



**Humane Society**  
TENNESSEE VALLEY

# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## Welcome

On behalf of the entire staff at Humane Society, Tennessee Valley (HSTV), welcome to our Volunteer Program! Being a Volunteer is an extremely rewarding, educational, and fun experience and we value your choice to volunteer with us . Whether it's working hands-on with the animals, assisting with adoptions or working behind the scenes to support our mission, your desire to help support our mission is greatly appreciated.

This manual has been prepared as a reference guide to our policies and procedures, and will be your guide to working with the staff in your vital role as a volunteer. We reserve the right to modify, rescind, supplement, or revise any provision in this handbook at any time. We will notify our volunteers via the email we have on file when updates are made to our policies.

## Introduction

### History of HSTV

Founded in 1885 as the Knox County Humane Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Animals, we are the first animal shelter in the state of Tennessee. We are also the first no-kill animal shelter in Knoxville.

Our organization has worked hard throughout its existence to be at the forefront of animal welfare. For a full history of our organization please visit our [website](#).

### Non-Profit Status

A stand-alone 501c(3) limited admissions animal shelter, the Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley receives no funding from national humane entities or government agencies, relying solely on private donations and grant funding. We are not affiliated with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) or the American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) nor do we get any portion of donations made to either group.

Being a non-profit animal shelter, a major portion of our funding must go to the care and welfare of the animals. We strongly rely upon the generous support of volunteers like you to advance our mission to support the homeless dogs and cats that need our help. Therefore, we ask our volunteers to look at their position with commitment; you supply a critical role.

### Mission

Humane Society, Tennessee Valley is dedicated to providing lifesaving programs and resources to enrich the lives of people and companion animals in the communities we serve.

## **Vision**

We envision a future in which all animals are treated humanely, with compassion and respect.

## **How Are We Different?**

Located in Knoxville, TN our organization is committed to our relationships with other shelters and rescues across 33 counties in East Tennessee by transferring animals at-risk for euthanasia, to our shelter for adoption. Our programs include Adoption, PetHelp-Keeping Pets and People Together, Traveling Tails Transport and Outreach. Our Adoption Center offers dog and cat adoptions along with lifesaving programs including outreach, foster, and volunteer. Our PetHelp Program includes a Pet Food Pantry and a low-cost Wellness Clinic for the public to help keep animals in their homes and out of area shelters.

## **Adoption Center**

Once in our care all animals receive the highest level of care through our veterinary staff. Animals are examined by our Shelter Veterinarian, vaccinated, microchipped, dewormed, sterilized and on many occasions given medical care before heading to the adoption floor to find their new family. In 2023, we had *820 adoptions!*

Our adoption fee covers the cost of spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations, microchip with registration, and a complimentary wellness exam through our staff Veterinarian. Our current adoption fees and specials can be found on our website.

## **The Volunteer Program**

### **Goals of the Program**

Volunteers provide HSTV with opportunities to enhance many of our programs and services. Our volunteers are our ambassadors. They allow us to expand many of our programs and provide better care to our animals and visitors.

Our volunteers donated 5,805 hours of their time in 2023. This is equivalent to \$87,085 in staff time, assuming that the average staff member makes \$15/hr and works 50 weeks out of the year. This means that our volunteer force was equal to roughly 3 full time staff members in 2023.

**Goal #1:** To provide a formal program with orientation and training that provides our volunteers with the knowledge and skills they will need to create a positive experience for animals and volunteers alike.

**Goal #2:** To increase community and individual awareness of animal issues, such as responsible pet ownership and animal overpopulation, by forming and maintaining groups of volunteers committed to HSTV's mission.

**Goal #3:** To provide volunteers and the HSTV organization with a mutually rewarding relationship, which in turn will provide our community with a resource for educating the public about the needs of companion animals.

## **General Participation Requirements**

### Age Requirements

Due to the risks associated with working in an animal shelter environment, there are age limitations.

Those under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. The parent or guardian must also attend orientation, present a valid driver's license,, always provide the youth volunteer with transportation to/from the facility, and meet all other applicable requirements outlined in this manual.

