



## **Volunteer Orientation**

Welcome to the Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center and Friends of the Animal Center Foundation (FACF) Orientation Program. Volunteers work in nearly all areas of our organization, providing direct care to the animals, planning events, fundraising, and contributing to the everyday functioning of our Center and programs.

Volunteers are vital to our success! They help to raise awareness of animal welfare issues and assist staff to carry out the mission of the Iowa City Animal Services Division throughout the community. We want your volunteer experience with us to be enjoyable as well as educational. Knowing that a homeless animal is benefiting from your generosity and compassion is a very rewarding experience for you and the center staff.

Following completion of reading this document, please complete the [Volunteer Orientation Quiz](#) located on our website, [icanimalcenter.org](http://icanimalcenter.org).

Thank You,  
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### **The Purpose of the Animal Center:**

To promote the humane treatment of animals through the enforcement of local and state laws enacted to protect both animals and the public. It provides education and a network of animal-related resources, gives sanctuary to animals, and promotes spay/neuter programs, adoptions, and responsible care of all companion animals.

### **The Purpose of FACF:**

FACF is a public non-profit organization formed in 1999 to raise funds to support and expand the animal care services of the Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center. We seek health, comfort, freedom from fear, and a loving guardian for all our homeless companion animals.

### **History**

The Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center was founded by the City of Iowa City in the 1950's. It is a non-profit municipal agency. The Center is part of the Animal Services Division of the Iowa City Police Department. The facility on Kirkwood Avenue was built in 1989 and sections were renovated in 1995. We were displaced by flooding in June 2008 to the Johnson County Fairgrounds. We spent 4 weeks at the fairgrounds before moving to a long-term temporary location on Sand Road. In 2014 construction on the new shelter began and we moved in August 2015. Our shelter is located south of the softball fields on South Gilbert Street. The official address is 3910 Napoleon Lane.

### **Funding**

The Center is funded through the Iowa City Police Department budget and is supplemented by funds raised by FACF. FACF provides financial support for a medical fund, dog training fund, facility improvements beyond City budget provisions, equipment used to care for the animals, educational programs in the community, and both the volunteer and the foster care programs. FACF is funded primarily by private donations.

### **Facility**

The Center responds to and investigates animal welfare cases for Iowa City, Coralville, University Heights, the University of Iowa, and Unincorporated Johnson County. We house animals from these areas and take in a variety of animals including various domestic animals, exotic animals, and wildlife. Our capacity is approximately 120 animals.

Days and hours of operation open to the public and available for volunteer work are:

Monday-Friday: 10:30 AM - 5:30 PM

Saturday: 10:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Closed Sundays and major holidays but volunteers are welcome from 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM

## **Programs**

The Center operates the following programs with support from FACF:

- Foster Program (Cold Noses, Warm Hearts)
- Volunteer Program
- Outreach Animal Welfare/Humane Education

## **Events**

The Center holds pet supply drives and other types of events. These events encourage the adoption of animals, private donations, and help to give the public information regarding the Center's operations.

FACF hosts other fundraising and educational events throughout the year.

Volunteers help with many event responsibilities, from planning and fundraising to transport and handling animals.

## **Services of the Animal Care and Adoption Center:**

### **Adoption Program**

The Center's adoption program includes counseling from Center Staff to help insure appropriate matches between animals and people for lifelong placements. Adoptions include medical screening tests, medical treatments, flea bath, vaccinations, free health examination, temperament evaluation, microchip and license identifications, and adoption informational packages.

Animals are also spayed or neutered before adoption (the surgeries can be performed at two months of age and older). The lack of education about spaying and neutering and the resulting pet overpopulation is one reason why so many animals end up at shelters every year.

The fees and adoption policies are found in the Center pamphlet entitled "Adopting a Pet...Have You Really Thought It Through". Please refer to this information to learn about these items.

### **Receiving of Lost and Unwanted Animals**

The Center accepts lost, stray, or unwanted animals from Iowa City, Coralville, University Heights, the University of Iowa, and Unincorporated Johnson County. The animals receive a medical examination and temperament testing. Based on the results of these tests, an animal may be put up for adoption. Not all animals that come to the

Center are healthy or happy. Sometimes animals we accept have diseases, are sick or injured, or are not socialized. To minimize risk and stress to the animals, only staff, not volunteers, care for these animals. The Center may send an animal like this to foster care for treatment or socialization in a less stressful environment or to a veterinarian for surgery and recovery then on to foster care. Many animals like this can be rehabilitated thanks to donations to Friends of the Animal Center Foundation. The Foundation provides funds for the foster care program, medical fund, dog training fund, and other special needs for the animals at the Animal Center.

