



Essential Capabilities of ARLGP Volunteers

Volunteering to help animals is extremely rewarding but can also present some challenges. Below are the essential abilities a volunteer needs in order to safely participate in the ARLGP volunteer program.

Essential physical capabilities of ALL volunteers

- Ability to work in the presence of potential allergens including peanut butter, cat, dog and small animal dander as well as cleaning chemicals, and an immune system strong enough to tolerate exposure to dust, dirt and zoonotic diseases.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time during shift.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to pick up containers, feed animals, move cages, clean, etc.
- Average vision, smell, hearing, steadiness of hands and body and physical strength (example: average sense of smell and touch in order to assess body condition of animals, and to note signs of illness or injury. Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain).
- Ability to move safely around the building, and to observe animal body language without difficulty.

Additional physical capabilities of volunteers handling animals

- Ability to walk unaided on various terrain & surfaces.
- Ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling animal).
- A high level of manual dexterity to leash, harness or hold animals and handle small tools.
- Ability to reach, bend, squat and stand frequently and for extended periods of time.
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces and react quickly in order to prevent animals from escaping their enclosures.
- Must be physically able to lift a moderate amount of weight, such as bags of food or litter, or animals of small to medium size.

Essential mental capabilities of ALL volunteers

- Ability to understand, remember and follow both written and verbal instructions.
- Once trained, must be able to work independently with minimal supervision yet be able to recognize limitations and ask for help when needed. Should be able to work independently within a team atmosphere with other volunteers and staff.
- Must be able to understand and observe shelter signage, to speak and effectively communicate verbally as well as in written form.

- Ability to observe an animal's reactions and evaluate the proper response to handling behavioral problems that are revealed during socialization.
- Must be able to recognize a potentially dangerous situation when working with/around animals and 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 deal with strong and unpleasant odors, and to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.

Essential emotional capabilities of ALL volunteers

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to understand constructive criticism.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally charged environment.
- Ability to understand ARLGP's 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 the ARLGP.

Questions or concerns about your eligibility to volunteer? Please feel free to connect with our volunteer coordinator at scote@arlgp.org or (207) 517-3934 to discuss any questions or concerns about our volunteer requirements.