

**Homeward Bound**  
*Addison County's Humane Society*



## **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



**THE Homeward Bound MISSION:** The mission of Homeward Bound, Addison County's Humane Society, is to educate the community and improve the lives of animals, alleviate their suffering, and elevate their status in society. We safeguard, rescue, shelter, heal, adopt and advocate for animals in need, while inspiring community action and compassion on their behalf.

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**Welcome to Homeward Bound,  
Addison County's Humane Society!**

We are very happy that you have chosen to join our team of volunteers. Our volunteers partner with staff to help accomplish the organization's mission. You are a valued member of our team and your contributions make a difference to our staff and animals.

Enclosed in this handbook is information about Homeward Bound and an orientation to our volunteer program. This handbook is meant to assist you in your volunteer duties. It addresses organizational policies, workplace standards, and expectations that you need to understand in order to succeed in your volunteer role. Please read the information carefully and bring any questions or concerns you have to the Executive Director. We can work together to achieve success!

**ABOUT US:**

Homeward Bound was founded in 1975. We are a private non-profit organization. We receive no financial support from any national or local humane organization, nor do we receive any United Way funding. Our programs are supported solely by donations, memberships and fundraising events.

Homeward Bound is an open-admission shelter that takes in approximately 750 animals a year from Addison County and beyond. We accept animals that owners can no longer care for and we accept animals that are found as stray and we do not charge fees for any animal brought to us. All of the animals brought to us receive TLC from a dedicated animal care staff and routine or necessary medical care including vaccines and parasite control. All the animals are spayed and neutered if necessary and we address behavioral challenges in a variety of ways.

We partner with area veterinarians and other humane groups in Addison County and beyond to address the challenges of pet overpopulation and provide education and assistance to support responsible pet ownership.

**OUR EXPECTATIONS:**

At Homeward Bound we take very seriously the responsibility of caring for and re-homing the unwanted animals that come through our doors. Owners have placed the ultimate trust in us to provide for their pets and people who bring strays to our doorstep do so because they trust us to give the animal its best chance at a healthy and safe future.

As a volunteer, all of your actions and words have the power to contribute to the community's trust in us and we expect that you will behave in such a way that you help spread and strengthen the support

we enjoy. We expect that you will take your training seriously, ask questions when you need clarification, be respectful of policies and protocols, and follow appropriate channels of communication when you have questions or concerns. *One last note: a major expectation of volunteers includes acceptance of shelter policies and staff decision making.*

**ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER:**

A volunteer is a member of a team of people who provides services, without expectation or right to compensation, under staff supervision and direction. As a volunteer, you will perform many tasks that enable our employees to focus on their more specialized functions.

Volunteers provide an invaluable service which greatly impacts how we are able to care for the animals in our shelter. You really do make a difference!

**VOLUNTEER POSITIONS, COMMITMENT, & SCHEDULING:**

We understand that volunteers are motivated by the desire to be as helpful as possible but we expect that you will never go beyond the boundaries of the area in which you have been trained. If you perform a task which is not appropriate for a volunteer or for which you have not been trained, you may put yourself, the animals, and/or staff at risk. We expect that volunteers will make a good faith commitment of 3 months to Homeward Bound.

In an effort to make our volunteer program as user friendly as possible, only select volunteer positions require signing up for specific shifts. Volunteers often find it the most rewarding to serve at least once a week as it provides the opportunity to develop relationships with the animals, staff, and other volunteers.

**STAFF AND HOURS OF OPERATION:**

Homeward Bound is made up of the animal shelter and the administration offices of the humane society. The animal shelter's hours may change seasonally. Currently the adoption center is open 12-5 Tuesday-Saturday and the animal care staff is scheduled as needed from 8-5 Tuesday-Saturday and 8-4 Sunday-Monday. Hours are subject to change as needed.

The administration offices are staffed Monday-Friday 8-4. Administration staff includes the Executive Director, Development Director, and Administrative Assistant. All other positions are shelter staff. Below are the names of our staff and their positions.