### **Welfare Investigations**

The Center's officers respond to complaints regarding cruelty, neglect, or abandonment of companion animals for the purposes of protecting the animals. Their job is to ensure that pet owners comply with state and local laws and to educate owners on how they may humanely care for their companion animals.

### **Licensing**

The Center provides licenses and tags to animals over the age of six weeks for residents of Iowa City. We also maintain a computer registry of owner information so that animals found at large may be reunited with their families as soon as possible.

### **Websites**

The Center maintains a website, which includes general information, adoptable animals, and links to other animal welfare agencies. The site is [www.icanimalcenter.org](http://www.icanimalcenter.org). FACF maintains a website which includes information on donating and supporting the Animal Center and an event calendar. The site is [www.facf.org](http://www.facf.org).

### **Social Media**

The Center has two Facebook accounts--one for the Iowa City Animal Care & Adoption Center and one for Friends of the Animal Center Foundation. A great way to stay informed about current Center activities, needs, and events is to "like" these pages and receive their updates in your Facebook news feed. Volunteers will be invited to join the Iowa City Animal Center Volunteer page on Facebook. Fosters will be invited to join the Iowa City Animal Center Foster page on Facebook.

### **Humane Education**

The education program offers videos, lectures, printed materials, and guided tours to schools, youth organizations, and adult civic groups.

## **Information and Referral Service**

The public often calls the Center for animal related information (i.e. training, behavior problems, and referrals).

## **Volunteer Program**

Safety of the volunteer is top priority at the Animal Center. The training program is designed to reduce risk and maximize the beneficial results the volunteer's work has on the animals. We have a no-show no call policy for training classes. If you register for a class and do not call or email to let us know that you can't make the class, you will be removed as an active volunteer. If you can give notice that you must miss the class, you will be able to rebook the class. You cannot be an active volunteer until you have taken a training class. All volunteers are required to read the Volunteer Orientation Manual, complete the quiz with a passing grade of 70% or higher, complete an application, sign a waiver, pass a background check, and attend training classes. New volunteers may also be mentored one-on-one by a more experienced volunteer to ensure they meet the requirements for working hands-on with the animals and are comfortable doing so independently. Volunteers must be at least 13 years old. Volunteers younger than 16 must be accompanied by a parent. Those under 18 will need parent's permission.

**Because we require that all volunteers take the hands-on training, please do not bring along friends or family to your volunteer sessions.**

Volunteers need to recognize that there are certain penalties for infractions. They are as follows:

- a. Verbal Warning
- b. Written Warning
- c. Volunteer Suspension
- d. Volunteer Termination

**Serious violations may be dealt with by any of the above measures on the first offense.**

Volunteers are required to comply with all Center policy and procedures and follow the direction of Center Staff if questions arise while volunteering. Volunteers must log their time donated in the Volgistics kiosk located in the volunteer area at the Center and must wear a name tag, volunteer T-shirt, long pants, and closed toe shoes while volunteering.

### **Volgistics**

The Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center's volunteer program utilizes Volgistics to track and schedule volunteer shifts. It is required that volunteers can schedule their shifts using this online software. Our volunteer program mandates that at least 2 hours of volunteer time is donated per month for at least a year. We understand that circumstances change and temporary leaves are necessary. These absences need to be communicated to maintain active volunteer status.

### **Community Events**

The Center is involved with many different types of community events. Volunteers are always needed to assist with all aspects of planning and operating these events. When volunteers feel comfortable, they may attend events on behalf of the shelter without the volunteer director present—with permission. It is encouraged to take pictures at events to document all the hard work put into making it possible.

### **Facility Grounds/Building**

Volunteers can help beautify the area inside and outside the facility. They may be involved in gardening projects, painting, cleaning, or trash pick-up. Volunteers should be available as projects arise.

