



VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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Welcome

The Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland (ARLGP) is grateful and highly appreciative of your desire to donate your time to our cause, and we will make every effort to provide a productive, educational, and rewarding experience for you while you support our work on behalf of the animals.

The ARLGP will honor your volunteer agreement by providing you with the appropriate orientation, training, on-the-job supervision, and support in your work. Our goal is to provide you with a rewarding experience, while the ARLGP benefits from your donation.

Your commitment to the ARLGP is vital to our level of success and the quality of care our animals receive. While working as a volunteer, we request that you perform your duties as assigned and directed by your supervisor and uphold the ARLGP's policies and procedures.

This manual is meant to serve as an introduction to our mission and programs as well as provide an overview of policies and protocols. While serving as a volunteer, you are an ambassador to our community (on or off-site). It is important to have a basic knowledge of shelter operations. If you are ever unsure of an answer, please refer the inquiry to your supervisor or contact your supervisor for appropriate information. We will do our best to keep you updated on changes and new programs. **PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT.**

Contact Information

Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland

217 Landing Road

Westbrook, ME 04091

(Mailing Address: PO Box 336, Westbrook, ME 04098)

207-8540-9771

Shelter backline: 207-856-2696

Public Hours of Operation (**currently closed due to Covid until further notice**)

~~Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 11am – 5pm~~

~~Wednesday – Closed~~

~~Friday 11am – 6pm~~

~~Saturday & Sunday 10am – 4pm~~

Volunteer Coordinator

Shannon Cote

scote@arlgp.org

Direct phone: 207-517-3934

Office hours: Monday – Friday 9am – 5:30pm

Mission statement

The ARLGP nurtures the connection between people and pets to advance animal welfare and improve the quality of life in our community.

The ARLGP provides temporary care and shelter for stray, abandoned, confiscated and relinquished animals, and places as many pets as possible into responsible and caring homes; we create awareness and support for the humane treatment of all animals; we strive to end animal overpopulation through education and the promotion of spaying and neutering; we make end-of-life decisions based on safety and animal welfare considerations.

Who we are

A LIFE-SAVING ORGANIZATION

Animal welfare organizations are often classified as “kill” or “no-kill” shelters, but as the animal welfare sector changes and grows, these labels can be misleading and very confusing.

The ARLGP discourages the use of the terms “kill” and “no-kill.” We are a lifesaving organization committed to the preservation of life. This means we do not euthanize due to space constraints or based on a time limit for adoptable animals, we do not euthanize for color, breed or age.

We embrace animals who may have health challenges and with a little extra care can be rehomed. Our guiding principal is always quality of life for the animal; even if it is obtained with support from medical treatment or diet. We are very committed to hospice and foster homes, so that each animal receives the love, compassion and dignity it deserves.

We are a high-adoption, open-admission facility. There is no time limit on an animal’s stay in our care. We do everything we can to ensure each animal has the opportunity for a new beginning, and provide them with the care, treatment and time they require, before they find their new family.

Euthanasia is performed when it is the only alternative to end an animal’s suffering due to terminal illness, severe injury, mental deterioration, or when the animal poses a safety concern for other animals or humans. Indefinite confinement of living in a shelter environment is also not an acceptable alternative. Hospice and foster homes allow us to continue our life saving efforts and maintain our 98% live release rate.

Euthanasia is never considered unless reasonable medical alternatives or behavioral modifications have been exhausted. The ARLGP is proud to partner with local veterinarians, certified trainers and animal behaviorists, along with surgical specialists to make this very important decision in the best interest of our animals, our organization and our community.

We also have partnerships with shelters in other areas of the country that are inundated with animals as their communities lack access to spay/neuter programs. These shelters may not fit the “no-kill” category but labeling them a “kill” shelter diminishes the hard work and compassion they provide to their communities and to homeless animals.

We want to help those communities move towards the same lifesaving work that we do. We can’t achieve those goals if we are operating from the “kill” / “no-kill” paradigm. The ARLGP respects and values the work that all shelters and rescues do, without judgement.

