



Essential Capabilities

Dog Care Volunteer Role

Volunteering to help animals is extremely rewarding, but can also present some challenges. Below are the essential capabilities a volunteer needs to safely and effectively participate in a dog care role.

Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes, a high level of manual dexterity, and the ability to use both hands simultaneously.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged, wet, muddy, or slippery floors and outdoor surfaces.
- Ability to lift and carry at least 35 pounds.
- Ability to squat to leash/harness or pick up a dog, without putting a knee on the ground, and move from a squat to standing without using one's hands to push off the ground.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time (up to two hours).
- Average vision to move safely throughout the campus, be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, be able to read instructions and animals' paperwork.
- Average sense of smell and touch in order to assess body condition of cats, and to note signs of illness or injury.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to handle and restrain animals up to 75 pounds with extreme caution and care. This requires steadiness of hands and body, good balance, average coordination, physical strength, and mental alertness.
- Ability to work in the presence of peanut butter, cat, dog, and small animal dander, as well as cleaning chemicals.
- Ability to deal with strong unpleasant odors, fleas, feces, and possible wounds on animals in our care.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.
- Ability to bend, lean, and stoop to reach into cabinets, shelves, and kennels at ground level.
- Ability to push carts of laundry; load and unload washer and dryer; fold clean laundry and put away, reaching cabinets and shelves from ground level up to 6 feet, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to reach down into a tub, laundry cart, or kennel to complete grooming, cleaning, and sanitation procedures as needed.
- Possess an immune system strong enough to tolerate exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.

Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember, and follow both verbal and written instructions and procedures.
- High level reading, writing, spelling, and communication skills and ability to effectively communicate in English as necessary to complete volunteer duties.
- Possess problem-solving capability and ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to evaluate an animal's response to handling and safeguard against animal bites or scratches.
- Ability to recognize potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals, must be able to remain calm with animals that are upset; show good judgment; and act appropriately in these situations.

Emotional Capabilities

- Ability to handle constructive criticism.
- Ability to cope in a highly emotionally charged environment when animals arrive abandoned or abused, as well as with the reality that some animals in our care may be euthanized.
- Ability to understand the Irvine Animal Care Center's policies and positions regarding animal welfare.
- Ability and willingness to accurately and supportively represent these policies and positions when on duty, or when otherwise representing the IACC.

Level of Supervision:

- Work with minimal supervision while recognizing limitations in knowledge, ability, and permission.
- Willingness to ask for help when needed or when unsure.
- Work independently for long periods, work as a team with other volunteers and staff, and be able to provide a basic level of quality customer service to visitors.

Other

- All animal care positions involve some cleaning and can involve the use of hazardous or toxic chemicals.
- Practice cooperation and open communication with staff and other volunteers.
- Promote trust and behave with integrity.
- Think constructively and focus on positive problem-solving.
- The purpose of the volunteer program is to support staff in making the center a top-tier shelter.