



Austin Humane Society Volunteer Handbook

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Contact Information

124 W. Anderson Lane

Austin, TX 78752

(512) 646-7387

www.austinhumanesociety.org

Hours of Operation

Adoption Hours:

Monday, Wednesday-Saturday 12Noon-7:00PM

Sunday 12Noon-5:00PM

CLOSED TUESDAYS

Volunteer Hours:

Monday-Saturday 8:00AM-7:00PM

Sunday 8:00AM-5:00PM

Note: Hours may be abbreviated on holidays

Mission Statement

The Austin Humane Society is Austin's largest no kill, non-profit animal adoption shelter dedicated to saving Austin's homeless cats and dogs by educating our community about responsible pet ownership and reducing pet overpopulation.

Because we are a no-kill shelter, we are also a "limited intake" shelter. Animals are taken in from the public by appointment only and are assessed both behaviorally and medically before they are accepted into our adoption program. Once an animal is accepted in our adoption program they are not euthanized for space reasons. Unless there are medical or behavioral issues that develop deeming an animal un-adoptable, a cat or dog will stay in our adoption program until they find their forever home. The Austin Humane Society also works closely with other animal welfare agencies in the community and transfers animals in from other shelters that do euthanize for space, including Town Lake Animal Center.



Who we are

The Austin Humane Society (AHS) is a 501(c)3 non-profit, supported by individuals and businesses in our community and strong partnerships with other animal service organizations and animal welfare alliances. We receive no funds from national, state or local government entities. Formed in 1952, AHS has since been dedicated to re-homing homeless cats and dogs and educating the community about responsible pet ownership including spaying and neutering. Each year, AHS adopts out nearly 3,000 cats and dogs, receives over 32,000 visitors, spays and neuters more than 5,000 feral cats, and has a dedicated Board of Directors, advisors, staff and over 600 volunteers who work to socialize and provide companionship to all of our animals.

Key Staff for Volunteer Services

Sarah Streif sstreif@austinhumanesociety.org	Volunteer Services Coordinator 512.685.0124
Heather Allard hallard@austinhumanesociety.org	Receiving/Foster Care Supervisor 512.685.0113
Amanda Boutourline fostercare@austinhumanesociety.org	Foster Care Coordinator 512.646.7387 ext. 104
Larry Converse lconverse@austinhumanesociety.org	Clinic Supervisor 512.685.0125
Charles Spinoso cspinoso@austinhumanesociety.org	Adoption Supervisor 512.685.0129
Leticia Stivers lstivers@austinhumanesociety.org	Feral Cat Program Coordinator 512.685.0111
Crystal Tysz ctysz@austinhumanesociety.org	Animal Care/Facilities Supervisor 512.685.0122



AHS Services

- **Adoptions-** The Austin Humane Society adopts out nearly 3,000 cats and dogs each year. All adoptions are \$85 and require the completion of an adoption survey and brief counseling from our adoption staff. All animals go home fully vaccinated, spayed/neutered, and micro-chipped.
- **Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Clinics-** Since this program was established in 2007, the Austin Humane Society has spayed/neutered over 11,000 feral cats in an effort to combat the overpopulation of cats in the Austin area and decrease euthanasia of cats and kittens in the city shelter.
- **Dog Obedience Classes-** Our “Dog Manners” class is open to the public and offers basic obedience for dogs over 4.5 months old. Our dog trainers are all members of APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers) and use positive reinforcement training methods.
- **Pet Loss Support Groups-** Our pet loss support group meets on the last Monday of every month from 7-8:30pm and is free to the public. This group is facilitated by Debra Rimmer, LMSW-AP and licensed practicing social worker of 20 years.
- **Humane Education-** The humane education program teaches children and adults about people and pets. Presentations and educational support materials include services of AHS, responsible pet ownership, pet needs, safety for and around animals, and pet overpopulations. Tours and are available by appointment only.
- **Special Events-** AHS has a very solid foundation in the Austin community and attends many local events at which we showcase animals available for adoption, hand out educational materials, and promote our programs.
- **Fundraisers-** Because AHS receives no government funding, we rely on donations from members of the community to support our programs. Our two largest fundraisers are our annual “Rags to Wags” pet fashion show and our annual “New Car Raffle” in which we raffle off a brand new Mazda!



Volunteer Policies and Procedures

The Austin Humane Society relies on volunteer support in almost every aspect of our operations. From walking dogs to socializing sick cats to fundraising and data entry, volunteers are an integral part of our shelter.

Age Requirement:

All volunteers at the Austin Humane Society must be 14 years of age. No exceptions to this policy will be made. 14 and 15 year old volunteers must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times while volunteering including at orientations and trainings. 15 and 16 year olds may volunteer on their own with parental consent.

Training:

All volunteers must attend a general volunteer orientation and subsequent program-specific training session. No volunteer may handle animals until they are approved and trained on shelter protocol.

Volunteer Training Fee:

The Austin Humane Society charges a one-time administrative fee to help us cover our costs for our volunteer program. As long as volunteers remain active, (Volunteers are dropped after three months of inactivity) one fee covers all volunteer programs at AHS.

The fees are as follows:

- Students \$20.00
- Adults \$35.00
- Seniors 60 and over \$20.00
- Foster Care Volunteers - waived fee

Dress Code:

All volunteers must be in dress code while working at the shelter and at any event where you will have direct contact with animals. The dress code is as follows:

- Long Pants
- Close-toed Shoes
- T-shirt or long-sleeved length shirt
- No Jewelry



Austin Humane Society **t-shirts** are available for volunteers but not required. Please see the Volunteer Services Coordinator to purchase a t-shirt (\$10 each).

Upon completing the initial training, volunteers will receive a **volunteer name badge** which they are required to wear at all times while volunteering.

Commitment:

All volunteers are asked to commit to an average of 2 hours per week. However, different programs have different needs, and we understand if this is not realistic for your volunteer position. With the exception of Foster Care volunteers, those who do not log hours for 3 months straight will be considered “inactive” and will be required to re-train as a volunteer.

Communication:

Each volunteer program utilizes a Yahoo group for communication among volunteers and Staff members. The Yahoo groups are a great way to get to know what is happening at the Shelter and provide access to volunteer opportunity postings and events. Participation in the Yahoo groups is not mandatory but is highly recommended for all volunteers. The Volunteer Program also sends out the “Volunteer Voice” every Monday to all volunteers. This e-newsletter provides volunteers with updates on shelter happenings, weekly adoptions, volunteer opportunities and special events.

Volunteer Hours:

With the exception of foster care volunteers, all volunteers are required to log their time volunteering for the Austin Humane Society through our online volunteer software system. All hours should be logged within 24 hours after working and **MUST** be logged by the last day of the month for reporting purposes. Volunteer hours are calculated in order to apply for grants and fund our Shelter programs, ultimately helping to save more animal lives.

Scheduling:

Most volunteer programs do not require volunteers to sign up for specific shifts, although it is recommended that you use the Yahoo group calendars to see when coverage is needed at the shelter.



Parking:

We ask that volunteers please park in the back of the Shelter in order to keep the front spaces available to adopters. Volunteers may enter through the green double doors in the back of the building or the “Obedience Training” entrance in front. Please note: The main Adoption doors are only unlocked during adoption hours.

Personal Belongings:

It is recommended that volunteers do not bring any personal belongings to the shelter that they cannot keep on their person at all times. If you do bring in personal items such as jackets, bags, purses, etc, it is recommended that you lock these items in lockers provided in the volunteer break room. Volunteers are responsible for providing their own locks.

Visitors and Personal Guests:

Only AHS approved volunteers may handle animals at the Shelter. Any guests wishing to shadow a volunteer must be pre-approved by the Volunteer Services Coordinator and will not be able to interact with the animals. No children are allowed at the shelter.

Bite/Scratch Reporting:

It is the policy of the Austin Humane Society and the City of Austin that all bites or scratches that break the skin, whether intentional or not, must be reported immediately upon injury. If a cat or dog bites or scratches and breaks the skin, please report directly to our Receiving department to fill out the appropriate information. The injured area should be immediately washed with soap and water, and the volunteer should seek appropriate medical care from their primary care physician.

Confidentiality:

As a volunteer, you may have access to information and documents that may be confidential including donor information, adoption records etc. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement in which the divulging of confidential information may result in termination from the volunteer program. Additionally, volunteers may also have access to information about animals that are not yet approved for adoption. Volunteers may not



disclose to members of the public any information on animals that are not yet available for adoption.

Sexual Harassment/Discrimination:

The Austin Humane Society is committed to providing a harassment-free workplace for both staff and volunteers. AHS will not tolerate any speech or conduct that is intended to, or has the effect of, intimidating, abusing or harassing any employee or volunteer because of his or her race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy applies to any person associated with the Shelter.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse:

The Austin Humane Society is committed to maintaining a safe and productive working environment for all individuals. The use of drugs or alcohol by individuals associated with the AHS could create a serious threat to safe and productive operations. Therefore, to protect the health and safety of fellow volunteers, employees, the general public, and to safeguard Shelter property and community image, the Shelter has adopted this Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy. Volunteers who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination from the volunteer program. The Austin Humane Society prohibits the manufacture, distribution, possession, concealment, use, sale, purchase, transfer of or being under the influence of alcohol, inhalants, illegal drugs or controlled substances while on the job, including meal and break periods, on Shelter premises, including parking lots, in Shelter vehicles or while on Shelter business, whether on or off Shelter premises.

Grievance Process:

The purpose of the grievance process is to maintain an atmosphere of open, two-way communications between staff and volunteers, to foster and environment of trust and to resolve volunteer issues and concerns in a timely manner. You are encouraged to raise concerns directly to the Volunteer Services Coordinator as soon as possible after the event that causes the concerns.



Volunteer Pet Adoptions:

All volunteers are eligible to adopt an animal. Adoptions for volunteers will be handled exactly like any other adoption for an Austin Humane Society customer. All adoptions will be treated equally whether an individual is a customer or a volunteer. All adopters must go through the application process and pay the adoption fee.

Transmission of Disease:

While volunteering at the Austin Humane Society volunteers may come into contact with diseases communicable to humans and/or to household pets. All volunteers should take care to change and wash any clothes and shoes worn after returning home from the Shelter so as not to spread disease to personal pets. Any volunteer approved to work with sick animals should be properly protecting themselves from disease, particularly those transmitted to humans. AHS recommends that personal pets of volunteers remain current on all veterinarian recommended vaccinations.

Tax Deductions:

Volunteers may be eligible to claim deductions on their tax returns for travel time to and from volunteer assignments. Please check with your tax professional for more information. Records of volunteer time may be printed out from the online volunteer software system for requested from the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

Inactivity:

Excluding foster volunteers, volunteers will be considered “inactive” when they have not reported to a volunteer position for more than three months. Once deemed inactive, in order to return as a volunteer you will need to contact the Volunteer Services Coordinator and possibly re-train. AHS encourages any volunteer who is leaving the program to provide feedback to the Volunteer Services Coordinator regarding their reasons for leaving and any suggestions for improving our programs.

Thank you for choosing the Austin Humane Society!