We are fortunate to be valued by a community that supports animals in need, has access to spay/neuter services, and warmly welcomes animals into their loving homes. WE ARE PROUD OF OUR LIFESAVING WORK.

Services & programs

Microchipping

We strongly encourage that adopters microchip their pets. Microchipping is a permanent form of identification which greatly improves the chances of reconnecting a lost or stolen animal with an owner. Furthering our efforts to keep animals in their homes, the ARLGP offers microchipping for the cost of \$40.

Public assistance

Whenever possible, the ARLGP partners with good, loving pet owners to keep animals in their home.

- **Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic:** The ARLGP Spay/Neuter Clinic holds public spay/neuter days 2-3 times a month for cats, dogs, and rabbits. Members of the public who meet certain financial requirements qualify for these services. In addition,
- **Pet Food Assistance:** To help support our community of pet families, the ARLGP provides pet food to those in need of temporary assistance.
- **Wellness Clinics** are offered quarterly and are an opportunity for members if the public to access vaccinations at a reduced cost.

The ARLGP as a community resource

- We maintain **lost and found** files to help reunite pets and their owners. 403 families reunited in 2019!
- **Ani-meals on Wheels** – We partner with Southern Maine Agency on Aging to provide Meals on Wheels recipients in the Greater Portland area assistance with pet food when needed.
- **Humane Education** - Humane Education is a pillar of our organization, teaching youth of all ages how to be responsible, compassionate, and kind. In 2019, 12,200 students participated in our educational programming!
- Our **Country Kitties** program places feral cats coming into the shelter into appropriate homes.
- **Behavior & Training** – we offer programs, guidance, and support to community members.

Intake and adoption process

The ARLGP supports **14 contracting towns:**

- Buxton
- Cape Elizabeth
- Casco
- Chebeague Island
- Gray
- Gorham
- Long Island
- Portland
- Raymond
- Scarborough
- South Portland
- Standish
- Westbrook
- Windham

There are a variety of ways that animals make their way to us, including strays, owner surrenders and transports. In 2019, we saw over 5,000 animals come through our doors. The intake to adoption process varies depending on an animal's behavioral and medical needs. We are fortunate to be able to take the time needed to get each animal ready for a new life in a loving home.

Our **adoption process** is fast, fun, and friendly. Every person adopting from the shelter must complete an adoption survey. Potential adopters are counseled and informed of the animal history and health records to ensure that adopters will properly care for their pets through regular vet visits, exercise, companionship, and any necessary training.

All **adoption fees** cover life-saving treatment and care provided by the ARLGP. In addition, the following services and treatments will have been provided to adopted animals:

DOGS

Dogs adopted from the ARLGP will have also been provided the following services and treatments:

- spay/neuter procedure
- heartworm test (over 6 months)
- distemper and kennel cough vaccination
- rabies vaccination (over 16 weeks) and tag
- leash and collar
- discounted coupon for ARLGP canine obedience classes

CATS

Cats adopted from the ARLGP will have also been provided the following services and treatments:

- spay/neuter procedure
- feline Leukemia test
- feline immunodeficiency test (over 6 months)
- rabies vaccination (over 16 weeks)
- distemper vaccination
- basic worming
- ear mite treatment (if necessary)

New beginnings for thousands. Last year, 4,135 animals were adopted into loving homes:

- 1,384 dogs
- 2,435 cats
- 316 small animals

Volunteer program

Volunteers are the heart of the ARLGP and support us in all aspects of shelter operations. With a volunteer community of over 800, we are able to meet the day to day needs of the animals, pull off amazing events, and support animals in their journey through much needed care in foster homes. Your commitment to the ARLGP is vital to our level of success and the quality of care our animals receive.

While volunteering, we request that you perform your duties as assigned and by your supervisor and department staff and be supportive of the ARLGP's policies and procedures. Due to the high volume of traffic through the shelter and fluctuating number of animals, the workload may vary. We ask that you be flexible in your assigned position and assist with other duties as requested.

