



PALM VALLEY
ANIMAL SOCIETY

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Community Engagement & Education Department

pvastx.org · volunteer@pvastx.org

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WELCOME TO THE PVAS FAMILY

We are honored to have you become a Lifesaving Volunteer here at Palm Valley Animal Society (PVAS), under the supervision of the Community Engagement & Education Department (CEED). This handbook introduces you to PVAS and provides an overview of the Volunteer Program.

As the program grows, our department may change, and modifications to policies and procedures in this handbook may follow. Any changes will be communicated to all volunteers.

As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to become familiar with and abide by the guidelines in this handbook and any other agreements or policies provided. Questions? Contact a CEED Coordinator.

MISSION STATEMENT

Palm Valley Animal Society's mission is to provide lifesaving care, comfort, and compassion to animals in need by engaging the hearts, hands, and minds of our community.



FACILITIES & CONTACT

TRENTON CENTER	LAURIE P. ANDREWS CENTER
2501 W Trenton Rd Edinburg, TX 78539 (956) 686-1141	2451 N Expressway 281 Edinburg, TX 78541 (956) 720-4563

VOLUNTEER HOURS

PVAS is open to the public **12:00 PM – 6:00 PM Sun–Thu** and **12:00 PM – 7:00 PM Fri–Sat**. Volunteer hours run **9:30 AM – 6:00 PM daily, 7 days a week**. Events and special opportunities may offer hours outside these windows. Always check the Volunteer Portal for exact shift times.

CONTACT US

Reach a CEED Coordinator at volunteer@pvastx.org or call/text **(956) 478-9881** or **(956) 250-8300**. For in-person inquiries, stop by the Laurie P. Andrews Center.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

CAT DEPARTMENT

Cat Posse

Volunteers take care of cats in our shelter — cleaning kennels, feeding, replacing litter, and providing clean bedding. Before volunteering in any Cat Posse shift, you **must** complete the mandatory **Cat Onboarding Training** at the Laurie P. Andrews Center. Register through the Volunteer Portal.

Cat Room Assistance

Assist our Animal Care Technicians with feeding, cleaning kennels, and socializing cats.

Ringworm Wardens

Help care for cats undergoing medical observation or treatment — feeding, kennel cleaning, and health monitoring.

PetSmart Cat Care

PVAS cats at PetSmart (10th & Trenton) need check-ins 3 times a week — feeding, cleaning, and socialization.



DOG DEPARTMENT**Dog Squad**

Volunteers clean kennels, feed dogs, walk them, and assist with daily dog care. **Dog Care Training is mandatory** before interacting with any dog. Register through the Volunteer Portal.

Puppy Room Assistance

Help our Animal Care Technicians with feeding, cleaning kennels, and socializing puppies.

ACT Assistance

Partner with our Animal Care Technicians to clean and feed adult dogs.

Dog Walking

Take dogs out for walks to keep them socialized and enriched. Requires 18+, completed Dog Onboarding Training, and the 5-hour Fear Free Shelter Training Course. Volunteers may also assist the Enrichment Staff by walking dogs to and from playgroup areas.



MEDICAL & CLINIC — SHELTER ESSENTIALS

MEDICAL & CLINIC DEPARTMENT

Clinic Assistance

Assist our Medical Team during monthly Spay & Neuter surgeries. Duties include cleaning and organizing medical instruments, restocking blankets and towels, cleaning kennels, monitoring pets post-recovery, and drawing vaccines.

SHELTER ESSENTIALS TEAM

Shelter Greeter

The first face visitors see. Sign them in, direct them to the right department, and offer brief tours.

Laundry Crew

Run laundry loads and organize clean towels, blankets, and pet beds so every animal has a clean, comfortable space.

Bowl Washing Crew

Keep pet bowls clean at both locations. Simple, important, always needed.

Maintenance Assistance

Help our Maintenance Team with tasks like fixing tarps and kennels, collecting trash, loading and unloading vans, cleaning vans, and organizing the maintenance garage.



RESCUE & FOSTER DEPARTMENT

RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Our rescue team always needs volunteers for transport prep, load-up, crate building, van prep, paperwork, van cleaning, and riding along.

Freedom Drivers

Help transport pets in urgent need of placement — locally or long distance. Using your own vehicle? You cover expenses and must have a valid driver's license. Driving a PVAS vehicle requires being 21+ and a valid license to be added to our insurance policy.

Freedom Riders

Passengers are occasionally needed to monitor animals, assist with potty breaks, and help with bottle feeding. Contact your CEED Coordinator directly to sign up.



FOSTER DEPARTMENT

Earn volunteer hours by fostering a pet in need. Register at pvastx.org/foster. Hours begin the day you pick up your foster. You must complete the full agreed foster term and adhere to all foster policies to receive hours. Questions? Contact foster@pvastx.org or your CEED Coordinator.

Court-appointed volunteers are welcome to foster but cannot receive service hours for fostering.

Tails Around Town

Take a shelter dog on a field trip for a few hours to half a day. Available at both locations. Must be 18+, have valid photo ID, and sign an agreement. Visit pvastx.org/tails-around-town for details.

Pawjama Party

Foster a long-stay shelter dog for up to 4 nights on Fridays or Saturdays — available at both locations. Give a dog a real break and earn hours. Visit pvastx.org/overnight-foster-program for details.

EVENTS & AT-HOME VOLUNTEERING

EVENTS

Community Clinic

Monthly low-cost vaccine clinic. Assist with greeting families, directing traffic, drawing vaccines, payment facilitation, pet registration, and check-ins.

Pet Pantry

Drive-through food distribution for families in need. Help direct traffic, distribute food, and greet families.

Surgery Days

Large-scale spay & neuter events. Assist vet staff with post-op procedures, sanitizing surgical tools, and client registration.

