

Volunteer Handbook

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Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Humane Society of El Paso!

Thank you for choosing to share your time and talents with us. We are delighted to have you join our community and look forward to the meaningful impact you will make as part of our mission.

As a volunteer, you are beginning a truly rewarding journey. Along the way, you'll meet compassionate individuals and connect with dogs and cats, each with their own unique story. Some will make you smile, others may capture your heart, and many will leave a lasting impression. While you help them find hope and healing, you'll discover that they give just as much back in return.

At HSEP, we deeply value every hour you dedicate to our cause. Your time, energy, and commitment create brighter futures for the animals in our care. Simply put, we couldn't do this without you.

Volunteers are the heart of our organization, and 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 are fortunate to have you with us.

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. As the cases declined, the organization shifted its focus. By the 1960s, HSEP had embraced a new mission centered on combating pet overpopulation and homelessness.

In 2009, HSEP proudly became the first no-kill shelter in our community. This commitment means we do not euthanize healthy or treatable animals, never euthanize for space, and maintain a live release rate of at least 90 percent. Throughout our decades of service, one thing has remained constant: HSEP's dedication to improving 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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Volunteer Coordinator

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Key Staff Members

Robert Shamy

Executive Director

Edgar Armendariz

Director of Operations

Courtney Roszak-Moore

Director of Marketing & Community Relations

Sandra Penrod

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

Getting Started as a Volunteer

Role of a Volunteer

The Humane Society of El Paso provides care for nearly 2,000 homeless dogs and cats each year. With a dedicated team of just over forty staff members, additional support is essential, especially during our busiest times. That's where volunteers make an incredible difference.

Volunteers play a vital role at HSEP by ensuring animals receive socialization, walks, clean kennels, enrichment, and so much more. Your time and commitment help create a safe and nurturing environment for every pet in our care.

In return for your dedication, we strive to provide a welcoming and enjoyable experience for all volunteers. We ask that you always represent HSEP with professionalism, kindness, and respect, while carrying our core values: caring, compassionate, consistent, and dependable.

Above all, the most important responsibility of a volunteer is to help our shelter animals feel safe, loved, and cared for during their stay.

Eligibility & Requirements

- Must have a signed waiver on file
- Volunteers must be **13 years or older**
- Orientation must be completed before beginning service
- Sign in and out using VolunteerHub and on Sign-in sheet for each shift

How to Become a Volunteer:

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

- Create a profile on VolunteerHub
- Attend an orientation.
- Sign up for shifts on VolunteerHub

If the volunteer is between the ages of 13 and 15, a parent or guardian must complete the minor consent form within the volunteer application, submit a separate volunteer application for themselves, and be present whenever the child is volunteering.

If you are between the ages of 16-17, a parent or guardian does NOT have to accompany you, however, HSEP must have signed parental consent on file.

HSEP DOES NOT accept volunteers under the age of 13-years-old.

NO child under the age of 13 is allowed on HSEP grounds while you are volunteering.

The Humane Society of El Paso retains the right to refuse volunteer participation or terminate volunteer involvement at any time and for any reason.

General Guidelines

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

Dress Code

- Must wear pants, a tshirt, close-toed shoes, and an HSEP colored vest at all times 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
- Always be aware of your surroundings
- No physical contact (horseplay, etc.) maintain appropriate boundaries
- Report all incidents (e.g., bites, scratches, injuries) immediately to Volunteer Coordinator
- Do not enter Staff-Only areas without permission (e.g., End of Life Room)
- Due to the risk of chemical exposure, ensure that proper PPE equipment is worn at all times while handling chemicals
- Only handle chemicals if you are 18 or older and you've attended HazCom training
- Please ensure ALL faucets are turned off after every use
- Clean up after yourself and return supplies to their designated areas
- Volunteers must follow standard intake and adoption procedures

Animal Interaction

- Clean up after all animals you interact with
- Only handle animals if you have been trained and feel confident to do so
- Never interact with puppies under 20 weeks without staff approval
- Do not create playgroups or break up dog fights
- Always read the enrichment/kennel board before engaging with an animal. If you are unsure, please ask a staff member
- If you see a loose dog, alert staff. If walking a dog, secure yourself and the dog safely
- Report ill or injured animals or safety hazards promptly