Volunteer requirements

- Must be able to commit to a regular weekly schedule for a minimum of 6 months.
- Must abide by our policies and procedures as outlined in this manual or included in trainings.
- Volunteers must have current health insurance. All ARLGP volunteers are required to be covered under their own health insurance policy. There are no exceptions to this.
- Must have reliable access to the internet for obtaining information about volunteer positions and shelter updates.
- Must meet the mental and physical essential capabilities of volunteers.
- Age requirements:
 - Minimum age is 13, volunteering with a parent/guardian until 16 (child and adult must each complete an application, attend orientation, and co-volunteer in the same job)
 - 16 years old to volunteer independently or to work with dogs
 - 18 years of age to volunteer in the surgery clinic
 - 21 years of age to assist with animal transports

Volunteer entrance

During your shift, please use the designated Staff & Volunteer Entrance on the lower level of the building. If you visit at a time other than your designated shift, please observe the shelter's open hours, use the main entrance, sign in at the front desk and experience the shelter as a normal member of the public would.

Time sheets & nametags

All volunteers are required to sign in and out of their shift. It is important that volunteers are honest and accurate when recording hours. An accurate record of the time you donate to the ARLGP is important in helping us understand the amount of work that goes into keeping the shelter running smoothly. You can include volunteering on a resume as work experience and use your records as a reference and for tax purposes.

A name tag will be provided to you. Volunteers are required to wear their nametag while working, as it identifies you to fellow volunteers, staff, and visitors.

Volunteer shift supervisors

The manager of the area in which you volunteer is your supervisor. Department managers oversee the day to day work of volunteers as well as designate staff for training. Please feel free to ask your supervisor, or any staff member in your department, if you have questions about your role, or would like some additional training. The Volunteer Coordinator is your resource for general questions, comments, and concerns, as well as volunteer scheduling, and orientation.

Canine Manager: Kathleen Fobear

Email: kfobear@arlgp.org

Phone: (207) 517-3952

Volunteer Coordinator: Shannon Cote

Email: scote@arlgp.org

Phone: (207) 517-3934

Feline & Small Animal Manager: Molly Draper

Email: mdraper@arlgp.org

Phone: (207) 517-3957

Foster Coordinator: Ann Eagan

Email: foster@arlgp.org

Phone: (207) 517-3956

Guest Services Manager: Sarah Flynn

Email: sflynn@arlgp.org

Phone: (207) 517-3958

Training & Behavior Manager: Brittany Linkenheimer

Email: training@arlgp.org

Phone: (207) 517-3965

Schedules & Attendance

Most volunteer positions require a regular, weekly commitment, and shifts average about 2 hours in length. Please understand that certain jobs are only available at certain times.

There are many people and animals depending on you. We understand you may need to miss a shift occasionally and ask that you notify us as far in advance as possible so we can plan and find someone to fill in if needed. If unexpected absences are reoccurring you may be asked to resign, if a more suitable schedule cannot be agreed upon.

We ask volunteers to refrain from showing up during unscheduled shifts unless you are subbing for an absent volunteer. We keep detailed volunteer schedules in each department, so our staff members know when volunteers are present. If you would like to increase your weekly volunteer shifts, or change your schedule, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Calling out - If you know in advance that you will be going on vacation, etc., please email the Volunteer Coordinator to let her know. If you have a last-minute need to call out, please call the backline at 856-2696 after 8:00am to get a message to the staff in your department.

Holidays - The ARLGP closes to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. While many staff have these days off, we have a "skeleton crew" here to ensure that the essentials and our animal needs are being met. We do not expect that volunteers to come in on these holidays, however sign-up sheets will be posted for volunteer shifts on these days. Regularly scheduled volunteers are encouraged to sign up, but it is not required.

Inclement Weather Policy - In the event of unsafe road conditions, volunteers reserve the right to miss their scheduled shift last minute. Informing staff with as much notice as possible is appreciated. You can email the Volunteer Coordinator or call the backline at 856-2696 to let us know. If shelter management decides to close the shelter due to inclement weather, all volunteer shifts are cancelled and will be covered by staff.

Leave of Absence - If needed, your services may be put on hold for a period of up to 6 months. Any volunteer who is inactive, for any reason, for a period of longer than 6 months may be required to submit a new volunteer application and attend another orientation session.

