

Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Our Mission:

To be a community-centered shelter that supports the human-animal bond through compassionate care, adoption, education, and advocacy.

Our Vision:

- A community that is nurturing and compassionate towards all animals.
- A community where no animal suffers from abuse or neglect.
- A community where companion animals are treated as lifelong, valued family members.

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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 850 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 6 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 Monday-Sunday. 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 (See extensions below)

Fax: 382-9320

Executive Director: Jessica Danyow, ext. 222

Jessica@homewardboundanimals.org

Shelter Manager: Carly Lehrer, ext. 223

clehrer@homewardboundanimals.org

Volunteer Liaison Nance Hall, ext. 221

volunteer@homewardboundanimals.org

Administrative Assistant/Feline Care Coordinator: Michelle Shubert, ext. 232

mshubert@homewardboundanimals.org

Canine Coordinator: Caitlin Sheldon

Tphelps@homewardboundanimals.org

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 6 months. Volunteers working Special Events, Outreach or miscellaneous categories will receive training as it pertains to their required duties.

At your orientation, all shelter 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.

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 Shelter Manager, with input from visiting veterinarians. In the event that a volunteer wonders where a certain animal is, you are welcome to ask the Shelter Manager or 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, please make sure that you sign in and out in the Volunteer Sign-In notebook. We tabulate volunteer hours monthly so it is important to record your hours.

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. Clothing must not be excessively revealing nor bear potentially offensive words, slogans, or writing. Volunteers are also expected to exercise proper personal hygiene.

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.