping promote the animals on social media, and by grooming our animals so they look their best!

This manual has been prepared for you as a guide. The information in this manual will help you understand our policies and procedures.

## **About Cumberland County Animal Services**

Our department is a county agency, and therefore we are what is called an open admission shelter. In 2017, over 11,000 dogs and cats were brought to our shelter, either by Animal Services Officers, the public, or the owner of the animal. The shelter has a capacity of approximately 300 dogs and cats. We also occasionally have livestock, poultry, and exotic pets brought to our shelter. All animals brought to our shelter are assessed for behavior and health by the staff. If they are “stray” animals (we do not know who the owner is) then by NC General Statute

we are required to hold them for 72 business hours to give an owner the opportunity to reclaim them. Animals that are surrendered by the legal owner do not have to be held for any minimum time-period. Once an animal has cleared any legal holds, it may be put up for adoption, returned to the owner, placed with a rescue organization, placed in temporary foster care, or euthanized. CCAS may also house wildlife temporarily until they can be placed with a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

### **Volunteer Program Requirements**

#### **Orientation:**

After you review this manual, you will need to call or email to schedule your first volunteer shift (call Amanda at 910-438-4050 or email [aorgan@cumberlandcountync.gov](mailto:aorgan@cumberlandcountync.gov)). A brief tour of the shelter will be conducted at your first volunteer shift, this tour will take about 45 minutes. Tours are scheduled though out the week.

#### **Ages for Volunteering**

Ages 12-15 may volunteer alongside a parent or guardian. Both must volunteer as a team at all times. Only one minor child per adult is permitted.

Ages 16 and older may volunteer without parental supervision but must have a parent or guardian sign a waiver.

## Volunteer Opportunities

The following is a list of volunteer opportunities available at CCAS. Please review each description and decide which one fits your interests and abilities best. Some volunteers choose to spend their time in multiple positions.

**Cat TLC Volunteer:** You will provide socialization and exercise to shelter cats and kittens, groom the cats, spot clean kennels and change litter pans and provide the cats with toys and bedding.

**Dog TLC Volunteer:** You will provide shelter dogs with mental and physical exercise, walk and socialize dogs and puppies, spot clean kennels and clean up the play yards, do minor grooming and bathing, and provide dogs with toys and bedding.

**Photography/Social Media Team:** You will take or assist in taking digital photographs of adoptable animals and assist designated volunteers in posting these photos to Facebook and other social media sites.

**Foster Care Provider:** You will provide a nurturing, compassionate and comfortable environment in your home for foster animals, provide all elements of care for foster animals including feeding, cleaning, grooming, medicating and socializing. Ensure safety and care of foster animals and transport them to and from the shelter for medical treatments, check-ups, and to be shown for adoption.

## Volunteer Hours

You are welcome to come in and volunteer anytime during the following hours:

Monday-Friday: 8:30am to 5:30 pm

Saturday: 10am to 5pm

*No volunteers on Sundays or Holidays*

## Volunteer Policies and Procedures

### Dress Code

**Proper Footwear** – Floors are often wet and slippery so shoes with good traction are a must. Your feet also need to be protected from animal waste, cleaning chemicals and disinfectants. Tennis shoes or work style boots with low heeled, non-slip soles are recommended.

**Open-toed shoes, flip flops, or sandals are not permitted.**

**Clothing** – While here, you are a shelter representative, so you should always have a tidy appearance. Please only wear comfortable items that can also be easily washed and that you don't mind getting stains on. **Long pants and long sleeves are highly recommended** to protect you from chemicals, bites and scratches even in the summer. **Shorts are required to be at least mid-thigh length. Clothing with potentially offensive graphics or logos are not permitted. Tube tops, spaghetti straps, or shirts that do not cover the torso fully are not permitted.** All clothing should be laundered between visits to the shelter. This reduces the spread of viruses and disease.

**Jewelry** – Please limit jewelry while volunteering. Large or dangling jewelry can get caught on cages and in claws or fur, potentially injuring you or the animals. Jewelry is especially hazardous to animals that are attracted to it, like cats and birds, who could easily remove and ingest it. CCAS is not responsible for any losses of personal property, so it is advised to not wear jewelry that is especially valuable while in the shelter.

**Name Tags** – Volunteers must wear a badge identifying them as such at all times while they are in the shelter. This ensures that the staff and public recognize you as a volunteer and helps us get to know you. If you misplace your name tag or it becomes damaged and unreadable you may request a new one from the volunteer coordinator.

