

humane
society
of charlotte

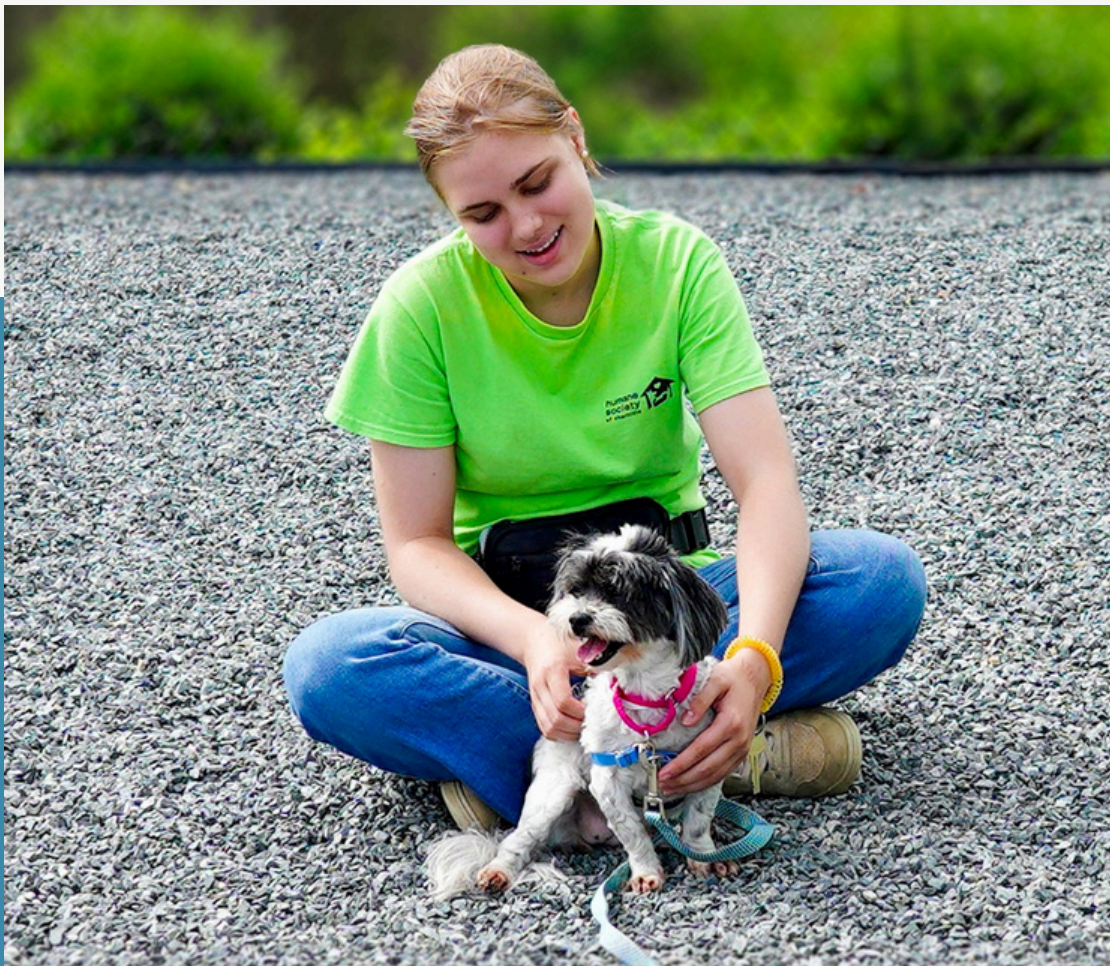


VOLUNTEER

HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO VOLUNTEERING AT HSC!



Welcome to Volunteering!

Thank you for committing to volunteering with the Humane Society of Charlotte. Volunteers are a vital part of our shelter's operations and help expand the capacity in which we serve the community of Charlotte. Whether you are cleaning kennels, greeting individuals in the clinic, or delivering pet food to people in need, you are making a difference.

We are excited to have you as a part of the Humane Society of Charlotte family and can't wait to see you in the facility! Please take a moment to read the handbook thoroughly.

