

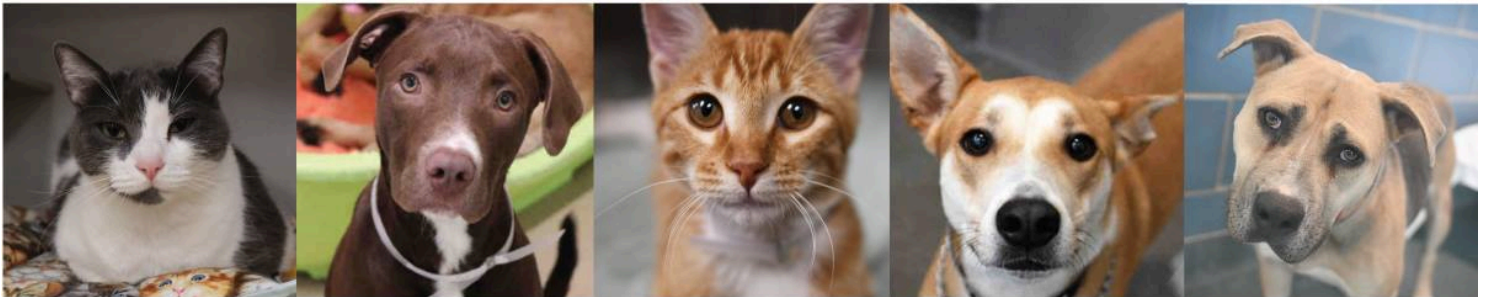
# DALLAS ANIMAL SERVICES

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK AND GUIDELINES

# BE DALLAS90.



VOLUNTEER • FOSTER • ADOPT • EDUCATE • DONATE



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# ABOUT DALLAS ANIMAL SERVICES AND DALLAS90

## Welcome to the Dallas90 Team!

We are thrilled to have you as part of our innovative, lifesaving team! With your help, we can continue to increase the number of lives we save every day and improve the lives of both pets and people in our community.

Dallas Animal Services (DAS) is the only open-admission animal shelter in the City of Dallas, which means that we take in any Dallas pet, regardless of our current capacity or the health and behavior of the animal. While Dallas is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country, DAS has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest dog and cat intake in the country (behind only City of Los Angeles and LA County shelters) with more than 39,000 cats and dogs entering our care in Fiscal year 2019.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Dallas Animal Services' (DAS) mission is to help Dallas be a safe, compassionate, and healthy place for people and animals.

## DALLAS90

In November 2018, DAS launched Dallas90, a community engagement campaign designed to increase community support for DAS' lifesaving efforts in order to help DAS achieve a sustainable 90% live release rate.

## DALLAS 90 VISION STATEMENT

Lead the nation in compassionate care of animals while finding positive outcomes for all placeable pets through innovative shelter operations and community engagement.

## DALLAS 90 MISSION STATEMENT

Make Dallas the leading city for animal welfare by responsibly saving all adoptable pets and providing citizens with the education and resources needed to make them successful pet owners.

## DAS PRINCIPLES

Public Safety - Compassion - No Shortcuts

## DAS CORE VALUES

- Responsibly exceed a 90% live release rate without sacrificing the quality of care or life of animals in our shelter.
- Provide exceptional care to all animals in our shelter in accordance with industry best standards and the Five Freedoms.

- The Five Freedoms, as established by the Farm Animal Welfare Council and have been widely accepted by the wider animal welfare / animal sheltering industry, are:
  - Freedom from hunger and thirst.
  - Freedom from discomfort.
  - Freedom from pain, injury, or disease.
  - Freedom to express normal behavior.
  - Freedom from fear and distress.
- Create the best pet owners in the country through humane education and accessible resources.
- Present the public with transparent and accurate data.
- Increase the safety of Dallas by decreasing the number of loose and aggressive dogs.
- Collaborate with animal rescues, fosters, volunteers, politicians, community leaders, businesses, and citizens to improve the lives of Dallas pets.
- Never turn away any Dallas pet but work towards keeping pets in loving homes through education and resources whenever possible.

