

Stamford Animal Control Center Volunteer Program

Welcome to the Stamford Animal Control Center (“ACC”), and thank you for your interest in joining our volunteer program. We value our volunteers and count on them to help socialize the animals in our care as well as facilitate adoptions, among other things.

In order for the volunteer program to operate efficiently, and to ensure maximum benefit is derived for the animals, the Stamford ACC expects its volunteers to be dependable and effective during their volunteer hours. Volunteers are asked to make an initial commitment of 6 months to our program, with a minimum of 8 hours in each month. Please note volunteers must be at least 18 years of age to participate in our Volunteer program.

Volunteer Application

Persons interested in volunteering should fill out an application. Applications are available at the ACC, 201 Magee Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902.

After your application has been submitted, and a background check has been conducted, our Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to arrange a one-on-one orientation to meet with the staff and to discuss the areas available for volunteer participation. Following the one-on-one orientation, you will be informed if you have been accepted into the Volunteer Program. Once accepted, your 6-month commitment will begin.¹

Stamford Animal Control Center Volunteer Policies and Procedures

The safety of the public and our volunteers is paramount while providing for the care of our animals. All volunteers will report directly to, and be under the supervision of, the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers must abide by the following policies and procedures and are required to report dangerous conditions or anything unusual to the Volunteer Coordinator or to an Animal Control Officer immediately.

Failure to obey these rules may result in termination of volunteer status.

- Animal Control Officers are in charge ALL of the time.
- While performing volunteer service on behalf of the ACC, volunteers are required to wear name tags.
- NO SMOKING is allowed in the building.
- Volunteers are not allowed to answer the telephone or interfere with the administrative operations of the ACC.
- Volunteers are not allowed to have keys to the Center or other City of Stamford property.
- Volunteers may not feed or give treats to any of the animals without permission from the Center’s Animal Control Officers or Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers must clean up after themselves in the kitchen, volunteer room, kennel, outside areas, etc.

- Volunteers are prohibited from performing duties performed by Animal Control Officers such as filling out adoption paperwork, responding to calls, evaluating animals, etc.
- No City of Stamford property, including animals at the ACC, may be taken home for any reason.

It is important to understand the potential risks of volunteering at the Animal Control Center to the volunteer as well as indirectly to pets that the volunteer has at home. These risks include, but are not limited to animal bites, infection, scarring, disfigurement, and Rabies, as well as Parvovirus, Leptospirosis, Kennel cough, and internal and external parasites such as round worm, tapeworm, fleas and ticks, and sarcoptic mange.

Dog Handling

Provide socialization, exercise, and basic training for the ACC dogs. Major responsibilities include walking dogs outdoors for exercise, using the required equipment and appropriate handling techniques, cleaning up after dogs, and teaching basic obedience in accordance with ACC training methods and policies.

Dog handlers must attend scheduled continuing education classes.

If you sign up for dog handling, you must be comfortable around all types of dogs and must commit to self-study of the volunteer manual, policies and procedures at home.

Dog Handlers must be able to:

- Safely handle large, strong dogs;
- must be comfortable working around and cleaning animal waste;
- must be physically able to do required tasks.

Dog handlers will be assigned dog walking duties by the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will provide the volunteers with information about any issues related to the dogs. The volunteers should also read the dogs' evaluation sheets prior to walking the dogs.

- Always lead dogs out through the kitchen or back door (never through front office doors). To avoid possible altercations between dogs, use caution and always check to see if another volunteer has a dog on the other side before going through the doorway.
- Always shut the front gate. This gate must be closed properly at all times.
- Don't allow dogs to pull, bite the leash, or jump up on you. If you need help addressing these behaviors, ask for help. Bad behavior is reinforced if ignored or not properly addressed.
- Dogs are not allowed to socialize/play with other dogs in order to prevent injuries.
- Dogs should be brushed after every walk. Working on any issues the dog may have (as indicated on the evaluation sheet) - such as fear of quick hand movements – or just basic obedience such as walk, sit, and stay is also recommended.

