

VOLUNTEER MANUAL



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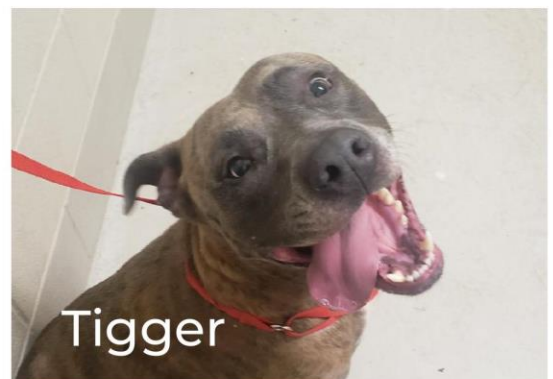


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WELCOME

Thanks for considering Santa Rosa County Animal Services (SRCAS)! We appreciate you for donating your time to our shelter and helping our homeless animals find the loving homes they deserve. The shelter can be an emotionally and physically challenging place but the result - seeing an animal go to their fur-ever home - is worth all of it to us. We certainly could not do our work without the help from volunteers in our community. We strive to make your experience here incredibly rewarding and appreciated.



Shellie says, "Thank you!"



SRCAS Services

Animal Intake

We are a county shelter; therefore, we can only take animals from our county. Our main goal is to reunite pets with their owners. We have a mandatory three-day holding period for all stray animals to give owners time to find their lost pet. We post all of our lost pets on our website.

Strays

All stray animals picked up by Animal Control or come in through our front door are also posted on our website for the same three-day holding period. All of these animals are scanned for a microchip and ID tags. SRCAS staff will use all information given to find the pet's owners and use every attempt to reunite them.

Owner Surrender

There are certain cases where owners cannot or choose not to fulfill the commitment of adopting an animal into their family. We try to inform owners of all alternatives like local Facebook Groups, neighboring rescues, local pet food pantries, etc. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis; appointments are now required if you need to surrender an owned pet to the shelter.

Animal Control

Animal Control Officers (ACO) enforce animal laws and ordinances and respond to loose dog, bite, nuisance, cruelty, and neglect cases. If the basic needs of an animal like access to food, water, shelter, and exercise are seen, an ACO will investigate.

Adoption

The staff at SRCAS dedicate their time to maintain high adoption rates and our title of being a "No-Kill" shelter. Our adoption fees include a spay/neuter procedure, microchip,

Hours of Operation

Shelter: M-Th (11:30 - 4:30), F (11:30 - 6:00), Sat (10am - 3:30pm), Closed Sunday

All adoptions must be made 30 min. prior to closing

Our Mission

Santa Rosa County Animal Services strives to build a society in which every animal is treated with compassion. We hope to reach this state by providing the community with resources to provide shelter and humane education while also offering adoptions, veterinary services, and other lifesaving programs.

About our Shelter

SRCAS works with animal management and welfare which has strict bio-protocols to help keep the animals healthy, which also increases the likelihood of an animal having a positive outcome. Along with Animal Control, we concentrate our efforts on reducing nuisances and dangers associated with stray animals, health-related hazards of animals, and insuring proper care of pets.

Upon intake...

-All adult dogs and age-appropriate puppies receive a DAPP (distemper, adenovirus, parvovirus, parainfluenza virus), Bordetella vaccine (AKA kennel cough), a basic dewormer, and an external treatment for fleas and ticks

-All adult cats and age-appropriate kittens receive a FVRCP (FVR: feline rhinotracheitis virus, calicivirus, panleukopenia) AKA the "Feline Distemper" vaccine and an external treatment for fleas and ticks

Volunteering at SRCAS

Volunteers are an invaluable asset in the shelter as they help us place our homeless animals into loving homes as well as expand our community outreach. Dedicating free time to helping the animals who don't have a voice can be an emotionally & physically demanding task. In this handbook, we provide our policies, procedures, and all of the tools to set you up for success and keep you knowledgeable of our goals. Staying up to date on this information will help you provide the best care to the animals as possible.