Communication & Concerns

- Direct concerns to the **Volunteer Coordinator**. There are multiple QR codes around the facility that may be utilized to provide feedback, suggestions, and concerns. All information provided will remain anonymous.
- No cell phone use while volunteering. Lockers are provided for personal items

Core Training

Whisker Warriors

Vest Color: Green

Requirements:

- Must complete Volunteer Orientation prior to beginning Core Training
- 20 hours of training

Rules and Expectations:

- Do not handle animals unless trained and instructed by staff
- 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

Core Duties:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Spray out kennels, vehicles & crates (if HazCom Trained) | • Grounds keeping, trash, maintenance |
| • Clean play rooms and play boxes | • Organize donations (with supervision) |
| • Laundry | • Stock kennel supplies |
| • Dishes | • Sanitize common areas |
| • Scoop waste & change cat litter | • Prep & serve food |
| • Sweep & mop | • Add blankets to kennels |
| | • Enrichment |

Animal Handling

Tail Waggers

Vest Color: Blue

Requirements:

- Must complete Core Training
- 20 hours of training required
- After staff training, you may continue independent training. If you are unsure how to proceed, please ask a staff member

Rules and Expectations:

General Handling & Safety

- Only enter playrooms, runs, or fields with permission
- Always read the enrichment board before handling any animal
- Check off all enrichment that has been completed
- Do **NOT** handle animals under the following conditions:
 - Staff-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

- Ensure play areas are clean before/after use
- Provide fresh water before placing an animal in a play area
- If you take a dog out of its kennel, you are responsible for returning the dog to its kennel
- Keep dogs separated and avoid close contact during walks. Dogs should not be interacting while walking
- Exit dogs safely using outside compartment of kennel (if the option is available)
- Be cautious of nearby dog movement before removing a dog from a kennel

Grooming Guidelines

- Monitor and report all 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

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.

Core Duties:

- All duties listed in Whisker Warriors
- Bathe & brush green yellow & red dots
- Walk green, yellow & red dots
- Document food & bowel movement charts
- Assist in intake
- Supervised playgroups

Paw-fessional Volunteer Opportunities

Once you've completed all core training and gained hands-on experience, you can explore specialized volunteer roles based on your interests and strengths. These are opportunities for you to grow, contribute, and choose your own path at HSEP.

Homeward Hounds (Adoption Counselors)

Vest Color: Purple

Requirements:

- Must be 17 or older to volunteer in this department
- 20 hours of supervised adoption counseling training

Rules and Expectations

- Completion of all required training is mandatory before engaging with adopters
- You may introduce customers to shelter animals
- Staff has the final say on all adoption approvals
- Always communicate truthfully with adopters about the animals

Training Includes:

- Conducting & supporting on-site Meet & Greets with potential adopters
- Homeward Hounds may assist an Animal Care Associate with dog-to-dog introductions but cannot conduct them alone unless trained and approved

Customer Service Associate

- Must be 17 or older to volunteer in this department
- Must complete 35 hours of supervised specialized training
- Volunteers may not use shelter computers, phones, or radios unless properly trained and authorized by staff

Purr-suit of Happiness Opportunities

Vest Color: Pink

HSEP Clinic

- Must be 16 or older to volunteer in this department
- Must complete 40 hours of supervised specialized training
- Follow all safety protocols and instructions from Medical staff
- **Volunteers assisting in HSEP Clinic may only assist in Mary Speers and HSEP Clinic to prevent cross-contamination**

Mary Speer Program

- Must be 16 or older to volunteer in this department
- Must have a signed Mary Speer waiver on file
- Must complete 40 hours of supervised specialized training
- 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
- Transporting traps between designated rooms
- Check paperwork to verify cat identities during pickup

Foster

- Must complete 20 hours of supervised specialized training
- Do not pet or handle animals unless explicitly instructed by staff
- Community Cat Care (Must have a signed Community Cats waiver on file to participate)
- **Volunteers must assist in the Foster Department first before working in other areas of the shelter to prevent cross-contamination**

Retail Cats

Retail Cat Program

Requirements: Must be 16 years old, complete retail-specific training, and attend HazCom Training

Core Duties:

- Provide fresh food and water
- Scoop waste
- Dishes
- Sweep & mop
- Clean kennels
- Report all behavior and signs of illness