On occasion the shelter closes to the public and volunteers due to **inclement weather**. When this occurs, shelter staff will announce the closure on our website and Facebook pages. Please be certain to check either of these sites before heading out to volunteer. Always be safe.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Phone: 388-1100

Fax: 382-9320

Executive Director: Jessica Danyow  
[Jessica@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:Jessica@homewardboundanimals.org)

Development Director: Hannah Manley  
[hmanley@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:hmanley@homewardboundanimals.org)

Administrative Assistant: Michelle Shubert  
[mshubert@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:mshubert@homewardboundanimals.org)

Volunteer Liaison & Reception: Nance Hall  
[volunteer@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:volunteer@homewardboundanimals.org)

Animal Care Coordinator: Chris Ouellette  
[chriso@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:chriso@homewardboundanimals.org)

TNR Coordinator: Caitlin Sheldon  
[shelter@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:shelter@homewardboundanimals.org)

Adoption Counselors: Nancy Ward, Courtney Thorn, Carol Fenimore  
[shelter@homewardboundanimals.org](mailto:shelter@homewardboundanimals.org)

Canine Coordinator: Terri Phelps

Shelter Staff: Caitlin Sheldon, Siara Bates, Emily Schreffler, Jameson Haggert, Heather Schuettner, Lindsay Beattie.

**TRAINING:**

Training is required for all volunteers interested in working at the shelter. It is expected that volunteers will make a good faith commitment of 3 months. Volunteers working Special Events and Outreach will receive training as it pertains to their required duties.

At your orientation, all volunteers receive a manual on safe dog handling or a manual on safe cat handling, depending on the volunteer position. Reading these manuals before you come in to volunteer is required.

**DOG VOLUNTEER TRAINING:**

It is important for dog volunteers, both those who only walk the dogs and those who provide in-kennel enrichment, to understand the color signage system in the kennels. All trained volunteers may work with the dogs who have **green** tags on their kennels. Volunteers must ask staff for permission, supervision, and guidance to work with dogs who have **yellow** tags. **Volunteers may not work with dogs who have red tags.**

**PERSONAL PETS:**

While Homeward Bound staff makes every effort to ensure that the animals volunteers are interacting with are healthy, we cannot guarantee that they do not have something that might be contagious to your own animals. We recommend that you practice good hygiene, including washing your hands and changing your clothes/shoes before interacting with your pets at home.

**VETERINARIAN REFERRAL POLICY:**

Volunteers of Homeward Bound will not refer or recommend specific veterinarians or veterinary practices to visitors, callers or adopters. We also ask that you refrain from making referrals when the person is asking because of your position as a volunteer at Homeward Bound.

This policy protects Homeward Bound from the perception of favoritism and from liability in the event of a negative experience. It also recognizes that Homeward Bound gets support from the entire veterinary community and appreciates the support of all veterinarians.

**VOLUNTEERS AND ADOPTIONS:**

Volunteers are subject to the same adoption policy as staff. The adoption of the first animal shall be at a 50% discount. If two animals are adopted at the same time, the first adoption shall be at the discount and the second adoption shall be full price. All subsequent adoptions shall be full price.

**VOLUNTEERS AND EUTHANASIA:**

Homeward Bound is an open admission shelter and we accept all animals in need of shelter and care, regardless of ultimate potential to be rehabilitated and adopted.

The Homeward Bound open door policy means we accept injured animals, animals with histories of aggression, or other problems that may prevent us from adopting them into new homes. When we have to

make the decision to euthanize, we base it on the animal's quality of life, and the safety of our staff and the community.

Decisions to euthanize are made by the Executive Director and Animal Care Coordinator, with input from visiting veterinarians. In the event that a volunteer wonders where a certain animal is, you are welcome to ask the Executive Director. We expect that you will not ask other staff questions nor make comments or publicly express opinions about euthanasia decisions.

### **SIGN-IN PROCEDURES:**

When you arrive to volunteer at Homeward Bound, you will start by entering your name and time of arrival onto the log sheet located at the front desk, and when you leave you will enter your time of departure on the same log. The purpose of this log is so the staff knows who is in the building at all times in case of an emergency. Volunteer name tags are located in a basket on the front desk; please put on a name tag on when you arrive and return it to the box when you depart.