Thank you for donating your free time and energy to the animals at our shelter. We hope your experience at the shelter will be as rewarding to you as it is beneficial to these animals.

Becoming a Volunteer

As the shelter can be a demanding environment, we are looking for those who are passionate in making a difference in the lives of our homeless animals. They need constant attention, exercise, socialization, and engagement to ensure the best outcome possible. We require volunteers to commit to at least four hours a week to efficiently help the shelter staff.

Here is how you can get in the kennels and start making a difference:

- We hold **Tours** for anybody who is interested in volunteering; this is where you will see the many ways volunteers can help throughout the shelter and get a behind-the-scenes view of the shelter environment
 - o The link to this Sign-Up Sheet is available on our [website](#)
 - o We will go over our Lifesaving Programs, scheduling options, and how we can set you up for success at the shelter
 - o If you find that the shelter is the place for you, please fill out an [application](#)
- **Orientations** are scheduled after an applicant passes a Background Check
 - o Those under the age of 18 do not need a Background Check
 - o This is where the volunteer will be trained on our procedures and processes

Volunteer Positions

"When Doody Calls" Cleaner

Please report to:

Kennel Technicians, Volunteer Coordinator

How does this help the shelter?

To make the dogs & cats feel more comfortable, we like to provide them with fresh beds, blankets, bowls, and kennels daily. Not only does it keep them comfortable but it also keeps them safe & healthy. When the kennels are nice & clean, the animals are happier and this helps the public see how great of a pet they can have in their family.

Time Needed & Location:

- Must commit to at least 4 hours a week (2 shifts)
- Laundry Room with A/C or Loading Bay outside

What you'll be doing

- Clean & replace bowls and linens daily
- Wash & sanitize toys, carriers, and other items
- Help Kennel Technicians clean kennels throughout the day
- Make sure all animals have clean, fresh water
- Maintain cleanliness throughout the shelter
- Clean, sanitize, organize carriers at the Loading Bay

Requirements

- Willing to follow cleaning procedures
- Must be able to stand for a few hours at a time
- Must be able to lift up to 30lbs
- Sign-In/Out onto VicTouch (Volunteer Database)
- Provide valid email to ensure effective communication

Dog Enrichment

Please report to:

Kennel Technicians, Volunteer Mentor, Volunteer Coordinator

How does this help the shelter?

Enrichment and exercise benefits the dogs by providing positive human interaction, ensuring good mental health, and reducing stress. In turn, this task helps the dogs with their social skills, manners, and confidence levels which will help them get adopted into a good home. Plus, when you interact with a certain dog long enough, you'll experience their personality & will be able to share that with the public.

Time Needed & Location:

- Must commit to at least 6 hours a week (3 shifts)
- Dog Kennels & around shelter for walking

What you'll be doing:

- Walking/exercising dogs daily
- Provide interesting, enticing activities to encourage mental & physical health
- Report dog's behavior/special traits to Staff Members
- Fill Kongs/Frisbees with Peanut Butter
- Pick up, clean, & sanitize water bowls. Refill with fresh water

Requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be able to handle larger dogs on a leash
- Must be comfortable with dogs of all backgrounds

Administrative Duties

Please report to:

Receptionists at the front desk, Volunteer Coordinator

How does this help the shelter?

We strive to streamline the Adoption Process to make it as easy as possible for the public to adopt from us. Making Adoption Folders, Adoption Bags, keeping the lobby clean, etc. will help us focus on matching our shelter animals to the homes they deserve.

Time Needed & Location:

- Must commit to at least 4 hours a week (2 shifts)
- Main Lobby & Volunteer Corner

What you'll be doing:

- Sweep Main Lobby and Cat Adoption Rooms
- Put away donations to their designated spot
- Create Adoption Folders & Goody bags
- Create Colored Clothespins
- Send out Amazon "Thank You" notes

Requirements:

- Willing to greet the public when they come in
- Clean & organized

Cat Enrichment

Please report to:

Kennel Technicians, Volunteer Mentor, Volunteer Coordinator

How does this help the shelter?