### Transportation

All volunteers must have a valid form of transportation. HSTV is not able to provide transportation to volunteers at any time.

### Time Commitment

All volunteers are required to commit to working at least one hour per month to remain active.

### Court-Ordered Community Service (COCS) Volunteer Applicants

HSTV does accept court-ordered volunteers on a very limited basis. All individuals must be at least 18 years of age, \$20 for a uniform t-shirt, and present documentation verifying the type of offense.

Finally, all prospective COCS volunteers must not have been convicted of any of the following crimes:

- Animal cruelty or neglect
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Possession/receipt/sale of stolen property
- Theft
- Felony-level crimes
- Crimes committed with a weapon
- Illegal possession of firearms
- Drug-related offenses
- Sexual offenses

- Predatory crimes
- Other violent crime

HSTV reserves the right to refuse any court-ordered volunteers for offenses not listed above.

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Our volunteers can expect to be treated fairly with consideration and respect by the HSTV staff. We value the thoughts, ideas, and suggestions of our volunteers and strive to create an open and honest environment where feedback is always welcome.

### **Respectful behavior**

As a member of the HSTV team, you are a representative of HSTV's brand and image. Therefore, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. Be respectful and courteous in your interactions with the public, staff, and other volunteers. We expect the same of all members of the HSTV team. Volunteers are not to disclose any staff member contact information to the general public. Direct any questions to staff members on hand.

### **Adherence to Rules**

You are expected to follow all protocols, policies, processes and procedures. If you are unable to for some reason, or if you do not understand a particular rule, contact the Volunteer Coordinator or a supervisor before proceeding.

### **Substance Abuse Policy**

The Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley is committed to providing a safe environment and fostering the well-being and health of its volunteers. This commitment is jeopardized when any HSTV volunteer illegally uses drugs on or off the job, comes to volunteer under the influence, possesses, distributes, or sells drugs in the workplace, or abuses alcohol on the job. Any such violations would result in dismissal from the volunteer program.

### **Anti-Harassment & Anti-Discrimination Policy**

The HSTV Volunteer Program's Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy expresses the organization's commitment to maintaining an environment free of harassment where our team members can feel safe and happy. This policy applies to the employees, volunteers, public visitors and anyone else with whom volunteers come into contact.

Harassment is defined as a course of conduct which annoys, threatens, intimidates, alarms, or puts a person in fear of their safety. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens or offends the victim and results in a

hostile environment for the victim. It includes bullying, intimidation, direct insults, malicious gossip and victimization.

Willful discrimination based upon age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, political views, or disability is prohibited. An exhaustive list will not be provided, but a few examples of what would be considered harassment include:

- Engaging in frequent or unwanted advances of any nature.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Commenting derogatorily on a person's ethnic heritage or religious beliefs.
- Sabotaging someone's work on purpose.
- Starting or spreading rumors about a person's personal life.
- Ridiculing someone in front of others.
- Physical, intellectual, or emotional intimidation of others.
- Purposely excluding or alienating someone from the inclusive environment HSTV strives to maintain.

Punishment for harassment depends upon the severity of the violation and may include counseling, reprimands, suspensions or release from the Volunteer Program.

Sexual harassment is illegal and we will thoroughly investigate all reported incidents.

If you feel you are being harassed, or if you witness or suspect harassment, whether by a staff person, a volunteer, public visitor, or anyone else, contact the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

### **Weapons Policy**

The HSTV Volunteer Program is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for its staff, volunteers, and guests and has adopted this Weapons Policy as a measure to achieve this.

HSTV strictly prohibits the use or possession of any weapon or simulated weapon by any volunteer while on HSTV property, unless it is stored securely and discreetly in a Volunteer's personal vehicle. This policy applies to all volunteers regardless of whether they are licensed to carry that weapon.

Weapons include:

Instruments used to inflict physical harm or intended to inflict harm, or that could reasonably cause fear of the infliction of harm.

- Firearms, such as pistols, revolvers, shotguns, and rifles.
- Stun guns and tasers.
- BB & pellet guns, electric dart guns, other devices which launch projectiles under pressure.
- Knives having a blade exceeding four inches in length.