## SHELTER LOCATIONS

**Main Shelter:** 1818 N. Westmoreland Rd., Dallas, TX 75212

**PetSmart Everyday Adoption Center:** 16821 N. Coit Rd., Dallas, TX 75248

## CONTACT THE VOLUNTEER TEAM

DASVolunteer@dallascityhall.com

# ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook summarizes many of Dallas Animal Services' policies and procedures related to volunteering. Please note that Dallas Animal Services' managers and their designees may modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If any changes are made, we will be sure to notify you as soon as possible.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The staff members at Dallas Animal Services truly appreciate of your service and dedication to saving the lives of animals in our community. We want to ensure a good experience each time you come to our shelter. Together, our work is guided by the following values and principles:

- **Lead with Innovation:** develop, promote, and collaborate to create new ideas geared towards better lifesaving techniques and increasing the quality of life for all animals.
- **Demonstrate Empathy, Compassion, and Kindness:** by understanding and respecting each other, we can collectively identify how we can become a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.
- **Provide Success through Support:** ensure that every animal and person is set up for success by providing information, training, and assistance with appropriate dialogue.
- **Safety through Transparency:** provide open and honest communication to ensure all humans and animals thrive within a safe environment.
- **Using Positive and Forward-Thinking:** look towards challenges with an open and positive mind-set, as well as creative solutions.

By working together within these principles, we can impact everything from the animals in our facility, to the individuals who take them home.

## AMBASSADORS FOR THE CAUSE

When you join the Dallas90 Team, you become an ambassador of our shared mission. We understand that individuals have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare and we support this diversity as we believe that it is through diversity that innovation is created. Nonetheless, our conduct impacts our community and our ability to help save lives.

We expect all staff, volunteers, fosters, and partners to operate in a respectful, inclusive, and professional manner when voicing opinions.

Additionally, when you are operating in an official DAS capacity or representing yourself as a member of the Dallas90 Team, we expect that your behavior and the information you share will be aligned with DAS policies, procedures, and values.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Online communication platforms are a valuable tool in our efforts to reach as many individuals as possible. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, NextDoor, etc.) are now go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with Dallas Animal Services and our collaborative efforts. For

that reason, we ask and expect you to use good judgement when contributing to DAS' official pages and groups as well as your own personal accounts, particularly when your posts are related to DAS, DAS projects, and DAS partners.

We encourage the sharing of stories and promotion of our mission through social media, but assert that volunteers cannot speak as official representatives of Dallas Animal Services. Regardless of the platform or page, when engaging with others via social media regarding situations related to Dallas Animal Services, our events, efforts, or animals, we have the following expectations:

**Be accurate.** Check your facts before posting, taking every precaution to gather the most current information available. If you don't have the facts, please refer readers to one of DAS' general mailboxes ([DASVolunteer@dallascityhall.com](mailto:DASVolunteer@dallascityhall.com), [DASFoster@dallascityhall.com](mailto:DASFoster@dallascityhall.com), [DASAdopt@dallascityhall.com](mailto:DASAdopt@dallascityhall.com), [DASRescue@dallascityhall.com](mailto:DASRescue@dallascityhall.com), or [DASPIO@dallascityhall.com](mailto:DASPIO@dallascityhall.com) -- (marketing and media) or share a link to the post directly with DAS staff.

**Protect confidential information.** Protecting confidential and proprietary information is crucial to maintaining public trust. Some examples of information that should never be shared include, but are not limited to:

- Adopter or Rescue Group information: Texas State law protects the identities of adopters and rescue groups who pull animals from DAS.
- Owner or Surrender information: Under no circumstances should any identifying or contact information be shared with members of the public. Information shared with partners is, oftentimes, not appropriate for public sharing.

Failure to maintain confidentiality could result in termination of your relationship with DAS. If you are unsure if the information you wish to share is confidential, please ask DAS staff.