**Personal Belongings** – It is recommended that anything of value to you be left at home or in your vehicle. Coats can be left in the volunteer coordinator office but please don't wear your favorite or most expensive. CCAS cannot guarantee the safety of your personal items.

**Personal Pets** – you are not allowed to bring your personal pets with you while you are volunteering. If you are considering adopting one of the shelter animals and want to do a “meet n greet” with your existing pet, that is great, but it should be done outside of your volunteer hours.

**Smoking** – Smoking is prohibited on all county property, including the animal shelter and surrounding grounds.

**Logging Your Volunteer Hours** – You will need to sign in at the Volunteer sign-in desk (located in the adoption lobby) when you come to volunteer. If you need documentation of hours you have

volunteered for school, work, etc., please request this in advance from the Volunteer Coordinator via email.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

While volunteering you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner which respects our guests, staff and other volunteers. If you fail to follow the policies and guidelines outlined in this handbook or other training classes you attend you will be counseled again on our policies. However, repeated deviations from protocol, a consistently poor/insubordinate attitude or exhibiting any of the behaviors listed below as prohibited conduct will likely result in immediate termination of your volunteer privileges.

The following is a list of conduct that is prohibited while you are volunteering for CCAS in any capacity:

- Mistreatment of animals, including rough handling or shouting at an animal.
- Intimidation or harassment of staff, volunteers or members of the public.
- Possession of firearms or weapons on CCAS property, including off site events.
- Consumption, possession or being under the influence of illegal substances, non-prescribed pharmaceutical drugs, or alcohol during your volunteer shift.
- Use of abusive, profane, inappropriate or threatening language
- Theft of property or funds

We value our volunteers and consider them a huge asset, so we want to ensure your experiences with staff and other volunteers at CCAS are pleasant. Please inform the Volunteer Coordinator or another supervisor on duty if anything occurs that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

### **Customer Service Expectations**

Volunteers are considered shelter ambassadors just like paid staff, so how you conduct yourself while in view of the public is very important. Be friendly. Smile. Say hello. Ask a guest if they need assistance and help direct them to the appropriate staff member. Your appearance and the way you treat our guests will affect the reputation of CCAS in the Community. If CCAS is perceived as an ineffective or hostile organization, the animals will suffer for it.

### **Safety and Health Guidelines**

#### **Practicing Safety around Animals**

The animals that our volunteers handle are animals that the staff have evaluated and consider good candidates for adoption. The shelter environment can be stressful for many animals; therefore, behaviors cannot always be predicted. You should always pay full attention to the animal you are handling and your surroundings to avoid accidents. **Do not play with your cell phone while you are handling or supervising an animal! It only takes seconds for an animal to injure itself, another animal, or you.**

Only handle animals that you are capable of controlling. Make sure you are in full control of the animal before removing it from the kennel or cage.



Remember that all animals must be kept separate unless approved by a staff member. Keep dogs at least 10 feet apart at all times when leash walking them. Keeping animals separate reduces the spread of disease, and not all animals at CCAS are friendly towards other animals, especially under times of stress. If you witness a dog or cat fight, DO NOT attempt to break it up. Fights often sound worse than they really are, and trained staff members are the only ones who should intervene.

Even when every precaution is taken, accidents can happen. While rare, bites and scratches do occur. Cleaning any injury immediately with soap and warm water is important to avoid infection. You must report any bite, scratch or other injury to the Volunteer Coordinator or another staff member immediately, not matter how small or insignificant it may seem. Medical history is uncertain on many of the animals here. Additionally, state law requires that dogs, cats and ferrets be quarantined for 10 days if they bite or scratch and it breaks the skin.

Cat bites have a high likelihood of infection. CCAS recommends that you see a health care provider within a few hours of a cat bite to ensure that you are treated properly to prevent infection. Notify shelter staff immediately if you are bitten by a cat.

### **Disease Prevention**

Please notify a staff member if you see an animal exhibit any of the following symptoms: Diarrhea, vomiting, discharge from eyes or nose, sneezing, coughing, limping, lack of muscle control. If you think that an animal is in any physical distress, please alert a staff member quickly. Many of the animals in our shelter have been exposed to disease prior to coming in and may not show signs of illness until they have been

here several days or even weeks. Most disease spread in the shelter is caused by fomites, which are object such as bowls, mops, towels, shoes and even your unwashed hands, so please remember to use hand sanitizer and wash with soap and water frequently, and do not move articles such as toys or bowls from one animal's cage to another's without disinfecting them first.