We use an online volunteer hours tracking program called *Track It Forward*. Every time you volunteer you will need to log the amount of time you spent by logging into your *Track It Forward* account. There are multiple ways to do this; please refer to the *Track It Forward* information sheet towards the back of the handbook for instructions. You will receive an email from *Track It Forward* a day or two before your scheduled orientation to finish setting up your account. If you did not receive the email or need assistance with *Track It Forward*, please contact Michelle Shubert, the Administrative Assistant.

Adult/youth volunteers that visit together will have one account. Please record your combined hours for every visit by making an entry for each individual volunteer in the group.

It is very important to log your hours every time you visit; tracking hours allows us to quantitatively demonstrate the level of support we receive from the community, it allows us to determine the true cost of the programs and services we provide, and reporting volunteer hours is essential in securing funding.

### **APPROPRIATE DRESS:**

Homeward Bound is a professional organization dealing with the public on a day-to-day basis. Volunteers and staff must therefore dress appropriately for the work they do. Footwear must be sturdy with non-

slip soles and covered toes. Blue jeans and shorts are allowed but we do not permit cut-off shorts, ripped clothing, flip flops or open toed shoes.

**PERSONAL BELONGINGS:**

We advise you to lock your purse and/or other personal items in your car. We cannot be responsible for missing items. Lunch and drinks can be placed in the refrigerator in the conference room kitchen.

If you need to use your cell phone during your volunteer shift, please do so respectfully.

**OFF LIMITS:**

Any area marked as Staff Only, or that is temporarily marked “Do Not Enter” is off limits unless you have been expressly permitted access.

**PARKING:**

Parking is available throughout the shelter lot. Please be aware of other vehicles and foot traffic when parking. Please DO NOT park in front of the dumpster or double doors by the dog kennel.

**SMOKING:**

Homeward Bound is a smoke free workplace in accordance with Vermont law. Smoking is permitted only in your personal vehicle. Smoking materials shall be disposed of properly.

**TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION PROCEDURES:**

If, at any time, a volunteer violates the policies of Homeward Bound: Addison County’s Humane Society, or is deemed unfit for volunteering for any reason, Homeward Bound: Addison County’s Humane Society reserves the right to terminate his or her association with our organization.

The following is a sample of behaviors that would likely lead to termination:

- Alcohol on breath/under the influence of drugs
- Bringing drugs/alcohol onto shelter property
- Using abusive language
- Stealing
- Threatening, agitating, or intimidating employees or volunteers
- Sexual harassment
- Not following prescribed work procedures
- Failure to follow safety practices

*\* Please note that anyone found to have physically abused an animal in the shelter will be asked to discontinue their volunteer work at Homeward Bound immediately and permanently. In certain circumstances, criminal charges may be filed.*

In the event that a volunteer's behavior leads to termination, the staff will make every effort to provide clear warning to the volunteer, and to conduct an investigation into the allegation before termination.

If, for whatever reason, you decide to end your volunteer relationship with Homeward Bound, **we ask you provide the staff with a customary two weeks notice.** If you are ending the relationship for reasons related to the volunteer experience, rather than personal reasons, we ask that you arrange for a meeting with the Executive Director so we may learn from you and improve the experience for future volunteers.

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:**

Homeward Bound: Addison County's Humane Society has a zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. Physical assault, verbal threats and non-verbal threatening behavior are not permitted or tolerated. Swearing, yelling and other intimidating behavior is also not permitted. Conflicts and disagreements should be discussed respectfully and calmly.

Any volunteer who is a subject in a restraining order should inform the Shelter Manager or Executive Director of the order if it interferes with his/her ability to perform his/her job.