- Fixed-blade knives, switchblades, and throwing knives.

This policy also extends to the possession of simulated weapons, which are defined as facsimiles of any category of weapon described above, which resemble the actual weapon but are not capable of use as a weapon.

The consequences for a volunteer bringing a weapon into the HSTV facility will result in release from the Volunteer Program. Possession of illegal weapons will be referred to local law enforcement.

### **Complaints and Conflict Resolution**

If, at any time during your service here at HSTV, you have an issue with the organization, a staff member, another volunteer, or the general public, please make sure to bring it to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

As representatives of HSTV, it is expected that volunteers will uphold the values of HSTV. This extends to the internet and its multitude of social media and review websites. If a volunteer has a grievance or negative feedback of any kind, it must be brought to the Volunteer Coordinator immediately for resolution. Do not seek to resolve these issues online. Doing so is inappropriate and may result in dismissal from the Volunteer Program.

### **Scheduling, Attendance, and Recording Service Hours**

Your support matters! The animals and the HSTV team are counting on you. Volunteers are asked to make a minimum one hour per month commitment to stay active.

#### **Scheduling**

HSTV uses Volgistics and VicNet to manage volunteers. Volunteers must schedule themselves on VicNet. This program allows our volunteers to have more control over their scheduling and helps us organize and communicate better.

Each volunteer will be assigned a pin number which they will use to login, schedule shifts, and to clock-in/ clock-out for their shifts.

VicNet URL: <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll?FROM=243172>

#### **Canceling Shifts**

If you must cancel a shift, please remove yourself from your shift in Volgistics with at least 24-hours' notice. This will allow other volunteers to fill in for you during your absence. Your help is important and staff must plan accordingly for your absences.

#### **Missing Shifts**

Missing volunteer assigned shifts leaves spots available that could have otherwise been staffed by other volunteers. No-shows truly affect everyone. When you sign up for a

shift, our animals, staff, and other volunteers rely on you to be there during that time. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism may result in dismissal from the volunteer program.

### **Recording Service Hours**

For grant funding and scheduling purposes, HSTV maintains records on all volunteers' hours. Volunteers are responsible for recording their service hours by logging in and out using the online VicNet portal, accessible via mobile phone by scanning the posted QR code at <https://www.volgistics.com/vicnet>. If you forget to log in and/or log out for a shift, contact the Volunteer Coordinator promptly so that your time can be properly recorded.

### **Resignation**

Both volunteers and HSTV are free at any time to terminate the volunteer relationship without notice or cause. We do ask that if you are unable to continue your volunteer service, you provide the Volunteer Coordinator with feedback for your time with us. We encourage you to give us specific details about your volunteer service and your reason for resigning. We strive to work through issues that are brought to our attention so that we may better the program.

### **General Rules**

#### **Dress Code and Appearance**

The HSTV Dress Code and Appearance policy has two goals:

**Goal #1:** To protect the health and physical safety of the people and animals with whom we work.

**Goal #2:** To promote an appropriate image to other volunteers, employees, customers, and the public.

The dress code is in effect at any time an HSTV Volunteer is representing HSTV, whether it is on-site or at an event. You may be asked to leave the facility or event for failure to comply with these requirements. Remember to dress with this mindset: anything worn while volunteering will get dirty!

As an HSTV volunteer, you are required to wear the following during each volunteer activity:

- HSTV Volunteer T-shirt      First provided with your initial program fee and extra available for \$20+tax.
- Close-Toed Shoes              Select shoes for comfortable and practicality. No sandals or flip flops.
- Long Pants                      Must cover down to the ankles.

Volunteers working with animals must manage jewelry and body piercings to minimize risk of injury to the wearer and to shelter animals. Piercing jewelry not flush with the

surface of the skin must be removed. Large, open piercings must be covered, filled, or otherwise protected.

HSTV reserves the right to define additional appropriate standards of appearance for the workplace.

### **“Staff Only” Animals & Off-Limits Areas**

Animals identified as “Staff Only” may not be handled by volunteers. Only staff members are allowed to handle and work closely with these animals.