Encouraging socialization with our shelter cats increases the chances of them getting adopted. It stimulates their mind and bodies to keep them happy & healthy.

Time Needed & Location:

- Must commit to at least 4 hours a week (2 shifts)
- Cat Adoption Suites

What you'll be doing:

- Interact with cats from all backgrounds & behaviors
- Provide cats with stimulating activities
- Ensure each cat has a toy/nesting area/blanket in their kennel
- Report behavior to Staff Members to put into ShelterLuv
- Make sure every cat has clean water

Requirements:

- Experience with cats
- Must be 18 years old or over

Programs

Foster Program

The focus for the Foster Program is to help our animals who need medical attention as well as kittens and puppies. These are the animals who cannot survive without our intervention. We provide the medical attention needed and a Foster Family who will work hard to ensure these animals are taken care of until they're available for adoption. Our Foster Coordinator and on-site Veterinarian maintain close contact with our fosters to schedule them for check-ups, work with behavioral issues, etc. Allowing an animal to recover in a stress-free home setting can help bring out their personality and increase their confidence which can lead to more successful adoption. Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

Barn Cat Program

This program places fully vetted, healthy cats into a safe outdoor living space like a barn or factory to be a working cat! This is for the cats who may have litter box habits that make them unsuitable to live indoors or for cats who are more shy/fearful of humans. We do not have an adoption fee for barn cats but would suggest that the adopter's location to be away from busy roads and a relocation period of at least two weeks in a large crate to have them adapt to the area. Learn more about this program on our website [here](#).

Operation Fur-ever Freedom

This program is designed to provide veterans, active-duty military, reservists and National Guardsmen with up to two pets, *all fees waived*. Military dependents are eligible for reduced rates. An active ID or DD 214 card must be provided.

Doggy Day Out

Members of the community can take shelter dogs out of the shelter for field trips! Outings can last one hour to all weekend and can include a trip to the beach, a hike or even a meal at a pet-friendly restaurant. These trips outside of the shelter help the dogs relieve stress, meet potential adopters, and helps us learn more about their personality.

Rescue Partnership

We work actively with rescue groups to get more animals to safety. It's a team effort, and we work with many organizations, both locally as well as country wide.

Volunteer Program

Dedicated volunteers help us reach our lifesaving goals and increase the chances of our animals getting their fur-ever homes. We offer this program to students involved with a Bright Futures scholarship; any participants are welcomed ages 16 and up.

Working with SRCAS

Authorized Areas

Volunteers are limited to certain areas of the shelter for the safety of the volunteer and the animals. Prohibited areas include the Hold/Evaluation Rooms, Quarantine Rooms, Surgery Areas, as well as the Stray and Feral cat rooms. These locations are labeled and will be addressed during a Tour of the facility. If needed in these areas, volunteers must be escorted by an SRCAS staff member.

Euthanasia Policy

As of 2019, our shelter has exceeded the 90% save rate of the animals from our facility. We strive to keep this title; however, euthanasia can be an inevitable part of animal welfare. Our trained shelter staff and shelter director are the only members who make the decision regarding the adoptability of the animal after reviewing their temperament test data, health conditions and all other available information about the animal. We keep public safety at the forefront of the decision regarding euthanasia. Only the shelter's contracted veterinarian or certified animal services staff will be permitted to euthanize animals. At no time will any volunteer be permitted to assist with euthanasia.