Any volunteer who may be at risk of violence from a non-employee should discuss the situation with the Executive Director to see if any additional safety measures may need to be taken.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT:**

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, verbal or visual sexual advances, requests, or conduct. Sexual harassment is unprofessional, unacceptable, and illegal. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, which is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**SAFETY:**

Homeward Bound is committed to providing a safe, healthy and hazard-free work environment. Volunteers are required to report any safety concerns, unsafe conditions and injuries to the Executive Director immediately.

If you experience any kind of injury while acting in your capacity as a volunteer for Homeward Bound, please ask to fill out an Incidence Report Form immediately.

## **HOMEWARD BOUND SAFETY POLICY**

The Board of Directors of the Homeward Bound is committed to creating a safe and healthy work environment for all staff and volunteers. Good faith efforts will be made to meet the acceptable standards of operations as established by OSHA and the Vermont Department of Labor and the Vermont Department of Agriculture.

### **GENERAL SAFETY RULES**

The following general health and safety rules have been developed for employees and volunteers in response to specific hazards identified in the day to day operations of the animal shelter.

In case of emergency, we are served by a 9-1-1 system.

### **CHEMICAL EXPOSURE:**

Homeward Bound employees and volunteers may be exposed to various chemicals while cleaning. To avoid contact with these chemicals when in use, staff and volunteers may wear protective equipment that may include plastic gloves, rubber boots, breathing apparatus and safety goggles. If an employee or volunteer is accidentally exposed to chemicals the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) should be consulted. All employees/volunteers must wash after handling animals or chemicals. Pregnant employees/volunteers are advised not to handle insecticides (including flea products) or cat feces.

### **NOISE:**

High noise levels may exist in kennel areas. Staff/volunteers may wear ear protection devices while working in a high noise areas.

### **PHYSICAL HAZARDS:**

Physical hazards may exist during the operation of the shelter. The following precautions are to be taken by employees/volunteers to prevent injury:

- ❖ Wet floor signs must be posted after washing or spills.
- ❖ Appropriate clothing and footwear (no sandals or open toes) must be worn.
- ❖ Proper lifting techniques should be used to move animals.

- ✪ Individuals should not lift animals over forty pounds without assistance.
- ✪ Walkways should be cleared of snow, ice, and debris.
- ✪ Employees/Volunteers will be trained before walking dogs.
- ✪ In the event of a dog fight, volunteers should not put themselves between dogs or at risk in any way but should first call staff that will use proper techniques to stop a dog fight. Water, noise, brooms or other poles may be used to separate dogs.
- ✪ All animal bites must be reported to a supervisor immediately and an IRF form filled out.
- ✪ Volunteers are not to handle or have contact with animals in kennels or cages where it has been noted that the animal is aggressive or otherwise dangerous.

### **1. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

All accidents & injuries should be reported and an accident report completed. Accident report forms are available at the front desk. The Executive Director will meet with employees & volunteers to review the incident and make recommendations to avoid future accidents. If necessary, the Homeward Bound Safety Manual will be revised to address this type of incident.

### **2. VOLUNTEER COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

If a volunteer has concerns or complaints about adherence to the safety procedures set forth by Homeward Bound, he/she may contact the Executive Director. The volunteer has the right to remain anonymous. The Executive Director will then meet to review the complaint and determine the appropriate corrective action if such action is warranted. A report on the complaint will be filed in the Employee Safety Procedure Complaint file. The Executive Director shall decide if a revision to the Homeward Bound Safety Manual is in order. Complaints heard about Homeward Bound from the general public should be reported to the Executive Director.

