



Volunteer Essential Capabilities

Volunteers play a crucial role in helping us keep the shelter running smoothly and efficiently to attain our goal of helping animals in need while searching for their forever homes. In order to safely and effectively serve as a volunteer at the Humane Society for Greater Nashua, volunteers must possess certain capabilities. Some areas of volunteerism require different abilities than others.

It is our goal to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to all who want to support HSFN and we will do our best to provide accommodations whenever possible. However, if the area you have chosen for volunteer service is not compatible with your abilities and accommodations cannot be made, you may be reassigned to another area, or unable to volunteer at the shelter. **Your safety and the safety of the animals are our top priority.**

Essential Capabilities of All HSFN Volunteers

- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally charged environment with some animals that are homeless, abandoned and/or abused, as well as the reality that some of the animals in our care may be euthanized
- Ability to understand HSFN's policies and positions regarding companion animals, and other key animal welfare issues and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing HSFN
- Ability to read and understand animal body language
- Ability to read and understand shelter signage
- Ability to cope with loud noises and unpleasant/strong odors
- Ability to understand, remember, and follow written and verbal instructions and procedures
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities and ask for help when needed
- Comfortable cleaning and using hazardous or toxic chemicals
- Comfortable working independently and with others
- Able to effectively communicate through written and verbal means

Essential Capabilities of Cat & Small Animal Volunteers

- Quick reflexes & ability to use both hands to safely interact with animals in cages
- Ability to bend, squat and lift heavy objects such as bags of litter and food
- Sense of vision, hearing, smell and touch in order to monitor animal body language and cues
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces
- Ability to safely and appropriately handle cats and small animals of various species
- Must not have strong allergies to dogs, cats or other companion animals that can't be managed by medication, or to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning
- Ability to manage unexpected animal behavior without assistance
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals, must be able to remain calm with animals that are upset; behave sensitively and confidently; show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations
- Ability to reach cabinets & cages up to 6 ft. high, using a step stool if needed

Essential Capabilities of Dog Volunteers

- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery exercise kennels, lawn areas, and wooded walking trails
- Ability to stand and move around for significant periods of time while working with dogs

- Average vision to move safely around the building, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, and to be able to read notes on animals' paperwork
- Ability to move and react quickly
- Ability to read and react to an animal's body language and responses in a quick and efficient manner
- High level of manual dexterity to leash/harness animals, handle small tools, and effectively interact with pets
- Quick reflexes & ability to use both hands to safely interact with animals in kennels/cages
- Ability to bend, squat and lift heavy objects such as bags of litter and food
- Sense of vision, hearing, smell and touch in order to monitor animal body language and cues
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces
- Ability to safely and appropriately handle and restrain dogs of all sizes (up to 110lbs) with extreme caution and care
- Must not have strong allergies to dogs, cats or other companion animals that can't be managed by medication, or to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning
- Ability to manage unexpected animal behavior without assistance
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals, must be able to remain calm with animals that are upset; behave sensitively and confidently; show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations