

# 2025 Volunteer Handbook

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Hello and welcome!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Humane Society of El Paso. We're beyond excited to have you join our community, and we can't wait for you to experience the joy and impact of being part of our mission.

As a volunteer, you're stepping into a truly rewarding journey. Along the way, you'll meet compassionate people and connect with countless dogs and cats each with their own story. Some will make you laugh, others might steal your heart, and many will leave a lasting mark on your life. While you're helping them find hope and healing, you'll find that they give just as much back in return.

Here at HSEP, we deeply value every single hour you choose to spend with us. Your time, energy, and dedication directly contribute to brighter futures for the animals in our care. Simply put, we couldn't do it without you!

Volunteers are the heart of our organization. We hope you feel not only needed but truly appreciated every step of the way. On behalf of our entire team and all the furry friends you'll meet thank you for being here.

We're lucky to have you.

Warmly,  
**Cynthia Cruz**  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

**About the Humane Society of El Paso:**

The Humane Society of El Paso was originally founded in 1947 to tackle the rabies crisis in El Paso. Once the cases decreased, HSEP changed its mission. In the 1960s, the shelter became focused on pet overpopulation and homelessness.

In 2009, HSEP became the first no-kill shelter in our community. This means the shelter does not euthanize healthy or treatable animals, does not euthanize for space, and has a live release rate of at least 90 percent. Pets with untreatable health conditions, poor quality of life, and dangerous behavior issues may be euthanized. Throughout the many years of operation, one thing has remained the same. HSEP is dedicated to bettering the lives of homeless pets.

**Mission Statement:**

“To prevent suffering, neglect, abuse and cruelty to animals by providing information, raising public awareness of animal issues and promote responsible guardianship and kindness toward all living things.”

**Funding:**

The Humane Society of El Paso is a private 501(c) (3), non-profit organization. We rely solely on our service fees, donations, fundraisers, and grants for funding. We have no affiliation with the Humane Society of the United States, ASPCA, or any local animal rescue. We do not receive any funding from the city, state, or federal government.

## Contact Information

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## Key Staff

**Robert Shamy**

*Executive Director*

**Edgar Armendariz**

*Director of Operations*

**Courtney Roszak-Moore**

*Director of Marketing & Community Relations*

**Sandra Penrod**

*Associate Director of Administration*

**Samantha Gambill**

*Medical Manager*

**Vanessa Steele**

*Shelter Manager*

**Stephanie Jimenez**

*Foster Care Manager*

**Tania Dasilveira**

*Customer Service and Administration Manager*

**Mike Metzger**

*Facilities / Health & Safety Supervisor*

## **Roles of a Volunteer:**

The Humane Society of El Paso cares for nearly 2,000 homeless dogs and cats in a year. With a dedicated team of just over forty staff members, additional support is essential, especially during busy times at the shelter. That's where our volunteers make a vital difference.

A volunteer plays a crucial role at HSEP. You ensure the animals receive socialization, walks, a clean kennel, enrichment, and more!

As a volunteer, you are dedicating your time to HSEP. The staff understands that, so if you are more comfortable with cats, then you get to work with cats. If you would rather handle paperwork, we can get you there! Our goal is to give you the opportunity to volunteer in the area you love! HSEP tries to create a fun and welcoming environment for everyone, so we ask that volunteers remember to always be professional and polite.

The most important role of a volunteer is, and always will be, to help the shelter animals feel safe and cared for during their time here.

## **How to Become a Volunteer:**

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with HSEP! Now, let's get you started:

- Submit a volunteer Application
- Attend an orientation.
- Complete core training with a staff member to become a Whisker Warrior.
- Be able to work independently and on a team when needed.

**If you are between the ages of 13-15-years-old, a parent or guardian will need to complete the minor consent form on the volunteer application along with being present when your child volunteers.**

**HSEP does not accept volunteers under the age of 13-years-old.**

**Core Values:**

Adaptable  
Caring  
Compassionate  
Honest  
Motivated  
Open-Minded

Consistent  
Dependable  
Efficient  
Positive  
Respectful

**Often Heard & Used Acronyms**

HSEP - The Humane Society of El Paso  
CSA - Customer Service Associate  
KCA - Kennel Care Associate  
ACA - Animal Care Associate  
TNR - Trap, Neuter, & Return