- Dogs may be exercised only in the fenced-in areas located in front of the shelter, or walked on a leash and choke collar in the Facilities Management area behind the shelter. Under NO circumstances may dogs be taken off the property or walked on the surrounding streets.
- Volunteers are not allowed to exercise any quarantined dogs, sick dogs, dogs with aggressive or questionable temperaments, dogs with "do not touch" signs on their cages, or any animal that the Animal Control Officers or the Volunteer Coordinator have not approved for volunteers to exercise.
- No dog may be left unattended while being shown to the public in the exercise pens; nor may a prospective adopter be allowed to handle the leash on a dog without Animal Control staff supervision. All meet and greets (family pets being introduced to a shelter dog) MUST be supervised by ACC staff.
- Please report to staff (as well as note on the sheet outside of the dog's kennel) anything unusual, such as:
 - blood in stool
 - bleeding sores or wounds
 - vomiting or diarrhea
 - acting lethargic
 - limping, dragging of leg, etc.
- If you are bitten, you must report the bite to staff immediately and provide the necessary information so that a bite report can be completed as is required by law.

It is of utmost importance to follow all rules and to report any unusual behaviors and illness to the Volunteer Coordinator and to an Animal Control Officer immediately. Failure to do so may not only cause injury to other animals but may also put another volunteer or the public at risk.

Cat Handling

Provide socialization and exercise for the Animal Control Center cats. Responsibilities include engaging cats/kittens in play exercise with toys, cuddling, utilizing our cat socialization room to give the cats time outside of their cages, cleaning up after the cats while the cats are outside of their cages. Cat handlers must be comfortable working around and cleaning animal waste, and must be able to bend and stoop.

- If you are scratched, you must report the scratch to staff immediately and provide the necessary information so that a scratch report can be completed, as is required by law.
- Kittens are NOT to be handled by the public until 6 weeks of age because their immune system is too weak and puts them at a high risk of infection. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Volunteers MUST wash their hands before and after touching EACH cat (sterilizer lotion is acceptable).
- Volunteers may not open the door to any cat cage until they know the cat's personality, and the cat gets to know them. The door to the room must be closed during this process to prevent escape.
- Volunteers should not take a cat into their arms until there is trust and a bond between volunteer and cat. A cat may be calm in its cage but, upon seeing other cats, may react differently.

When an animal first comes into the Animal Control Center, there is a notice published in the paper and the animal is held for a period of seven (7) days so that an owner can come forward. If an owner does not claim the animal within seven days of publication, the animal becomes city property and may be made available for adoption.

Time commitment and Reporting hours

Volunteers are required to commit to a minimum of eight (8) hours per month to the activities that align with the chosen volunteer role and provide additional volunteer time for special events or as may be needed.

All volunteer hours are scheduled, coordinated and recorded by the Volunteer Coordinator. If there is an event at which you will not be able to volunteer, or you become ill and will not be able to perform a task which you signed up for, please communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator and remove yourself from the calendar at least 48 hours in advance.

In the rare case of an emergency that comes up in a shorter timeframe, contact the Volunteer Coordinator via e-mail and phone. If you do not show up for a commitment, are late or cancel in a timeframe shorter than 48 hours, you will receive a warning. After the second warning you will be required to discuss the circumstances with the Animal Control Center Manager and the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers who do not meet the monthly requirements will receive one warning notice. If inactivity occurs again, they will be moved to inactive status and removed from the Program. Questions concerning volunteer status should be addressed to the Stamford Animal Control Center Volunteer Coordinator.

Off Limits Areas

Certain areas of the Animal Control Center are off-limits to volunteers. These include all quarantine areas, the kennel area, behind the desk of the office, and all personal offices.

Volunteers are not permitted to go into desks or look into paperwork or files. Volunteers are also prohibited from the use of City of Stamford employee computers. Volunteers are never allowed to answer the phone for the Animal Control Center, and may not open the Animal Control Center door to allow others (volunteers or the public) to enter if the door is locked.

No personal pets are allowed within the Animal Control Facility or on the Center's property. Family and friends may not accompany volunteers while they are participating in Stamford Animal Control Center training or working in a volunteer capacity.

Handling of Animals

Volunteers should ask the Volunteer Coordinator or the Animal Control Officers before handling the animal for the first time.