**Maintain professionalism.** Do not allow discussions of opinions, positions, or a situation or a debate to devolve into personal attacks, fights or flame wars that would reflect poorly on you or the organization; any doubts about the appropriateness of a post should be passed along to your coordinator for evaluation. If you feel that an individual's comments need to be addressed by DAS, please reach out to [DASPIO@dallascityhall.com](mailto:DASPIO@dallascityhall.com).

**No bash, no trash.** As a partner of DAS, you commit to helping us with our mission. To achieve this shared mission, we must work together and support one another. Words have power and the words we use can affect public perception. Please keep this in mind and make sure that as you are sharing the stories of animals and our organization, you are not creating negative perception of DAS, a specific breed, or the community that we serve. ***You may disagree with certain policies or decisions made, but we ask that you address these concerns directly with the Volunteer Coordinator rather than through online platforms.***

Again, if you are unsure of the appropriateness of a story or comment, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or management. You are encouraged and welcome to use your own social media platforms to help promote adoptable animals, events, volunteer opportunities, advocacy, outreach and more. However, DAS affiliates are prohibited from starting any new social media pages that represent the organization.

# STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

DAS upholds the highest standards of conduct and service in order to provide residents with a positive experience and to maximize the number of lives saved. Our Standard of Conduct is a statement of expectations. As a Dallas Animal Services volunteer, we expect you to:

## ***Be polite and professional.***

When conducting onsite service, please present an image that is both professional and appropriate to working conditions. First impressions are lasting. Please keep the following in mind:

- You should have a well-groomed appearance. Closed-toed shoes and pants are required when handling animals (unless instructed otherwise).
- Proper identification wristbands, shirts, or aprons should be worn and always visible to identify you as a DAS Team Member
- Drinking alcohol and the use of drugs are not permitted onsite or at offsite events; while volunteering, DAS volunteers may not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs with side effects that reduce your ability to safely handle animals or interact with residents.
- Smoking is only permissible in labeled outdoor areas; smoking is not permitted while handling DAS animals.

## ***Be responsible.***

Service begins and ends with individuals. While you cannot control what others do, you can guarantee the quality of your own work. Strive to be a positive role model and never be afraid to ask staff for help.

## ***Be positive.***

Positivity is contagious. Fulfilling your duties with enthusiasm and dedication will positively impact other supporters, potential supporters, and staff. Some other tips:

- Raise concerns and share ideas in a positive fashion; focus on solutions, not problems.
- Keep an open mind when given constructive criticism; try to avoid automatic dismissal of someone's point of view; strive to educate and prepare individuals for success.
- Add value to each interaction.

## ***Be friendly, courteous, and helpful.***

Common courtesy goes a long way toward making a favorable impression on current and potential partners, volunteers, adopters, donors, corporate partners, the public, and DAS staff. Please remember the following:

- A smile goes a long way.
- Use a person's name whenever possible.
- Practice active listening, giving someone your undivided attention.



- Treat each person with kindness.
- Avoid slang or technical jargon/terms that a person may not understand.
- Be aware of how your actions appear to the average person (for example, certain humane animal holds may appear concerning to the unknowing observer) and educate whenever possible.

The above are only guidelines to providing great service. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgement

## REQUESTS FOR ANIMAL HELP

As a supporter of DAS, you may be asked by people in your community for help with specific animal situations. Here are some ways to handle these requests:

- To help people find solutions to common problems, direct them to our website at [www.dallasanimalservices.org](http://www.dallasanimalservices.org).
- If the person has witnessed animal abuse or cruelty, instruct them to call 911.
- If a Dallas resident has witnessed animal neglect, a loose animal, or other animal issue, instruct them to call 311.
- If you anticipate that a situation will become very public or you are contacted by the media or a high-ranking official, please notify your DAS staff contact for further instructions.

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

As a DAS volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information of Dallas Animal Services to which you are exposed. All volunteers are required to sign a “Release of Liability and Maintaining Confidentiality” waiver. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of your relationship with DAS.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As a volunteer of Dallas Animal Services, you should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgement, interfere with timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, discredit DAS or conflict/appear to conflict with DAS’ best interest. The success of DAS rests on its reputation and the goodwill of the community.

Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of DAS assets, funds, materials, logos, facilities, time, or services of other DAS affiliates. Violations of this policy may result in release from partnership with DAS.

If you are asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of DAS or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please reach out to your DAS staff contact.

## ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Our anti-harassment policy expresses our commitment to maintain a workplace and environment that’s free of harassment, so our employees, volunteers, and guests can feel safe and happy. Dallas Animal Services strives to create and maintain an environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency and respect.



In accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, Dallas Animal Services expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

Dallas Animal Services expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. DAS will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. For purposes of this policy, harassment is any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate or coerce an employee, co-worker, client, volunteer, or any person working for or on behalf of Dallas Animal Services.

Anyone engaged in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from partnership with Dallas Animal Services. If you believe you are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify your DAS staff contact.

DAS will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment or intimidation of any supporter who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation may result in release from DAS partnership.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the affiliate who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, as a result of the investigation, DAS determines that an employee or affiliate has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, DAS will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination of employment, release from partnership or possible legal action.

## OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTEER PROCESS

We respect your time and strive to make your experience with us productive and rewarding.

We aim to utilize volunteers for a variety of tasks, including but not limited to:

- Assisting staff with daily tasks and duties
- Improving the quality of life for all animals in our facility through enrichment, socialization, training, and care
- Providing support with administrative processes
- Growing the reach of Dallas Animal Services into the community and beyond

Whether you are interested in hands-on work with the animals or specialized jobs supporting operations, we can help find the perfect fit for you. By matching you with your ideal position, we can better save the lives of Dallas' companion animals and increase the reach of care for Dallas Animal Services.

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator or login to the volunteer portal for more information on trainings and opportunities.

## BACKGROUND CHECKS

Due to handling confidential information and/or being around pharmaceuticals, background checks will be required for volunteers providing volunteer service in non-public areas, including medical, administration, and the kitten nursery.

## UNIFORMS/IDENTIFICATION

Volunteers will be required to wear a volunteer t-shirt to identify themselves as volunteers. They will also wear a colored wristband to identify what type of volunteering they are approved to do (i.e., cats, dogs, medical, administrative, etc.).

## CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We are always thinking of new and innovative ways to utilize volunteer assistance. Whether you work best with animals, people, or both, there are many ways that you can assist us at Dallas Animal Services. Some opportunities available include:

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Are your talents best suited on the computer? Do you have strong data entry skills or can only volunteer at home? Inquire about any administrative needs in any department at DAS.

### C.A.R.E. TEAM (COMMUNITY ANIMAL RESOURCE EFFORT)

Go into under-served communities with one of our field officers and provide education, information and supplies to pets living in those communities.

### CAT CUDDLER

Give our cats much-needed TLC, petting, grooming and play time.

### DOGGIE DAYCATION

Take a dog out of the shelter for the day! Go for walks, to dog-friendly restaurants, pet supply stores and more. Take pics/video and share on social media to promote these dogs for adoption.

### D90 RUNNERS

Be part of a team of runners and take out our dogs for a run to provide them with much-needed exercise.

### DOG WALKING

Provide physical stimulation to our dogs by walking them to/from playgroup, on the walking path, as part of one of our Sunday Strolls, or spending time with them in a play yard.

### ENRICHMENT TEAM

Increase the quality of life for both dogs and cats by joining our enrichment team. From pupsicles to daily playgroup, these opportunities are critical to keeping our animals as stress free as possible!

### GREETER

Greet people when they come to the shelter and provide them with information and directions about our facility and adopting the animals.

### KITTEN NURSERY

Feed bottle baby kittens and help with their care.

## ANIMAL MATCHMAKER

Help adopters find a match and take out our dogs and cats to do meet and greets.

## MEDICAL SUPPORT

Shadow and assist our medical team with intake, daily operations, and basic care.

## OFFSITES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Volunteers make these opportunities possible! There are several options for volunteering, including showcasing our animals, assisting staff with adoptions, and keeping the area tidy.

