



ESSENTIAL VOLUNTEER CAPABILITIES

Shelter work is an exceedingly rewarding, yet uniquely challenging experience. The following are the essential abilities a volunteer needs in order to be successful at the Lawrence Humane Society.

In order to ensure the safety of the animals in our care, as well as the volunteers that provide them with essential care and enrichment, the Lawrence Humane Society has the following essential requirements for participation in the volunteer program.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling animal).
- Ability to travel unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged, slippery and sometimes muddy terrain (both indoors and outdoors), as well as maneuver cramped spaces.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to leash/harness, and/or pick up an animal.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time while walking dogs, socializing cats, or cleaning cages/kennels.
- Ability to see well enough to move safely throughout the building, distinguish animal body language, as well as read instructions and an animal's paperwork.
- Ability to hear if animal is giving warnings, such as growling, yelping or hissing.
- Ability to effectively communicate verbally.
- Ability to react quickly in order to prevent dogs or cats from escaping (example: ability to quickly pursue and retrieve any cats or dogs who have escaped from a kennel or cage).
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.

COGNITIVE CAPABILITIES

- Ability, once trained, to work independently with minimal supervision, while recognizing limitations in knowledge and abilities, knowing when to ask for help if needed.
- If lacking the ability to work independently, whether due to age and/or neurological abnormality, must be able to work alongside a parent or guardian with a focused attention on the task at hand.
- Ability to read and understand instructions and procedures.

- Basic reading, writing, spelling and communication skills.
- Ability to problem solve
- Ability to handle redirection and constructive criticism without responding with negativity.
- Ability to recognize potentially hazardous situations when working with the animals.
- Ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to communicate professionally and politely.
- Acceptance of the boundaries between the role of the volunteer and the role of the staff.
- Maintain a positive attitude and a solution oriented approach to challenging situations, rather than resorting to complaining or gossiping.

It is our hope that the information provided serve as a thorough and useful tool for potential volunteers when deciding whether the Lawrence Humane Society is the right fit for them. If you have any questions about these essential capabilities, or would like more information, please email the Volunteer Manager at volunteer@lawrencehumane.org.