Disease Control

SRCAS is responsible for ensuring public safety including rabies control and other zoonotic disease containment. Zoonotic diseases are those that can be transmitted from animals to humans and may be present in the shelter at any time. Some of these disease transmissions include fungi, bacteria, viruses, parasites and arthropods. As a volunteer, you must be sure to wash your hands frequently as well as clean all animal handling equipment thoroughly to prevent the spread of disease in the shelter. Preventing disease transmission includes wearing gloves when handling litter pans, food or water dishes or when cleaning up feces, urine or vomit and washing hands frequently. If you have questions or concerns, we urge you to speak with your physician about your risks.

Code of Conduct, Policies, & Procedures

As a volunteer working with SRCAS staff and the community, your conduct is expected to be professional and courteous at all times. The shelter and animals rely on volunteers to be dependable and effective during their commitment by following established policies and guidelines. This allows our Volunteer Program to operate smoothly and provide maximum benefits to the animals

Respect

As a volunteer, you are an ambassador of SRCAS and are expected to display respect and professionalism towards the staff and members of the community. Any displays of disrespect or unprofessional behavior (any kind of harassment, threats, disparaging remarks, discrimination, or vulgar language) will not be tolerated. You may be asked to cease your volunteer work if we experience any of the above behavior. Volunteers and staff are considered partners in implementing the mission of SRCAS with each having a complementary role. It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. Volunteers should enhance the work of staff, not replace them.

No-Judgement Policy

SRCAS maintains a policy of treating all clients with respect and accepts that most people love their pets, even if they do not have the same resources to care for them as other residents of our county. As a volunteer, you will be asked to set aside all negative assumptions you may have about owners of unaltered pets or whose pets are not living in conditions, or are being cared for in ways, that you are accustomed to. The assumption that owners of unaltered pets, or those whose pets are living in what you feel are less than ideal conditions, are irresponsible or uncaring is generally inaccurate. One may never know what another is going through.

Confidentiality/Privacy Policy

Information pertaining to SRC Animal Service records or specific cases are strictly confidential and may not be discussed with others. Volunteers may be entrusted with sensitive and confidential information while volunteering. While most county activities fall under Florida open records laws, there are a few examples that are exempt. Your obligation is to protect confidential information during social media interactions. Volunteers are not to disclose any confidential information (contact, personal information, financial, etc.) of the shelter to customers or staff members. Only SRC Animal Service approved signage and messaging are allowed on premises and at events. Do not write notes or messages on kennel cards, on paper signs or affix any other signs or messages without prior approval from staff or management. Please

refrain from offering the public information on fees or policies unless you are sure you have current, accurate information. When in doubt, always refer the person to a staff member.

Dress Code

The following requirements are in place for volunteer's safety:

- Wear comfortable clothes; please keep in mind that you may get dirty. Your clothing should not be disruptive or offensive.
- Long pants are suggested; shorts may be worn during the summer months
- Nametags and Safety Vests are required to be worn at all times
- Closed toe, rubber-sole shoes are required. No flip-flops, sandals or clogs are to be worn at any time.
- Volunteers arriving in inappropriate attire may be asked by any member of management or staff to leave or change.
- You may bring drink and snack for your breaks (water or Gatorade is good for hot summer months) We supply a small fridge to store anything that must be cooled
- Any personal belongings may be stored in our cubbies in the Volunteer Corner

Electronic Devices

Cell phone use must be limited to emergencies only and be kept in the Volunteer Corner. Volunteers are not of assistance to the shelter staff and animals if they are preoccupied with their personal electronic devices. For everyone's safety, volunteers may only wear one ear bud/headphone and keep the other ear free to hear the people and animals in your surroundings.

Drug Use

Smoking is prohibited in all buildings and facility grounds. Volunteers who wish to smoke must ask management if there is designated area, and you may not smoke except when on breaks and out of public view. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer work at our facility on or off-site event under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If suspected of being under the influence of such, you will be asked to leave immediately and will be subject to termination from the SRCAS Volunteer Program.

Injuries

You are responsible for your own health and welfare, so be sure to mind all signs and safety precautions. If you are injured while at the shelter, you must notify the coordinator, staff member or management.