MS - Mary Speer  
O.R. - Owner Requested Euthanasia  
D.R. - Disposal  
C.R. - Cremation

## Volunteer Tiers Overview

**Advancement beyond Core Training depends on your selected interest area.**

**Tier One: Whisker Warriors (Core Training)**

**Requirements:** Complete 20 hours of core training

- First 10 hours: Must be staff-supervised
- Training starts at 8 A.M.
- After staff training, make your own schedule

**Core Duties:**

- Basic kennel care
- Spray out kennels, vehicles & crates (**18+**)
- Laundry & dishes
- Scoop poop & Mop
- Grounds keeping, trash, painting
- Organize donations
- Add blankets to kennels
- Sanitize common areas
- Prep food, toys & enrichment (Kong's, bubbles, reading, etc.)
- Scent spray for animals
- Supervised critter sitting

**Tier Two: Tail Waggers (Intermediate Animal Handlers)**

**Requirements:**

- Must complete Whisker Warrior training
- 20 hours required, with first 10 hours supervised by staff or lead volunteer
- Training starts at 9:00 A.M. with the Animal Care Team
- After training, set your own schedule

### **Core Duties:**

- Bathe & brush pre-approved dogs (green/yellow dots)
- Walk green/yellow dot dogs
- Kennel reactivity work
- Maintain poop/food charts
- Prep & serve meals
- Lead enrichment activities
- Stock kennel supplies
- Supervised green/yellow dot playgroups

### **Paw-tastic Partners (Advanced Animal Handlers)**

#### **Requirements:**

- Completion of Whisker Warrior & Tail Wagger training
- 15 staff-supervised training hours required
- Training is scheduled based on the Animal Care Supervisor's availability

#### **Training Includes:**

- Leash & clicker training
- Walking **yellow/red dot** dogs
- Kennel reactivity work
- Grooming (bath, brush, nail trims)
- Organizing playgroups
- Animal photography
- Supervised field trips

### **Homeward Hounds (Adoption Counselors)**

#### **Requirements:**

- Completion of Whisker Warrior, Tail Wagger, and Paw-tastic Partner training
- 20 additional hours of independent advanced animal handling

#### **Training Includes:**

- Conducting on-site Meet & Greets with potential adopters
- Assisting with adoption appointments at the shelter
- Supporting Animal Care Attendants during Meet & Greets
- Handling Meet & Greets with red-dot animals

### **Rescue Rangers (Volunteer Leads)**

#### **Requirements:**

- Completion of all previous tiers, plus,
- 15 hours of training with the Volunteer Coordinator or lead volunteer
- 15 independent hours in adoption counseling



- Lead a mock orientation with the Volunteer Coordinator

### **Training Includes:**

- Mentoring & training new volunteers
- Leading volunteer orientations
- Building relationships with trainees
- Maintaining communication with your group

### **Tier 3: Pur-fect Pals**

#### **(Requires Whisker Warrior training)**

#### **Beginner Mary Speer (18+)**

- 15 staff-supervised hours, split into shifts
- **Training times:**
  - Monday- Friday: 9–10 A.M., 4–6 P.M.
  - Saturday: 8 A.M.–12 P.M.
- **Training Includes:**
  - Paperwork, prepping pee pads
  - Surgery area/trap setup & cleaning
  - Tagging traps

#### **Foster**

- 15 staff-supervised hours
- Training times:
  - Weekdays: 9–10 A.M., 4–6 P.M.
  - Saturday: 8 A.M.–12 P.M.

### **Training Includes:**

- Sanitizing foster kennels
- Washing dishes and laundry
- Sweeping and mopping floors
- Organizing and decluttering storage
- Promoting the foster program at off-site events

#### **Beginner CSA (Customer Service Associate)**

- First 8 hours supervised by staff
- Includes:
  - Copying, filing, making tags
  - Microchip prep, lobby cleaning
  - Sorting/shredding

### ***Retail Cats***

- Requires retail-specific orientation
- Locations: PetSmart (3), Petco (2)
- **Includes:**
  - Cat kennel/playroom cleaning
  - Feeding, critter sitting

### **Off-Site Adoptions**

- Requires Whisker Warrior + off-site orientation
- Includes:
  - Prepping totes/dogs for transport
  - Puppy care & cleanup
  - Adopter interaction

### **Puppy Care (Clinic-Based)**

- 15 hours of staff-supervised training
- Based on clinic staff availability
- Includes:
  - Dish/laundry washing
  - Transport to/from surgery
  - Bathing & monitoring recovery