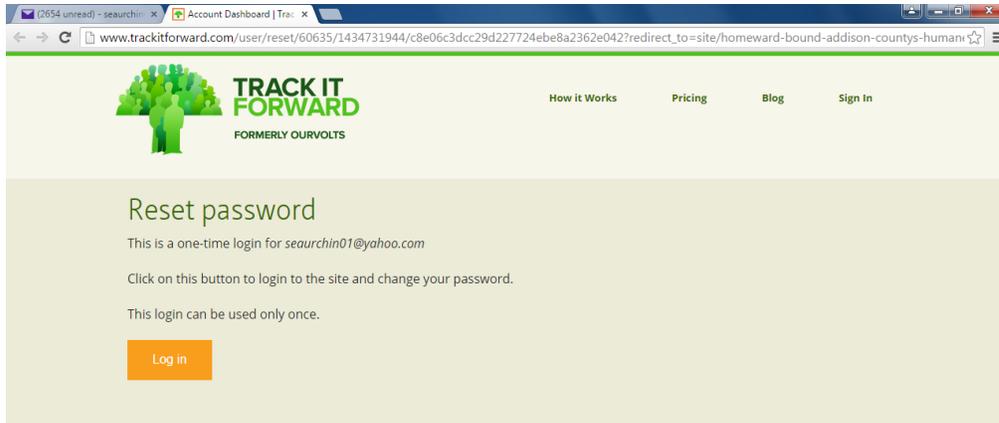
### **3. VOLUNTEER SAFETY TRAINING**

All volunteers are required to read and sign this safety policy. Signing this policy constitutes an understanding of the policies and an agreement to abide by them. In the case of minors under the age of 18, the safety policy shall be signed by a parent or legal guardian.

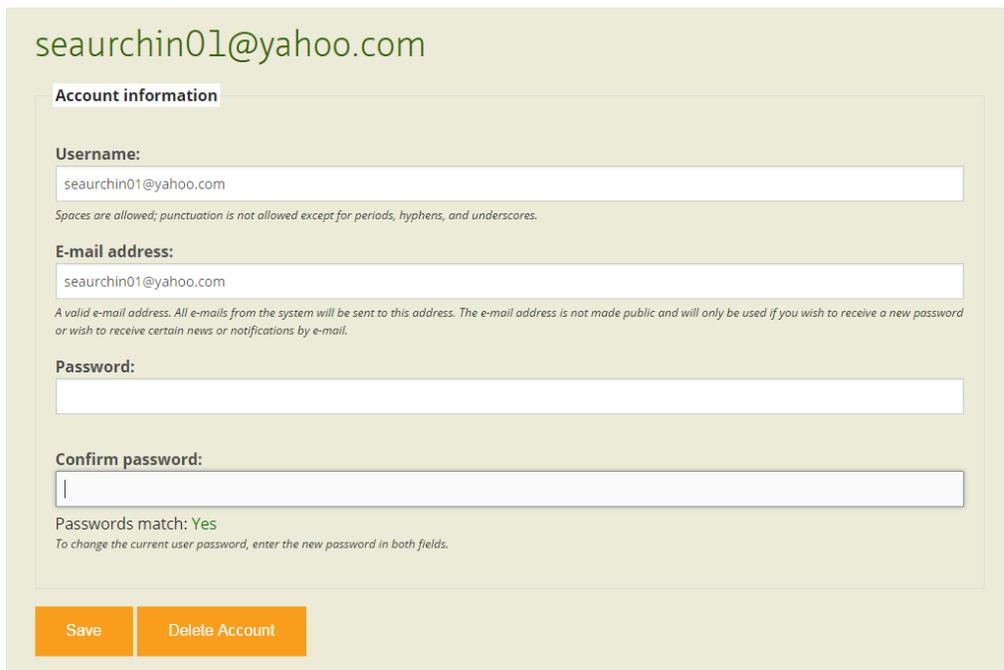
***First Aid kits are located in the cabinets in the first and second floor bathrooms. Please notify staff of all injuries.***

## Track It Forward Instructions

To get started, an account will be created for you within the Track It Forward website. You will receive an email from Track It Forward with instructions on how to finish setting up your account. The subject of the email will read, “Account created to track your volunteer hours for Homeward Bound.” Open the email, click on the link, and it will take you to this window:



Select “Log In,” the orange button at the bottom. It will open a window where you need to create a password. After creating your password select “Save.”

