



HSMC Volunteer Requirements

Age Requirement:

All volunteers must be at least 14 years old to join our program. Volunteers who are under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian during their volunteer shifts. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old to walk dogs. The parent or guardian must also complete a volunteer application and the required orientation process prior to volunteering.

Personal Appearance:

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image HSMC presents to customers and visitors. During business hours or when representing HSMC, volunteers are expected to present a clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. All volunteers must wear their volunteer t-shirt, long pants, and closed-toe shoes to all shifts. Clothes should be okay to get dirty while interacting with our animals.

For your safety, HSMC does not allow visible body piercings other than ears with stud earrings and nose with tiny studs. No rings are allowed in ears or nose. No other visible body piercings are permissible, including eyebrows and lip piercings and no gauges in ear lobes.

Physical & Sensory Requirements:

For Volunteers Working Directly with Animals:

Volunteers who wish to work hands-on with animals should be able to meet the following physical requirements to ensure the safety of both the animals and themselves

- Quick reflexes and the ability to use both hands simultaneously (e.g., opening kennel or cage doors while safely handling an animal).
- Ability to bend, squat, kneel, and reach to leash, harness, lift, or place animals.
- Ability to stand and walk for extended periods of time during a shift.
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds, particularly for roles involving dogs.
- Average vision (with or without corrective lenses) to safely navigate the facility and observe animal behavior.

- Ability to hear animals vocalizing (e.g., growling or sounds indicating fear, stress, or discomfort).
- Ability to hear and respond to audible alarms, warnings from staff or volunteers, and emergency signals.
- Ability to maneuver safely in tight or confined spaces.
- Must not have strong allergies to animals or to chemicals (such as those used in cleaning or grooming) that cannot be managed with medication.
- Ability to tolerate strong and unpleasant odors, exposure to feces, fleas, and the sight of possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.

For Volunteers in Non-Animal-Handling Roles:

Volunteers who prefer roles that do not involve direct animal handling (such as administrative support, events, outreach, or fundraising) should be able to meet the following requirements

- Ability to stand, sit, or walk for moderate periods of time depending on the assigned task.
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff, fellow volunteers, and the public.
- Average vision (with or without corrective lenses) to safely move throughout the facility or event space.
- Ability to hear verbal instructions, announcements, and emergency alerts.
- Comfort working in a busy shelter or event environment, including exposure to animal sounds and odors.
- Must not have allergies to animals or common cleaning products that would interfere with assigned duties and cannot be managed with medication.

Cognitive Abilities:

All volunteers, particularly those working directly with animals, must be able to meet the following cognitive and emotional requirements:

- Ability to understand, remember, and consistently follow instructions, safety guidelines, and established procedures.
- Ability to recognize potentially dangerous or high-risk situations when working with animals and to exercise sound judgment in responding appropriately.
- Ability to remain calm, patient, and composed when interacting with animals who may be frightened, stressed, or reactive, and to behave confidently and sensitively in these situations.
- Ability to receive, apply, and sustain instruction, coaching, and constructive feedback from staff and supervisors.
- Ability to cope effectively in a highly emotional environment, including working in the presence of animals who may be homeless, abandoned, injured, ill, and/or recovering from abuse or neglect.
- Ability to maintain focus, situational awareness, and professionalism in a fast-paced or sometimes unpredictable environment.