PetSmart Weekend Adoptions

Weekend adoption events at PetSmart (Trenton Rd & 10th). Advocate for adoptable pets and share information about PVAS programs.

Pop-Up Adoption Events

On-site and off-site adoption events throughout the community. Help prepare, set up, and represent PVAS.

Community Outreach Events

Career fairs, nonprofit fairs, and more. Share information about PVAS programs and services with the community.

AT-HOME VOLUNTEERING

Make a difference without coming to the shelter. Ask a CEED Coordinator about:

- Donating items (based on current shelter needs)
- Clerical / data entry work
- DIY treats and enrichment items
- Fundraising events
- And more as the program grows

For volunteers interested in donating or fundraising, consider hosting a community donation drive. Contact a CEED Coordinator to connect with our Development Team.

REGISTRATION & ELIGIBILITY

HOW TO REGISTER

- 1 Apply online at pvastx.org/volunteer. Complete the volunteer application form.
- 2 A CEED Coordinator will review your application. Allow 1–3 business days for a response.
- 3 If accepted, you will receive an email with next steps to begin your lifesaving volunteer journey.

IMPORTANT: Enter a valid email address and check your inbox — including your spam folder — for instructions.

JUNIOR VOLUNTEERS — AGES 11–13

Junior Volunteers ages 11–13 are welcome at PVAS. A parent or legal guardian **must be on-site at all times** during every shift.

Junior Volunteers may:

- Socialize cats
- Wash pet bowls
- Run laundry
- Make enrichment treats

Junior Volunteers may **not**:

- Work in dog kennels
- Assist in medical roles

Both the parent/guardian and child must complete the registration process. The parent/guardian must sign the Junior Volunteer portion of the Volunteer Service Agreement, which will be emailed upon registration.

VOLUNTEERS AGES 14–17

Minors ages 14–17 must register online. A parent or legal guardian must sign and submit the Minor Consent Form portion of the Volunteer Service Agreement, which will be emailed upon registration.

COURT-APPOINTED VOLUNTEERS

Court-appointed volunteers are held to the same standards as all other volunteers and will be treated with the same respect.

PVAS does **not** accept court-appointed volunteers with offenses involving abuse, assault, weapons, harassment, or any offense that endangers persons, animals, or children. All offenses are reviewed; PVAS reserves the right to deny service.

Court-appointed volunteers must:

- Abide by the full Volunteer Handbook
- Schedule an appointment with a CEED Coordinator to have their yellow card or official documents signed
- Wear the volunteer t-shirt and name badge at all times
- Sign in and out every visit
- Have the reporting supervisor sign their CSR Timesheet each day

Court-appointed volunteers CANNOT earn hours through fostering, donating, at-home volunteering, transport, Tails Around Town, or Pawjama Party. PVAS does not offer 2-for-1 hours. Hours will not be approved without proper signatures. Volunteers without their shirt and badge will not be permitted to work.

POLICIES & CONDUCT

SCHEDULING

All volunteer time must be scheduled. Pick up a shift through the Volunteer Portal at pvastx.org/volunteer. If an opportunity is unavailable, maximum capacity may have been reached.

ATTENDANCE

Show up on time and complete your scheduled shift. You must remain on-site unless your role requires off-site work. Clock out for any breaks. If you need to cancel, contact a CEED Coordinator or email volunteer@pvastx.org. After **2 no-call-no-shows**, a Coordinator will counsel you. A third occurrence may result in termination of volunteer status.

KEEPING YOUR ACCOUNT ACTIVE

Volunteers must contribute a minimum of **5 hours per month** to remain active. Two consecutive months of inactivity will result in your account being archived. Contact your CEED Coordinators to request reactivation.

GROUP VOLUNTEERS

Groups are always welcome. Contact the Community Engagement Department to register your group and discuss available dates. All groups must apply online. Submission does not guarantee participation, date, or time.

DOCUMENTATION FOR HOURS

Volunteers needing hours verified for school or community service must meet with a CEED Coordinator or Manager — the only individuals authorized to sign documentation. Schedule an appointment at: booking.setmore.com/scheduleappointment/rabec1631310494613. Walk-ins and same-day letters are not issued. A 10-minute grace period applies.

DRESS CODE

- Volunteer t-shirt and badge required at all times. No tank tops or crop tops.
- Long pants or jeans required. No leggings or torn jeans. Shorts by Coordinator approval only.
- Closed-toe shoes only. No Crocs, sandals, or house shoes.
- No large rings, dangling earrings, or necklaces — safety hazard with animals.
- Caps and sunglasses permitted if in good taste with no vulgar imagery.
- Sweaters and jackets permitted if appropriate.

DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY

PVAS is a drug- and alcohol-free environment. Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any impairing substance on-site will result in **automatic termination** and possible loss of hours.

STANDARD OF CONDUCT

By volunteering with PVAS, you agree to support our mission, vision, and goals. You are expected to conduct yourself professionally on and off duty — including refraining from publicly disparaging PVAS operations or engaging in behavior that could harm the organization's reputation with donors, partners, or the community. **Any abuse toward humans or animals will not be tolerated.**

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Violation of PVAS volunteer policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The standard process includes a verbal warning followed by termination if corrective action is not taken. PVAS reserves the right to terminate without prior warning when circumstances warrant.

"Save an Animal's Life Today, so they can Save a Human's Life Tomorrow."

Thank you for choosing to be a lifesaving volunteer with Palm Valley Animal Society. It is through your support, dedication, and care that we are able to carry out our mission and continue saving the lives of pets in our community. We look forward to working alongside you.

Questions not addressed in this handbook? Contact us at **volunteer@pvastx.org** or call/text **(956) 478-9881** or **(956) 250-8300**.