## PHONE FUR-TOGRAPHER

Using your cell phone, take pics of our animals to provide a better image to be uploaded to our web site and help increase adoptability.

## POTTY PATROL

Help keep our animals comfortable and happy by assisting in cleaning the individual kennels, yards, and enclosures.

As we continue to grow and evolve, new opportunities will always arise. Please reach out to the volunteer coordinator or check online through Volgistics for more information on how you can become involved.

## SCHEDULING

Volunteers can sign up for shifts in advance using our online volunteer platform. After attending an orientation, we process your volunteer paperwork and send you the link granting access to the scheduling site. Information regarding job duties, qualifications and availability is listed to make self-scheduling as easy as possible.

## AVAILABLE TRAININGS

Having a well-trained volunteer base is crucial to promoting a safe and productive environment at DAS. You might find there are some volunteer opportunities that will be limited to individuals that have already completed certain trainings. If you have interest in a position for which you do not meet the required level of training, please reach out to the volunteer coordinator for more information.

Prior to being able to handle animals, additional Feline 1 (Cat Cuddler) or Canine Training will be required

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Our program for fulfilling court-appointed service hours is separate from our Volunteer Program. Community service volunteers are not allowed to handle animals but can provide crucial cleaning assistance. To get started on Community Service volunteering, there is an application for court-ordered volunteers to be filled out on our web site at [www.dallasanimalservices.org](http://www.dallasanimalservices.org)

## YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

DAS welcomes the involvement of younger volunteers in several different volunteer positions. The goal is the same as it is for our older volunteers: to have a fun and rewarding experience. Below are the specifications to ensure a safe volunteer experience for our youth volunteers.

Ages	Position Types	Requirements
<12yrs	Non – animal handling only	Parent/guardian must be present always
12-15yrs	Open	Parent/guardian must be present always
16-17yrs	Open	Parent/guardian must be present for orientation

Please note: It is up to our Volunteer Team to decide which, if any, volunteer positions are open to minor volunteers.

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND 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 not make a commitment that you may be unable to fulfill or take on responsibilities for which you feel unqualified for.

We understand that life happens, and you may not be able to make it to your volunteer shift. If you are not available to complete the volunteer shift(s) for which you have registered, please log into the volunteer center and cancel your shift(s) or contact the Volunteer Team as soon as possible. By doing so, you will make the shift available to other volunteers.

If you can't perform the duties of your volunteer position or meet required deadlines, and you don't notify the volunteer department or your staff contact in advance, your participation in the volunteer program may be adversely affected. We encourage you to avoid this situation; by not fulfilling your commitment, you will miss out on some wonderful opportunities to help homeless pets.

Please consult your volunteer team for specific "no-show" policies.

If you are unable to volunteer due to unforeseen circumstances, you may take a leave of absence for any period. Please discuss your needs with your staff point of contact.

## VOLUNTEER PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Performance feedback sessions give staff a chance to meet with volunteers one-on-one to review the chosen volunteer position, discuss what's going well, and identify goals and areas for improvement. If, as a volunteer, you have not acted in the best interests of DAS, it may be necessary to end the volunteer relationship.

## POTENTIAL CAUSES FOR RELEASE FROM VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- Breaking of confidentiality
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Failure to report volunteer hours

- Inactivity
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- Excessive “no-show” for volunteer shifts
- Not fulfilling the duties of the volunteer position
- Misrepresentation of Dallas Animal Services
- Theft
- Violence or implication of violence

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you have any questions or challenges regarding your volunteer assignment, please bring them to the attention of your staff contact or Volunteer Team.

The volunteer management staff make every effort to provide you with an opportunity to raise your questions in confidence and without fear of reprisal or discrimination. Every effort will be made to investigate in a timely manner and settle the issue on a fair and equitable basis.

## THANK YOU!

Supporters like you are how we will reach our ultimate goals. Thank you so much for caring about the animals and for giving them your time, energy, and affection. The community is stronger for it and countless lives are saved through your efforts. We wish you a long, happy, and rewarding relationship with DAS!

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