A screenshot of the account creation form on the Track It Forward website. The form is titled "seurchin01@yahoo.com" and is labeled "Account information". It contains the following fields and instructions: "Username:" with a text input field containing "seurchin01@yahoo.com" and the instruction "Spaces are allowed; punctuation is not allowed except for periods, hyphens, and underscores."; "E-mail address:" with a text input field containing "seurchin01@yahoo.com" and the instruction "A valid e-mail address. All e-mails from the system will be sent to this address. The e-mail address is not made public and will only be used if you wish to receive a new password or wish to receive certain news or notifications by e-mail."; "Password:" with an empty text input field; and "Confirm password:" with an empty text input field. Below the fields, it says "Passwords match: Yes" and "To change the current user password, enter the new password in both fields." At the bottom of the form are two orange buttons: "Save" and "Delete Account".

After saving, your account will be up and running! It will take you directly to the “Log Hours” window, which is the screen where you will enter your hours every time you volunteer.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "/homeward-bound-addison-countys-humane-society". The page title is "eward Bound, Addison County's Humane". Below the title is a navigation menu with links for "Log Hours", "Timesheet", "Charts", "Event Sign-ups", and "Account". The "Log Hours" form includes a "Hours:" dropdown menu set to "1.5", a "Date Volunteered:" section with dropdowns for "Jun", "19", and "2015", an "Activity:" dropdown menu set to "Dogs", and a "Notes:" text area. An orange "Submit Time" button is located at the bottom of the form.

### **Logging Your Hours**

There are multiple ways you can access the system to record your hours:

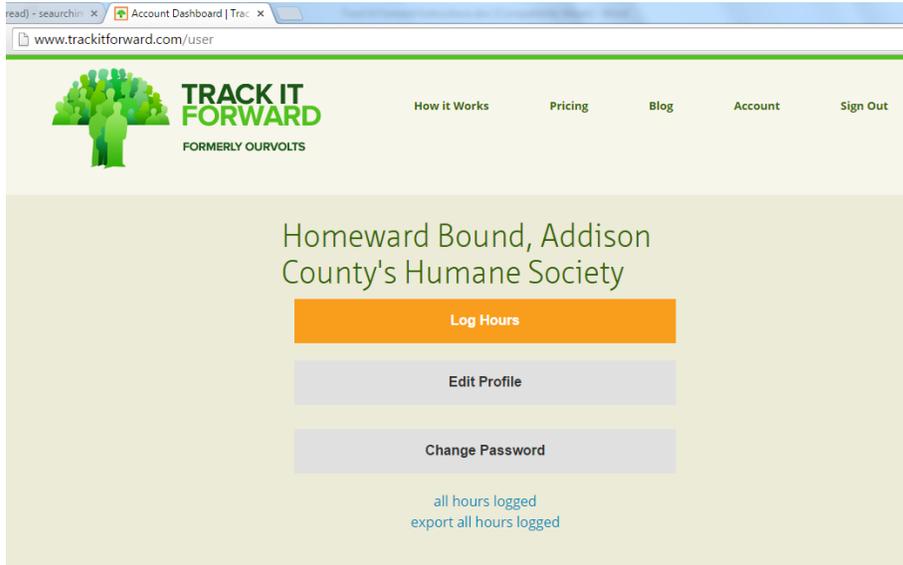
- 1) From your iPad or cell phone via the app.** Access the App Store on your Apple device, search for “Volunteer Time Tracking.” The icon looks like a green tree made of people, and the publisher is Our Volts. If you can’t find the app look to see if the search is pulling both iPhone and iPad apps, not just one or the other. Download the free app.

If you phone is NOT an iPhone you can download the app from Play Store (Google Play), searching for the same app as above. Open the app and sign in!

- 2) From your home computer, lap top, cell phone, or tablet via the website.** See below.

Go to [www.trackitforward.com](http://www.trackitforward.com). On the home page, select “Sign In” in the top right corner. Enter your email and password, then select “Log In.”

You will see the following page. Click the button “Log Hours,” it will take you to the “Log Hours “ screen you can view above.



Once you have signed in logging your hours is very simple; select the number of hours you volunteered (you must log hours in increments of one half hour, so you will need to round off to the nearest hour/half hour), select your activity from the drop down list, leave a note (optional), and then click submit!