### **Foster Care (Cold Noses, Warm Hearts)**

Fosters are needed to care for special needs, sick, and injured animals in their own homes. Some animals need time for various reasons before they may be placed up for adoption. If you are interested in fostering, please contact the program director by emailing [ADewolf@iowa-city.org](mailto:ADewolf@iowa-city.org).

Fosters go through a different process than normal volunteers. The required steps to become an Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center foster are passing our Online Orientation Quiz, filling out an application, passing a background check, and allowing an annual, mandatory home inspection, legally required by the state of Iowa. For residents of Iowa City, it is required that all resident animals are licensed with the City of Iowa City. We verify all residences to make sure animals are allowed on the property.

## **Dog Volunteers**

As a dog volunteer you will be enriching the lives of dogs in our facility. When you are a dog volunteer, you are helping to make them more adoptable, encouraging positive behavior, and helping to reduce the stress level. Dog volunteers are designated a color (green or yellow) depending on ability and fulfillment of requirements. All dog volunteers start at the green level and are required to pass Green Dog Training class. Additional training with a mentor may be required to ensure a new volunteer is comfortable and capable of working independently. Advancement to the Yellow Level will require testing with the volunteer coordinator. Yellow level requires a minimum of 100 volunteer hours, completing an assignment, passing a written test, taking additional classes, assuming additional responsibilities, and will be dependent on the staff's recommendations.

### **Yellow Dog Volunteer Advancement Requirements:**

Record <i>at least</i> 100 hours green dog volunteering.
Know the adoption procedure utilized by ICAC.
Know what to do in case of injury or bite.
Assist staff with morning cleaning of dog kennels (6:30-8:30 am) on at least 2 different dates.
Assist staff with bathing a dog (schedule with kennel staff).
Observe staff performing a behavior assessment (schedule with Jen Read or Sophie McClatchy).
Attend Dog Enrichment class.
Read "Dog Communication and Body Language" ( <a href="https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/dog-behavior/dog-communication-and-body-language/">https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/dog-behavior/dog-communication-and-body-language/</a> ) (Alternative: Dog Body Language Class).
Complete the assignment associated with "Dog Communication and Body Language."
Complete Shelter Dog Project.
Yellow Dog Written Exam

## **Dog Volunteer Shifts**

There are a variety of shifts for dog volunteers. The most common are elaborated on below.

Dog volunteers work directly with Animal Care Technicians or independently in the cleaning and sanitizing of all animal cages and areas throughout the facility. Most cleaning takes place between the hours of 6:30 AM and 10:30 AM seven days a week (starting at 7:00 AM on weekends and holidays). These are referred to as *Dog Area Cleaning* shifts.

Most shifts for dog volunteers are referred to as *Green Dog Walking* shifts. Green dog volunteers can sign up to come walk the green dogs any time between 10:30 AM and 4:30 PM. Green Dog Training Class is a requirement to sign up for these shifts.

The last shift of the day is called *Dog Closing*. The priorities of this shift are getting dogs out of their kennel one last before the center closes. Additionally, dog water bowls need to be refilled to last through the night. Any messes (torn blankets, destroyed toys, etc.) need to be cleaned up before leaving.

*Yellow Dog Work* is between 10:30 AM and 5:30 PM. To sign up for this shift, yellow status must be obtained (see advancement requirements above). Duties for Yellow Dog Volunteers are flexible and range from taking dogs to training class to doggy days out in the community. Because Yellow Dog Volunteers have extensive experience and complete various additional trainings, staff can rely on to complete more advanced tasks.

The shelter offers additional shifts that do not involve interacting with the animals. These are referred to as *Floater Duties*, or ongoing maintenance that goes toward making sure the shelter stays clean and organized. Floaters assist in completing dishes, doing laundry, organizing rooms, and sorting donations.

## **Cat Volunteers**

As a cat volunteer you will be enhancing the lives of cats in our facility. When you are a cat volunteer, you are helping to make them more adoptable, encouraging positive behavior, and helping to reduce their stress levels. Cat volunteers are not separated into levels of service and are not designated a color (green or yellow).

There are additional trainings available to cat volunteers that involve clicker training and advanced understanding of cat body language. Dates for these trainings are sent out via email.



## **Cat Volunteer Shifts**

There are a variety of shifts for dog volunteers. The most common are elaborated on below.

