



Essential Capabilities of Volunteers

General Animal Handling and Medical Volunteers

Austin Pets Alive! has a wide array of volunteer opportunities that are typically fulfilled by volunteers who work with or in and around cats and dogs. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities. Completion of an application indicates you believe you possess the basic capabilities. Please note: some accommodations can be made and will be taken into consideration relative to role placement.

Essential Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling and animal).
- High level of manual dexterity to leash/harness animals and handle small tools.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to leash/harness and pick up an animal.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time.
- Average vision (with or without correction) 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 hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to hear calls of alarm such as audible warnings from others or sirens.
- Ability to speak and effectively communicate in English verbally as well as in written form.
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces.
- Must not have strong allergies to animals or to chemicals, such as those used in grooming or cleaning, that can't be managed by medication.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odors, fleas, feces and possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment.
- Ability to reach cabinets and cages at least six feet in height, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to push carts and barrels of potentially heavy laundry; load and unload washer and dryer; fold clean laundry and put away, reaching shelves from ground level up to six feet, using step stool as needed.
- Ability to wash and dry dishes

- Average strength to assist with lifting small to medium size animals (up to 50 pounds)
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.

Essential Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- Reading, writing, spelling and communication skills (example: understand wards such as quarantine), and proficient in the English language.
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals; ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, and show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to receive, incorporate and sustain instruction and feedback.
- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to cope with highly emotionally-charged environment and in the presence of animals who are homeless, abandoned, injured and/or abused.
- Ability to understand Austin Pets Alive's! (APA!) Policies and positions regarding companion animals, animal control, 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 APA!.