### **Kennel/Cage Signs**

Frequently staff will post important information about an animal in signs on the cage or kennel. Please make sure you read all signs prior to opening the cage or kennel and follow instructions completely. If you don't understand a sign or feel it is in error, see a staff member.

### **Feeding treats**

Please do not feed animals anything other than approved treats without permission from the staff. Some animals have sensitive stomachs and they may develop diarrhea or other issues from eating unapproved treats. In addition, some human foods are toxic for pets.

### **Children and Guests**

Children who are not active volunteers cannot accompany a parent/adult while they are volunteering. Guests are also not permitted to accompany volunteers while they are performing their volunteer duties. Please invite your friends and family to become volunteers themselves. If you have a friend or family member visiting from out of town it is best to reschedule your volunteer time for when

it won't conflict with your plans. If someone is picking you up from the shelter, please meet them in the adoption lobby. They won't be permitted to search the shelter to find you.

### **Off-Limit Areas**

For the safety of the animals and volunteers, volunteers are not permitted in the isolation, holding and prep areas. These areas are marked with signs alerting you that these are staff only areas. Housed in these areas are stray animals, animals under bite quarantine, sick animals, or new arrivals that have not yet been evaluated for adoption. The temperaments of these animals have not been evaluated. Dangerous animals are frequently housed in the holding kennels. Just walking past these animals can cause them great distress and be very dangerous. Do not enter these areas, even if you see other volunteers doing so.

The euthanasia room is also off limits to volunteers, as are the veterinary treatment areas. Respecting the staff work space is important for everyone's safety.

### **Hygiene**

Please wash or disinfect your hands after handling each animal and before handling the next one. Washing your hands with soap and water will help eliminate the risk of becoming ill yourself, and also help prevent the spread of disease and germs throughout the shelter. Hands can be washed in the restrooms, break room, grooming room, and animal food prep areas. Wall dispensers with sanitizing foam can be found in the kennel areas and cat rooms. Please let a staff member know when a dispenser runs out.

## **Exposure to Infectious Disease**

While volunteering at CCAS you may be exposed to infectious disease. Usually these diseases will be contagious only to other animals. However, some diseases can spread from animals to humans. CCAS will notify you if we have reason to believe that you were exposed to a disease that could affect humans while you were at the facility. Please take extra precautions to launder your clothes and wash your hands. Notify the Volunteer Coordinator if you have any concerns. If you develop symptoms of an infection or illness do not return to volunteer until you have completely recovered. You may re-expose animals, other volunteers and staff members.

## **Other Guidelines**

### **Social Networking Policy**

CCAS volunteers who engage in blogging and social networking should be mindful that their postings, even if done off premises, could have an adverse effect on CCAS's legitimate business interests and the privacy interests of its employees, customers, and others. For example, the information posted could be considered CCAS proprietary or confidential information, or place CCAS or its employees in a bad light. In addition, some readers may view you as a *de facto* spokesperson for CCAS. To reduce the likelihood that your personal blogging or social networking will have an adverse effect on CCAS and the customers we serve, we require that you observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not engage in online activities of any kind using CCAS property or resources, including but not limited to Internet access,

computer hardware, or software. Express written consent of the Director of Animal Services must be given for any county resources or property to be used by anyone other than paid county employees.

2. If your posts or blogs include any information related to CCAS and even if you are posting anonymously, you are required to make it clear that the views expressed are yours alone and do not reflect the views of CCAS or Cumberland County.
3. Do not discredit, disparage, or defame the mission or services of CCAS, its staff, affiliates, supporters or partners.
4. Do not use Cumberland County or CCAS's logo, trademark or proprietary graphics, photographs of CCAS's premises, employees, or rescued animals (other than those available for adoption and posted on CCAS's website as such).
5. Before you make any posting on a social media site or blog that identifies yourself as a volunteer of CCAS, or that identifies CCAS, please consider whether what you are posting could affect CCAS and whether you might be damaging CCAS's reputation. If you are uncertain, you should consult with the Volunteer Coordinator or the Director before posting.
6. Please do not repost or share posts from others containing information about CCAS without ensuring that you are following the same guidelines as an original post. Many things are put on social media sites as fact that are not true. Reposting false information is just as damaging as if you posted it yourself.

## **Rescue Groups**

Rescue Groups must be pre-approved by the Rescue Coordinator, the Shelter Manager, or the Director. Once approved, rescue groups can pull any available animal at no charge.