Some areas of our facility, including the entire upstairs of the main building, are considered “Employee Only” and may be accessed only with express permission from the staff on-hand. We ask that you respect the signage, and only enter these areas at the request of a staff member.

### **Parking**

Due to the limited parking available here at HSTV, we request that you park your car in the spaces closest to Kingston Pike. This ensures that our visitors have access to the most convenient parking we have to offer. On busy days and during on-site events, you may be asked to carpool or to park at a neighboring business.

### **Personal Items**

You are advised to leave any and all personal items and belongings in your car or at home, so carry your cell phone at your own risk. There is no safe and secure place at HSTV where we can guarantee the safety of your property. HSTV is not responsible for any lost or stolen property. Any snacks or refrigerated items you bring may be stored in the upstairs breakroom fridge.

### **Non-HSTV Guests/Pets**

HSTV does not allow volunteers to bring pets or non-volunteer guests while volunteering. Volunteers with unapproved guests or pets will be asked to leave, as these can distract volunteers from their tasks and can create a safety issue for both humans and animals.

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Device Use**

All cell phones must be placed on vibrate once you enter the shelter or clinic to volunteer. Your phone should be placed in your pocket and not taken out to ensure your safety and to create a professional image for the public.

The exceptions are when a phone is needed for your safety or to take photos or record videos of our adoptable animals to share with staff for promoting the animals, which we encourage!

Cell phone use while handling an animal is strictly prohibited and volunteers may not use their cell phones while interacting with HSTV customers, unless required for their position. HSTV is not responsible for your lost or damaged equipment.

### **Use of Facilities and Property**

Volunteers are asked to treat agency property as they would their own. Specifically, volunteers are to keep their own work area and common areas clean and well-maintained, and limit their use of HSTV equipment and vehicles to work-related purposes.

Volunteers are required to receive supervisory approval before removing any agency property or vehicles from the premises.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited on HSTV property (indoor or outdoor), within 50 feet of doors and windows, in HSTV vehicles, and while handling HSTV animals off-site. Volunteers are strongly discouraged from smoking while representing HSTV or while engaged in HSTV business, on-or-off-site.

### **Volunteer Safety**

You are responsible for your own welfare and safety while here at HSTV, so be mindful of all the signs and safety precautions. Always use safety equipment and follow instructions to prevent accidents. This will ensure a safe working environment.

### **Hazard Identification and Reporting**

If you discover an unsafe condition, broken equipment, or other safety issue, report it to the Volunteer Coordinator or a staff supervisor immediately.

Examples include:

- Slip/Trip hazards
- Inadequate lighting
- Frayed electrical cords
- Suspicious persons
- Chemical spills
- Blood or bodily fluids

## **Accident/Injury Reporting**

All accidents, including those involving an animal or member of the public, are to be reported immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor on duty, whether or not medical attention is required. This reporting procedure is critical and will not jeopardize the animal involved in any way. We must report all worker's compensation claims, even for volunteers, immediately to our insurance company.

## **Protect Yourself from Zoonotic Diseases**

A zoonotic disease is a disease that can be passed between animals and humans. Zoonotic diseases can be caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi. These diseases are very common. The CDC estimates that more than 6 out of every 10 infectious diseases in humans are spread from animals.

Some common examples are ringworm, kennel cough, giardia and roundworms.

When you are volunteering with animals, you could be exposed to different types of disease. However, following these best practices will significantly decrease the likelihood of bringing disease back home to your family or pets:

1. Stay current on appropriate vaccinations, such as tetanus.
2. Wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap, especially after handling any animal and prior to eating or smoking.
3. Wear sturdy shoes or boots.
4. Use disposable gloves when changing litter pans, washing food and water dishes, or cleaning up feces, urine, or vomit.
5. Disinfect scratches and bite wounds thoroughly.
6. Don't allow animals to lick your face or any wounds.
7. Learn safe and humane animal-handling techniques and use proper equipment.
8. Seek assistance when handling animals whose dispositions are questionable.
9. Report any bites or injuries to shelter staff and to your physician. Should skin be broken or if there is bleeding, we encourage you to seek medical advice.