### **Tier 4: Critter Consultants**

#### **(Requires Whisker Warrior + Pur-fect Pals)**

#### **Advanced Mary Speer (18+)**

- Must complete 20 hours of Beginner Mary Speer
- Additional duties:
  - Cat transport
  - Surgery cat care

#### **Advanced CSA**

- Must complete 25 hours of Beginner CSA
- Additional duties:
  - Phones, greeting, adoption paperwork
  - Urn labels, radio use

### **Off-Site Lead**

- Requires: Homeward Hounds, Rescue Rangers, Advanced CSA
- Plus 10 hours of lead training
- Includes:

- Dog selection & prep
- Van prep & driving
- Paperwork & promo

Special Role: Marketing (Experience Required)

- Requires Paw-tastic Partners
- Plus 8 hours with Marketing staff
- Includes:
  - Social media, photography
  - Videography, special events

**Note:** Once trained, volunteers may be asked to help with any tasks, regardless of role/title.

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

To ensure a safe and positive environment for both volunteers and animals, please follow these essential rules:

### **Eligibility & Requirements**

- Volunteers must be 13 years or older.
- Orientation and required training must be completed before beginning service.
- Sign in and out using Volunteer Matters for each shift.
- Missing five training sessions without notice may result in removal from the program.

### **Dress Code**

- Wear an HSEP shirt or colored **vest** while volunteering.
- No shorts, torn jeans, leggings, tank/crop tops or open-toed shoes are permitted.

### **Conduct & Safety**

- Treat all staff, volunteers, guests, and animals with respect and professionalism.
- No physical contact (horseplay, etc.) maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Report all incidents (e.g., bites, scratches, injuries) immediately.
- Do not enter staff-only areas without permission (e.g., clinic, locker rooms, intake).

### **Animal Interaction**

- Only handle animals you feel confident and trained to manage.
- Never interact with puppies under 20 weeks without staff approval.
- Do not create playgroups or break up dog fights unless trained in Advanced Animal Handling.
- Always read the enrichment/kennel board before engaging with an animal.
- If you see a loose dog, alert staff. If walking a dog, secure yourself and the dog safely.

### **Health & Hygiene**

- Clean up after yourself and return supplies to their designated areas.

- Report ill or injured animals or safety hazards promptly.

### **Communication & Concerns**

- Direct concerns to the Volunteer Coordinator. An anonymous suggestion box is also available.
- No cell phone use while volunteering. Lockers are provided for personal items.

### **Additional Reminders**

- Volunteers must follow standard intake and adoption procedures, just like the general public.
- Be aware of your surroundings and never enter the O.R. room (near the Big Laundry room).

### **Volunteer Expectations by Tier**

#### **Tier One: Whisker Warriors (Core Training)**

- Do not handle animals.
- Always secure dogs on the opposite side of the kennel using dividers before entering.
- Refer all customer inquiries to staff.
- Use approved cleaning chemicals only.
- Check for dietary restrictions before offering treats or food.

#### **Tier Two: Continued Kennel & Animal Care**

#### **(Includes Tail Waggers & Paw-tastic Partners)**

#### **General Handling & Safety**

- Complete all required training before handling animals independently.
- Work only with pre-approved animals.
- Only enter playrooms, runs, or fields with approved animals.
- Always read the enrichment board before handling any animal.
- Log the time when removing an animal from its kennel.
- Do **not** handle animals under the following conditions:
  - Staff-only/ACA-only signage
  - Medical restrictions (e.g., “Red Card”, “Rest & Relaxation”)
  - Quarantine or missing kennel card
  - If you’re unsure of your ability to handle the animal

#### **Animal Interaction & Environment**

- Provide fresh water before placing an animal in a play area.
- Ensure play areas are clean before/after use.
- Keep dogs separated and avoid close contact during walks.
- Never create dog playgroups unless trained in Advanced Handling.
- Exit dogs safely using outside kennel.
- Be cautious of nearby dog movement before removing a dog from a kennel.

## **Grooming Guidelines**

- Monitor animal behavior and comfort during grooming.
- Avoid loud noises; discontinue if the animal becomes distressed.
- Return all grooming tools to their place and clean up thoroughly.