## **Adoption Prices**

**Dogs \$100**

**Cats \$70**

### **Adoption fee includes:**

- Spay or Neuter surgery
- 1-year Rabies vaccine
- Microchip
- 1<sup>st</sup> Distemper/Parvo vaccine (dogs) or 1<sup>st</sup> FVRCP vaccine (cats)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Kennel Cough vaccine
- 1 Deworming

Adoption fees are non-refundable, however if an animal is found to have a medical condition by a veterinarian, the animal can be returned, and another animal of the same sex/size may be chosen if desired.

## **Euthanasia**

Euthanasia is the term used for humanely putting an animal to death. Euthanasia is an unfortunate reality in animal shelters. CCAS is not a no-kill shelter. We are an open admission shelter. No-kill shelters are

limited admission shelters which means that they choose which animals to take in. Limited admission shelters usually do not take sick, injured, old, ill-tempered or difficult to adopt animals, because those animals are difficult to adopt and may take up space for very long periods of time. The Fayetteville Animal Protection Society is a no-kill shelter located in Cumberland County, and they do a wonderful job placing dogs and cats, but they do not have the same responsibility to the citizens of Cumberland County as we do as a government agency. Therefore, they can refuse to take in an animal whereas we cannot. We do our best to find homes for all the animals that come through our doors, but unfortunately that is not always possible. The staff at CCAS is very proud to do their best for every animal that enters the shelter without discrimination.

Animals may be euthanized at CCAS because they are sick or injured. While their medical condition may be treatable, it may not be financially realistic for us to do so, or the animal's prognosis may be poor. What is treatable for an animal living at home with its owner may not be treatable when the animal is living in a stressful shelter environment. Placing these animals in temporary foster homes for treatment is an option we use whenever appropriate.

Animals may be euthanized because they possess behaviors that make them poor candidates for adoption. CCAS has a responsibility not only to the animals, but also to the people who will be adopting these animals, and the people who share a community with them. We cannot in good conscience adopt out animals that are potentially dangerous, or who have severe problems adapting to change. Our staff is very familiar with animal behavior – while a volunteer may feel that

an animal is “fine”, our staff may see something that a non-professional could miss.

Shelter animals are sometimes euthanized because space is tight. The reason CCAS and shelters in general exist is that there are too many animals and not enough homes. We do not have a time limit for our animals, but there may be times when we are housing an abundance of a particular type of animal and we don't have any other options. At that time the animal in the shelter that is deemed the least likely to be adopted (due to age, temperament, illness and other factors) is the animal that will be chosen for euthanasia.

It is very difficult emotionally for our staff to have to make a decision to euthanize any animal, and then to have to perform the procedure. Euthanasia is not taken lightly, and it can raise the stress level of the employees a great deal. Volunteers are asked to respect these employees. We recognize that you may not always understand the reasons as to why an animal was euthanized, but it is highly inappropriate to confront the staff and make their jobs even more difficult by questioning them or challenging them on a euthanasia decision. You should consult with the Volunteer Coordinator, Shelter Manager or Director only regarding euthanasia policies. Likewise, if you are unsure what has happened to a pet you've gotten to know here, you are asked to not ask the staff about the animal's outcome. Reason being, if there was an unhappy ending to that animal's story, we don't wish the staff to relive the event for every curious volunteer – it's far too stressful. Please see the Volunteer Coordinator and you will be given an honest answer and will have the opportunity to discuss your feelings and any concerns you may have. We also ask that you be careful and use discretion when discussing your feelings about a sad



ending with other volunteers. Dwelling on the negative isn't good for anyone's morale and often leads to the spread of inaccurate information as the story is retold down the line. You will hear of sad endings, but never lose sight of the happy endings. Employees and volunteers should focus on their successes and be proud that what they're doing is ensuring more pets are finding their forever homes.

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

Volunteer Coordinator

Amanda Organ

Office: 910-438-4050

E-Mail: [aorgan@cumberlandcountync.gov](mailto:aorgan@cumberlandcountync.gov)

Shelter Manager

Kristin Davis Otero

Office: 910-321-6965

E-mail: [kcdavis@cumberlandcountync.gov](mailto:kcdavis@cumberlandcountync.gov)

Director

Elaine Smith, RVT

Office: 910-321-6856

Email: [ebsmith@cumberlandcountync.gov](mailto:ebsmith@cumberlandcountync.gov)

By signing below I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of the Cumberland County Animal Services Volunteer Manual, and the guidelines and policies herein.

\_\_\_\_\_ (print name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)