**1348 Parker Drive, Charlotte, NC 28208 | 704.377.0534 |
volunteer@humanecharlotte.org | humanecharlotte.org**

About the Organization:

The Humane Society of Charlotte believes in working to improve our community by creating new, loving families and building a world where there are no more homeless and unwanted animals. This is an ongoing process — for every animal we can connect with a new family; another animal in need comes to HSC's shelter.

HSC follows a philosophy in which we believe no healthy, treatable, behaviorally sound animal should be euthanized in our community. However, we want to make volunteers aware that from time to time, we euthanize animals who are sick or injured or who have displayed aggressive tendencies and pose a risk to public safety or to the safety of other animals. We are working towards the goal of our philosophy by supporting our local municipal shelter and those in the greater Charlotte community. We are able to have this excellent outcome by having programming and activities centered on our four pillars of focus, which are awareness, placement, retention, placement, and education.

That's why, as a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the HSC relies on the generous support of animal-loving individuals in our community to fund our work, along with low-cost fees for adoption, spay/neuter, and wellness services.

Our Mission

To champion the wellbeing of companion animals and strengthen their bond with the people who know, love, and need them.

Foundational Belief

We believe people will make good decisions for animals when they are treated with kindness and understanding, and when they have enough information and resources.

Our Commitment to You

We truly appreciate your service and your dedication to helping. We want to make sure you have a wonderful and enjoyable experience.

So, we strive to:

- Provide you with adequate information and training so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
- Provide you with guidance, goals, and feedback.
- Respect your skills and individual needs.
- Be open-minded, receptive, and truly value your comments and suggestions.

When you volunteer with HSC, you're giving the animals one of the greatest gifts of all — your time. Whether you're helping take care of our animals at the shelter, helping out at events, or assisting with our community programs, you're changing the lives of the animals for the better. We wish you an enjoyable, safe, fulfilling, and rewarding volunteer experience.

Volunteer Commitment

- When you sign up as a Humane Society volunteer, we ask that you:
- Have regular access to the Internet and an email address. Email is our main form of communication to share information, such as volunteer instructions, opportunities, and confirmations.
- Use the Volunteer platform to schedule your volunteer shifts and log your volunteer hours as applicable.
- Commit to 6 hours a month (2/3 shifts a month)
- Wear an HSC Volunteer t-shirt and name tag during your volunteer shift. Pants or capris and cargo shorts are allowed in the summertime. No rips, fading, or frays should be present. Shorts, leggings, and yoga pants are not permitted in public-facing positions. Must also wear closed-toe shoes.
- Make sure to try as many roles as you like and let us know if you would like to serve as a mentor/in a leadership volunteer role.

Your Volunteer Profile

Create and update your volunteer records. Make sure to include your photo, email address, mailing address, phone number(s), and your emergency contact. Your name and address will not be sold, traded, or given to any other organization.

- Each week, check that your volunteer hours are accurate on the volunteer platform. This record of your hours is used to recognize your contribution, to show potential donors and funders that we are supported by community members, and in grant reports.
- At each shift, complete assignments for which you volunteer. If you cannot attend your shift, please un-register on the volunteer platform.

Volunteer Benefits

We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to helping save the lives of these amazing animals. Depending on where you decide to volunteer your time and talents, you may:

- Be provided with opportunities to move into leadership volunteer roles when appropriate.
- Receive special invitations to events and activities.
- Be eligible for your employer to financially match the hours you donate, if your company offers such an option

We encourage our volunteers to consider becoming donors to HSC and identify possible opportunities in their professional work that overlap with HSC's mission (such as group volunteering, pet food drives, etc.).

Junior Volunteers (16-17 years old)

Our junior volunteers are able to participate in all areas of volunteer work except the following:

- Clinical Services
- Third Party Events – Community Events

Once junior volunteers complete general orientation with a parent/guardian, they are permitted to volunteer as individuals without direct parent/guardian supervision.

Representing HSC

When serving as a volunteer for the Humane Society Charlotte, what you say and do reflects the Humane Society Charlotte.

We understand that volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, and we sincerely accept this diversity of thought. If there is an issue on which the Humane Society Charlotte has not taken a position, you should remain neutral on the matter while representing the Humane Society Charlotte.