Time and Attendance

You must sign in/out each day you are volunteering at the Volunteer Sign-In area. When you commit to a volunteer task, you become a valuable member of the team and are vital to the success of that program or event. For that reason, we ask that you only commit to events or programs that you will be able to fulfill and are qualified for. We understand that life happens, and you may be unable to fulfill the task/program you previously committed to. Please notify your team coordinator as soon as possible.

Assignments

We will do our best to assure that your task is one for which you have expressed an interest in and aligns with your time and talents. We reserve the right, however, to reassign you as dictated by our needs at the time at the shelter. Some of the duties you may be asked to do are listed below but are not limited to these tasks. Clean kennels, laundry, wash dishes, separate newspapers, write thank you cards, put away donations in proper area, sweep/mop different areas of the shelter, greet public, walk dogs, socialize cats, assist with picture taking, dog washing, and print updated kennel cards.

Rules and Regulations

- For safety reasons, only volunteers adequately trained in a specific task may perform that task.
- Do not bring friends, relatives, children or personal pets with you to the shelter. If you know someone interested in volunteering, please encourage them to sign up for a Tour. Should you bring any of the previously named, you will not be allowed to volunteer that day.
- Volunteers are to have NO contact with any stray animals. Only adoption ready animals may be handled by volunteers. Information in regard to stray animals is not available to the general public as they are not considered property of the shelter until the legal holding time is up. Do not take pictures, discuss on social media, or disclose any information if the animal is not adoption ready and located in the adoptable section. Failure to adhere to this rule will be cause for immediate dismissal.
- Please be aware that you are at risk of transmitting diseases to your personally owned pets. We ask that all of your personal pets be vaccinated for Parvo and Bordetella, as well as be up to date on their rabies vaccination. Changing clothing and shoes before getting around your personal pets again may help prevent this from happening.
- Wash your hands throughout the day and between handling each animal.
- Only one animal is to be walked at a time. You will have access to leashes and will be informed of the animals that you are authorized to walk. During the summer months, maximum walking time is 10 minutes per dog.

- Please, INFORM STAFF IMMEDIATELY IF BITES, SCRATCHES OR ANIMAL AGGRESSION OCCURS.

News Media

Volunteers are specifically prohibited from speaking on behalf of SRCAS. All media questions are handled by the shelter director or our public information office. Sometimes representatives from the media will ask volunteers for interviews or information; you should inform them that you are a volunteer and cannot speak on behalf of the shelter. Please, steer them to the director or appropriate staff member. The term "media" includes all TV, radio, film, video, internet or other outlets, as well as reporters, photojournalists and anyone associated with these media.

Complaints

Your point of contact regarding volunteering or shelter activities is the Volunteer Coordinator. Bring your concerns/questions to them first. If you have a complaint regarding a staff member or an issue with SRCAS policy, bring it to the attention of the volunteer coordinator to be resolved. We want to resolve issues so that we can all work effectively as a team. Immediately report anything you interpret as harassment from staff, volunteers, or the public to the Coordinator/Director to ensure your safety and the safety of everyone on the premises.

Volunteer Dismissal

SRCAS reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's service at any time, with or without notice. The following may result in termination:

- Stealing or substance abuse
- Disrespect/Rudeness to another volunteer, staff member, or citizen.
- Unauthorized communication with media regarding shelter policies or practices
- Any deliberate act of cruelty to an animal
- Careless, negligent performance of volunteer duties

SRCAS Thanks You!

Thank you for offering your time and love towards the shelter and animals. We appreciate your commitment in helping save lives of community animals; your time is invaluable. Thank you for:

- Caring for the cats & dogs desperately needing positive human interaction
- Helping find homes for animals who deserve a second chance
- Becoming a part of making our community more responsible for our pets

Thank you for giving your time and energy to the animals at SRCAS. We hope that the time you spend here will be as rewarding to you as it is beneficial to the animals you help.