## **Animal Safety**

### **All Animals**

We count on volunteers to inform us of any signs of illness or unusual behavior in our animals. This can assist us in the early detection of illness or injury to our animals. If you notice any of our animals showing signs of illness or injury, please inform the staff of your observations as soon as possible.

Some signs of illness or injury include:

- Coughing, sneezing, or nasal discharge
- Excessive panting
- Runny or bloody stool
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite

### **Puppies and Kittens**

When our puppies and kittens arrive here at HSTV, they are often not current on vaccinations. This means that they are more susceptible to illness than our adult animals. In order to prevent the spread of illness, we quarantine all new puppies for 7 days. During this time, puppies are considered “Staff Only” and may not be handled or visited by volunteers or the public.

When working with puppies that are out of quarantine, please follow the below guidelines to ensure they are as healthy as possible:

- Do not allow puppies or kittens to be placed on the floor at any time, unless specified by staff.
- Try to hold animals away from your body and avoid unnecessary contact with your clothing.
- Make sure to sanitize your hands or change gloves between each cage.
- Always check the cage card on each cage for any warnings or limitations the animals may have.

### **Training and Classification Levels**

All of the various volunteer positions are described in detail in the next section. Each position’s duties and requirements are listed. Volunteers who attend training and gain experience at HSTV eventually become qualified to apply for positions of greater responsibility.

#### **Training**

Volunteers must attend Orientation to introduce them to HSTV. Once Orientation has been completed, volunteers sign up for shifts via [Volgistics](#), the first of which in each assignment will serve as a training for that position. Each position you are qualified for will also appear on Volgistics by clicking their name in the calendar.

Volunteers must complete an especial training to handle dogs as a Level 1 Canine Caretaker, working with our most polite and calm dogs, and a further training to work with our dogs with special needs as a Level 2 Canine Caretaker. Volunteers may only advance Level 2 Canine Caretaking with the direct referral of the Kennel Tech team.

## Other Opportunities

### Group Volunteering

If you have a group of volunteers who would like to offer their time to our organization, please don't hesitate! HSTV welcomes groups of volunteers year-round to help with numerous large tasks that could not be accomplished without the aid of our volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering with a group of friends, family, or co-workers, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@humanesocietytennessee.org](mailto:volunteers@humanesocietytennessee.org)

Some possible group activities include:

- Deep cleaning
- Donation sorting
- Landscaping
- Cleaning our outdoor dog enclosures
- Special events

### Fostering

If you are interested in opening your door to homeless pets, then fostering may be for you! We have a plethora of puppies and kittens waiting to go through spay/neuter surgery, as well as plenty of older animals that could use a break from the shelter who would love to be moved into a foster home. Wherever your interests lie with foster animals, we would love to have your help!

You can apply to foster on our [website](#).

## Hours for the Public & for Volunteers

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Open to the Public (Adoptions)	Closed	Closed	11:00 AM To 6:00 PM	11:00 AM to 6:00 PM	11:00 AM to 6:00 PM	11:00 AM to 6:00 PM	11:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Shelter Volunteers	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM	9:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Hiking Hounds Volunteers ***	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	8:30am to 4:00 PM	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM
*** Hiking Hounds animals cannot be away from the shelter for more than 2 hours ***							

## Contacts and Communications

Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley  
6717 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919

Email: [Info@HumaneSocietyTennessee.org](mailto:Info@HumaneSocietyTennessee.org)

Website: [www.HumaneSocietyTennessee.org](http://www.HumaneSocietyTennessee.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Humanesocietytennessee/>

Instagram: @HSTV1885

Phone: (865) 573-9675

Fax: (865) 588-6840

TikTok: @HSTV6717

# Thank You!

*Everyone on our team, whether a staff member, volunteer, or simply an animal advocate helps us to further our mission of enriching the lives of companion animals in East Tennessee. Thank you so much for choosing HSTV and for assisting us in being a resource to the public.*

*We look forward to seeing you!*