Social Media

Blogs and social media networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) are one of the go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with HSC. Your behavior as a volunteer reflects on HSC. Please use good judgment whenever you contribute to our social media pages. Do not post any pictures of animals that are not available for adoption; animals that are available for adoption should only be used for social media. No pictures should be taken while at Clinic Services, as these are mainly public-owned animals. We encourage volunteers to spread the word about HSC and the animals, but you should never speak as an official representative of HSC.

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Volunteer Code of Ethics

As a volunteer representing HSC, your conduct towards staff, fellow volunteers, animals in our care, and members of the public is expected to be professional and courteous. HSC does not conduct background checks on volunteers, and the safety of our volunteers is our utmost concern. When you become a volunteer, you are committing to our team, our animals, and yourself to carry out your duties in an exemplary manner to the best of your abilities. This Code of Ethics clarifies the expectations of HSC Volunteers.

Displays of unprofessional, dishonest, or disrespectful behavior, and/or a lack of self-discipline, are grounds for termination of volunteer status.

We expect our volunteers and staff to adhere to the following tenets

COMMUNICATION

- Ask questions, rather than assuming how or why something is done.
- Practice active listening.
- Be cognizant of body language and the messages conveyed through it.
- Pay attention to the nonverbal cues of our pet population.

SAFETY

- Follow the guidelines presented during orientation and training.
- Report all injuries immediately to the volunteer program manager or a staff member. Any cut, scratch, bite, or any other type of injury must be legally documented.
- Use equipment and supplies as intended and with caution.
- Keep cell phone use, including texting and social media use, to a minimum while performing duties, unless duties require it.
- Ask for help when needed and do not attempt to take on more skill sets than your abilities permit.
- Junior volunteers (16-17 years old) are not permitted to ride with or be in an enclosed space with a staff member unsupervised.

- Volunteers and the parents/guardians of junior volunteers will be aware that HSC does not perform background checks on all volunteers, only Youth Program volunteers.
- Unless trained or supervised, volunteers are not permitted direct contact with our animals

RESPECT

- Respect others, even when there is not universal agreement or where there are age or skill differentials.
- Follow the direction of HSC managers, staff, and senior volunteers.
- Display courtesy, sensitivity, consideration, and compassion for people and animals.

Dress Code

Volunteers must wear their uniform during all service hours performed at the shelter and at all offsite events, unless otherwise specified. This uniform will consist of long, or knee-length pants, closed-toe shoes, nametag, and a volunteer t-shirt or sweatshirt. No rips, fading or frays should be present on pants. Shorts, leggings, and yoga pants are not permitted. All volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather.

- Junior volunteers (16 & 17 years old) must wear the designated orange volunteer shirt
- Over 18 volunteers wear a green volunteer shirt
- Name tags can be found in the Volunteer Program Manager's office
- Long hair must be secured away from the face, and dangling jewelry or facial piercings should not be worn if working with animals. Volunteers can also place all belongings in a volunteer locker available at the end of the Operations/Clinic Services hallway.

Volunteers can purchase their first shirt for \$20 and a replacement shirt for \$10

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted on the facility grounds or in any Humane Society of Charlotte vehicle or areas where pets are kept. Smoking is never allowed while handling a shelter pet. This includes walking pets off the Humane Society of Charlotte property.

Drugs and Alcohol

HSC is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive environment for all employees and volunteers. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the facility poses serious safety and health risks. While on Humane Society of Charlotte property and while conducting volunteer-related activities off premises, no volunteer may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted at the facility only if it does not impair a volunteer's ability to perform essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger others.

Non-Discrimination Policy & Harassment

HSC is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated and are grounds for termination of the volunteer.

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace, report it to the Volunteer Programs Manager or an HSC manager immediately. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation. All allegations of sexual and other harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated.

Progressive Discipline Policy

It is imperative that HSC maintain a safe and supportive environment for our staff, volunteers, and, most importantly, the animals in our care. If a volunteer endangers this environment, whether through lack of awareness, negligence, or intentional malice, these issues will be addressed swiftly and according to our stated protocols.