*Cat Area Cleaning* shifts are vital to the function of the center. These volunteers work directly with Animal Care Technicians or independently in the cleaning and sanitizing of cat cages and areas throughout the facility. Most cleaning takes place between the hours of 6:30 AM and 10:30 AM, seven days a week (starting at 7:00 AM on weekends and holidays).

The most common shift for cat volunteers is *Cat Socialization*. Staff relies on volunteers to get cats out of the cages for exercise and play time. Doing this allows for the cats to get used to human interaction and helps staff better understand their personalities when trying to find adopters. Socialization shifts are available between 10:30 AM and 4:30 PM.

Similarly to the closing shift for dog volunteers, *Cat Closing* shifts are designed to assist staff in shutting down the shelter for the night. Between 4:30 PM and 5:30 PM, volunteers help to clean litter boxes, fill water bowls, and get the cats out for one last roam around the room.

The shelter offers additional shifts that do not involve interacting with the animals. These are referred to as *Floater Duties*, or ongoing maintenance that goes toward making sure the shelter stays clean and organized. Floaters assist in completing dishes, doing laundry, organizing rooms, and sorting donations.

## **Small Animal Volunteers**

On occasion, the center will get in rabbits, birds, guinea pigs, ferrets, etc. Though we do not consistently have them like dogs and cats, we enjoy having volunteers to interact with them and socialize them to humans. To work with these animals, there is a Small Animal Class that needs to be attended. Due to inconsistent intake of these types of animals, it is not always offered. For interest in this class, contact the Volunteer Program Assistant.

Like for dog and cat volunteers, there are different shifts. *Cleaning shifts* are available from between the hours of 6:30 AM and 10:30 AM seven days a week (starting at 7:00 AM on weekends and holidays). *Socialization shifts* are between 10:30 AM and 4:30 PM.

## **The realities of shelter work.**

Volunteering at the Animal Center is very rewarding. Volunteers truly make a difference in the animal's lives, keeping them clean and healthy, providing care and socialization, and creating a positive human-animal bond.

Volunteers may become attached to a particular animal while helping at the Center. It may be sad to say goodbye when they get adopted, but the best feeling in the world is knowing that you made a difference in that animal's life, and they are going on to a loving forever home.

Volunteering at the Animal Center can be challenging. Shelter animals come from a wide variety of backgrounds (often unknown). They may have no previous training, may not be potty or litter box trained, may be fearful and shy, or rambunctious and seemingly intolerable. The shelter environment can be stressful for the animals and their behavior may show it. Dogs get excited when volunteers take them out for a walk and may jump all over their kennel or the volunteer. They bark, setting off all the other dogs and a chorus of loud barking ensues. Cats under stress may eliminate outside their litter box, requiring cleaning multiple times a day. Volunteers are exposed to feces, urine, and other messes and are required to clean them following Animal Center protocol. A volunteer may see an animal that is not available for adoption yet (there is a 5-day waiting period) and want to interact with it, but volunteers only work with animals that are available for adoption. Not all animals that come to the shelter become available for adoption and volunteer interaction. If an animal is far too sick to be treated by a veterinarian or too aggressive to be safely placed in a home, it may be euthanized. While this does not happen frequently, euthanasia is a reality of responsible and humane shelter work. Illness among shelter animals may mean extra cleaning protocols for volunteers to follow that help prevent the spread of disease.

**Volunteers are expected to donate a minimum of 2 hours every month. You will also need to participate in morning cleaning twice a year. Volunteers that have taken the training class but not volunteered for 2 months will be removed from the active volunteer database.**

As an Animal Center volunteer, you make a meaningful contribution to the shelter and the animal's mental and physical health and wellbeing. If you have questions about volunteering or anything discussed in this orientation, please contact the volunteer coordinator at [ADewolf@Iowa-City.org](mailto:ADewolf@Iowa-City.org). You may also leave a message at (319) 887-6083, and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Please note that the Volunteer Program Assistant is not in the office on Sundays or Mondays.

The Volunteer program at the Iowa City Animal Care & Adoption Center is funded in part by donations to Friends of the Animal Center Foundation. For more information or to donate, contact:

FACF  
PO Box 1345  
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[www.facf.org](http://www.facf.org)