Volunteers may handle animals only if the Volunteer Coordinator has approved them for animal handling, and after they have been informed about any issues there may be with an unfamiliar animal.

Volunteers may only handle animals when the Volunteer Coordinator or another ACC staff member designated to fill in on a temporary basis for the Volunteer Coordinator is present at the Center to supervise their activities.

Privacy

Any information pertaining to Animal Control records and cases which you may learn (including names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) as a result of your position is confidential and may not be discussed with others. Under some circumstances, Animal Control staff may be prohibited from discussing with you certain specific details regarding cases that are under investigation or pending criminal court action. Volunteers are specifically prohibited from discussing any aspect of Animal Control records and cases with any representative of the media.

Conduct

As a Stamford Animal Control Center Volunteer, you are required to be familiar with the Center's policies and procedures. When dealing with the public, you must always be polite, courteous and helpful. It is the policy of the Stamford Animal Control Center to provide an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, as well as one that promotes equal opportunity and equitable treatment. Any type of harassment or discrimination based on a person's race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, etc. is prohibited.

Violence in the Workplace

It is the policy of the Stamford Animal Control Center to provide an environment for its volunteers that does not tolerate harassment and free from violent, aggressive or threatening behavior. Harassing behavior may be, but is not limited to, physical, verbal or visual harassment. The Stamford Animal Control Center prohibits the possession and use of firearms and other dangerous weapons by visitors and by volunteers while conducting volunteer business. Volunteers who carry dangerous weapons in their personal vehicles are prohibited from bringing or parking such vehicles on City property. Volunteers must immediately summon assistance from Animal Control Officers or call 911 if they are threatened or believe they are in imminent danger.

Drug-Free Workplace

The Stamford Animal Control Facility is a drug-free workplace. The Stamford Animal Control Center will take steps necessary to ensure that its volunteers perform their duties and responsibilities free of the influence of unlawful drugs and unimpaired by alcohol. The following activities are prohibited on the City premises or while conducting Stamford Animal Control Center business: the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance. No volunteer shall report for duty after having used a controlled substance which has not been legally prescribed by a health care practitioner. No volunteer shall report for duty while impaired from the consumption of alcohol.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any portion of the building. If you must smoke, you must do so off the Center grounds.

Discipline

Volunteers who commit violations of policy and procedure may be removed from the volunteer program. A meeting with the Animal Control Center Manager and the Volunteer Coordinator will be held to discuss further action or dismissal.

Other Ways to Help

If our Volunteer Program is not the right fit for you, there are still many ways to help our pets. Here are just some of the many ways you can get involved:

- Host a donation drive to solicit items from the Animal Control Center Wish List.
- Plan a Third-Party Event, where you and your friends/coworkers hold a fundraiser to benefit Animal Control Center animals.
- Encourage family, friends, and colleagues to adopt a wonderful new furry friend from the Animal Control Center.

For more information and other ways you can help, please contact the Stamford Animal Control Center at 203-977-4437.

Thank you for wanting to make a difference in the lives of our animals!

The following language will be inserted when the Webinar Training, Volunteer Orientation Week and In-Animal Control Center Training programs are in place:

Volunteer Orientation Week

We will schedule regular Volunteer Orientations at the Stamford ACC. The Orientation provides an important overview of our organization; gives specific information about our Volunteer Program, training, and opportunities. Only those applicants who have completed the one-on-one orientation and been accepted in the Volunteer program are invited to attend the volunteer orientation.

Webinar Training

Once you are accepted into our Volunteer Program, and as a form of continuing education, you will also receive instructions via email about how to proceed with Webinar Training. A webinar is short for Web-based presentation that is transmitted over the Internet. For your convenience, the trainings are recorded so you can attend the trainings from the comfort of your home or office. Volunteers will be periodically tested on the webinar content.

In-Animal Control Center Training

During the In-Animal Control Center Training, you will participate in hands-on training. Once you have passed your In-Animal Control Center Training, you will receive your Volunteer Packet with your volunteer supplies on your first volunteer shift. Your 6 month commitment will begin the week after your In-Animal Control Center Training.