For minor infractions or accidental oversights where the volunteer attempts to self-correct, verbal coaching may be all that is called for. However, should the behavior harm the organization's ability to carry out or operate according to its mission and stated policies, progressive discipline will be triggered. HSC follows a "Three Strike" approach regarding progressive discipline for volunteers who display inappropriate behavior:

Note: HSC reserves the right to determine the appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of volunteer status, based on the severity of the infraction, the volunteer's past record, and other relevant factors

1. Verbal Warning/First Offense:

First-time offenses will receive a verbal warning, notifying the volunteer of the inappropriate behavior(s) observed, and what needs to be done to correct it. The consequences of inaction and further strikes will also be discussed.

2. Written Reprimand/Second Offense

Second-time offenses are given a written reprimand. This will be delivered, whenever possible, in person by the Volunteer Program Manager. It will state the infraction committed, plan for redress, and consequences of further inappropriate behavior. This note will also be saved by the Volunteer Program Manager for their records.

3. Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and regulations of HSC, or who fail to satisfactorily perform volunteer duties, for a third time, may be subject to dismissal. Whenever possible, dismissals will be handled by the Volunteer Programs Manager and communicated in person, though there will be times when the behavior is such that an immediate dismissal and removal from the premises is necessarily undertaken by another manager. HSC reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer without warning in the case of gross negligence or misconduct.

A partial list of what would be construed as inappropriate behavior is below. Those with an asterisk (*) may be grounds for immediate dismissal:

- Accessing a restricted area
- Argument (w/ staff, another volunteer, or a member of the public)
- Improper animal handling
- Purposeful property damage*
- Unethical behavior
- Breach of confidentiality*
- Failure to report an incident
- Violating safety protocols*
- Physical altercation*
- Drug/alcohol use*
- Sexual harassment*
- Cruelty to animals*

Grievances

All grievances should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Programs Manager. If the issue is not addressed, and/or if you feel uncomfortable approaching the Volunteer Programs Manager with this issue, please see the Chief Administration Officer. Offices at the shelter are labeled with roles to facilitate locating the correct person.

Cancellations and “No-Shows”

If you are not available to complete the volunteer shift(s) for which you have registered, please log into the Volunteer Portal and cancel your shift(s) or contact the Volunteer Programs Manager as soon as you can. Please be considerate of our staff and your fellow volunteers' time, as they rely on you when you have committed to sign up. If cancelling, try to do so with 24 hours' advance notice, as this gives adequate time for others to replace you. Volunteers who no-show 3 times will be removed from the program.

Attendance Policies & Procedures

When you commit to a volunteer position, you become a valuable member of our team and play an important role in the success of our mission. For that reason, we ask that you please do not make a commitment that you may be unable to fulfill, or take on responsibilities for which you feel unqualified.

Volunteers are expected to commit 6 or more hours to volunteering with HSC per month. However, we understand that this may be unattainable each month due to extenuating circumstances. Please contact the Volunteer Programs Manager if you need to cancel your shift within 24 hours.

Inactive Volunteers

If you do not volunteer for more than 6 months, your status will be made 'inactive and your profile will be archived. After 6 months, all archived profiles will be deleted, and a volunteer must restart the program, beginning with a new volunteer orientation. If you have to step away from volunteering due to illness, school, or another reason, accommodations can be made.

Volunteer Feedback

HSC recognizes that an efficient, successful organization and a satisfied volunteer team go hand in hand. We take volunteer concerns seriously. Volunteer Programs has an open-door policy. Staff welcome your concerns, suggestions, and feedback. We will also send out a quarterly survey. Please take the time to fill these out so we can make improvements!

If you are uncomfortable speaking directly to a staff member you are working with, you can also contact the Volunteer Programs Manager. We make every effort to ensure you can provide feedback in confidence and without fear of reprisal or discrimination.

Thank You!

Volunteers like you are one of the keys to helping to save the lives of countless pets across the country. Thank you so much for caring about the animals and for giving them your time, energy, and affection. We wish you a long, happy, and rewarding relationship with HSC!