## **Field Trips (Paw-tastic Partners)**

- Field trips are for approved animals only and require staff authorization.
- Trips must occur before shelter opens and dogs must return by:
  - Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri/Sat/Sun: 11:00 A.M.
  - Wed: 1:00 P.M.
- Never let dog's off-leash.
- Visit only pre-approved locations (list provided in training).
- Keep your phone on and place a Doggy Day Out sign on the kennel.
- Return all supplies (leashes, poop bags, etc.) after your outing.

## **End-of-Day Protocol**

- Ensure all dogs are back in kennels 15 minutes before closing:
  - Weekdays: by 5:45 P.M.
  - Weekends: by 4:45 P.M.

## **Homeward Hounds & Rescue Rangers**

### **General Expectations**

- Completion of all required training is mandatory before engaging with adopters.
- You may introduce customers to shelter animals.
- Homeward Hounds may assist with dog-to-dog introductions but cannot conduct them alone unless trained and approved.
- Staff has the final say on all adoption approvals.

### **Conduct & Communication**

- Always communicate truthfully with adopters about the animals.
- Present yourself as a professional representative of HSEP speak kindly, act maturely.
- If you have concerns, share them calmly, respectfully, and promptly with staff.

### **Leadership Responsibilities (Rescue Rangers)**

- Be patient and welcoming when training new volunteers.
- Maintain a professional demeanor during orientations and peer interactions.

### **Pur-fect Pals & Critter Consultants (Tiers 3 & 4)**

- Must complete Whisker Warrior training and all additional program-specific training.

## **Mary Speer Program (18+)**

- Must be 18 or older to volunteer in this department.
- Follow all safety protocols and instructions from Mary Speer staff.
- Do not open traps unless trained and authorized.
- Ensure pee pads are clean and traps are securely closed before handling.
- Check paperwork to verify cat identities during pickup.

## **Foster Department**

- Do not pet or handle animals unless explicitly instructed by staff.
- Volunteers must assist in the Foster Department first before working in other areas of the shelter to prevent cross-contamination.

## **Customer Service Associate (CSA)**

- Volunteers may not use shelter computers or phones unless properly trained and authorized by staff.

## **Retail Cat Program**

- Notify the Retail/Off Site Coordinator or staff in advance if you're unable to attend your shift.
- Missing more than two shifts without prior notice may result in removal from the volunteer program.
- Immediately report any signs of illness or injury in retail cats to HSEP staff.
- Do not conduct meet-and-greets. Direct adoption inquiries to a store associate.
- Always sign in and out when volunteering at retail locations.

## **Off-Site Events**

- Maintain a professional appearance and respectful demeanor you represent HSEP to the public.
- Interact with the public in a courteous and informative manner.
- Sanitize hands between handling each dog.
- The public is not permitted to handle puppies under 20 weeks. Direct any requests to off-site staff or leads.
- Ensure puppies never touch the ground. Use blankets or towels to line kennels at all times.
- Feed puppies lunch at 1:00 P.M. and provide constant access to fresh water for all dogs.
- Be honest and transparent about each animal's behavior and personality never misrepresent an animal.

## **Marketing**

- Volunteers must have prior experience in marketing to participate.
- Follow all task-specific guidelines provided by HSEP staff or coordinators.

### **Volunteer Testimonials**

“Volunteering at the Humane Society of El Paso has been a rewarding experience for me. It's a great way to socialize with new friends, improve mental and physical health, and provide enrichment to shelter dogs.”

**- Melody Marez, Volunteer since 2018**

“I have volunteered at the Humane Society of El Paso for the past six years and have found that every job I do is important in the success of HSEP’s mission. Whether it is ensuring that the dogs/cats have a clean place to live, spending time sitting with the dogs to build trust, walking the dogs to help relieve stress, fostering underage puppies and kittens, or assisting people with the adoption process, I know I am making a difference in the lives of the animals at HSEP. “

**-Susan Barron, Volunteer since 2017**

“I have been volunteering for HSEP for about five years. The Humane Society of El Paso provides me with an outlet to enhance my mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Spending time with the animals offers a much-needed break from the hectic world around me. When I’m at the shelter all that matters is the relationship between me and the animal. Walking the dogs creates an exercise routine that I wouldn’t have without volunteering at the shelter. Giving back to the animals fills me with joy and warms my heart to know that these animals are getting the care and love they have always deserved.”

**-Tina Ramirez, Volunteer since 2018**