Probation period

The probation period for all volunteers is 30 calendar days from the first day of scheduled volunteer time. This probation period gives the Volunteer Coordinator the opportunity to determine whether the volunteer can satisfactorily perform the job for which they have volunteered. It also allows the volunteer time to adjust and decide if volunteering for the ARLGP is right for them. A volunteer may also choose, with the consent of the Volunteer Coordinator, to change their position to another area work, should a position be available.

Guests

Guests may not accompany you during your scheduled shift and they may not assist you with your assignments. This includes the walking trails behind the building. This includes for four-legged friends! Personal pets should remain at home to ensure the safety of all our animal friends.

You may escort guests through the shelter for a tour, at a time you are not scheduled to work. The Volunteer Coordinator would be happy to talk with anyone considering volunteering.

Smoking

The ARLGP is a smoke-free campus. This includes the dog walking trails.

Dress code

When volunteering, you are a representative of the ARLGP. Dress is casual, but suitable, appropriate clothing is required. When working with animals, clothing may get torn or stained, so please do not wear anything you can't live without. While various positions may have additional requirements, we ask that for health, safety, and public perception, volunteers observe the following guidelines:

- Clothing must be clean, free from excessive tears, holes, or rips, and allow for frequent bending, stooping, and lifting.
- No visible undergarments.
- Appropriate footwear is always required. Shoes should be comfortable & closed-toed with a rubber sole. No high heels, sandals, or flip-flops.
- Shorts must reach mid-thigh.
- No inappropriate prints or graphics.
- Dog walkers are encouraged to wear long pants to protect from scratches and ticks on the trails.
- Please do not cut or alter your official volunteer t-shirt when representing the ARLGP.

On-going training

When policies, procedures, and programs change we may ask volunteers to attend a training or informational session. We encourage all volunteers to attend these meetings if they are able. If you are unable to attend, information will be distributed outlining key information.

Personal belongings

The ARLGP is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. Please keep valuables at home or locked in your vehicle, and please retain the keys to your vehicle on your person.

Accidents/bites

If an accident or injury occurs while you are volunteering, the ARLGP is authorized to seek emergency medical treatment on your behalf. However, all volunteers must be covered under their own health insurance.

In the event of an animal bite, you must immediately report this to your direct supervisor and/or manager on duty and file a bite report. Any animal which draws blood must be quarantined for ten days per state and federal law. Failure to report this will result in termination.

Grievances

It is important that you follow the proper chain of command. If you have a grievance of any kind, please report it to the Volunteer Coordinator. If it is not resolved, then it will be presented to Director of Community Engagement, the Executive Director, and if necessary, passed along to our Board of Directors as appropriate.

*Immediate concerns regarding an animal's health or well-being should be directed to the supervisor or staff members of your department.

Termination/Resignation

Upon leaving the ARLGP please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. This enables us to keep our records up-to-date and to provide the best of care for our animal friends.

Volunteers not following the protocols/policies of the ARLGP will be given two verbal warnings by their supervisor. If the violation(s) continue after two verbal warnings, the volunteer will be terminated.

The following behaviors/violations will result in immediate termination (no verbal warnings given):

- Abuse, mistreatment, harassment, use of offensive language or threats of any kind towards the animals, staff, or other volunteers of the ARLGP
- Theft of ARLGP property or money
- False information on the volunteer application
- Violation of ARLGP's adoption policies
- Intentional damage to ARLGP property
- Use of or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on the ARLGP property
- 3 consecutive absences without notification to the staff supervisor

Confidentiality is essential to our organization. All information regarding new, current, or past owners of animals as well as information relating to members and donors must be kept confidential. Any information pertaining to animals not currently available for adoption must also be kept confidential. It is highly important that we are respectful of our staff, volunteers, and community members and strictly adhere to this policy.

Holding Areas

Holding areas refer to areas of the shelter that contain animals not yet available for adoption. For your safety and the safety of our animals, please observe the staff only policy in these areas. Unless your volunteer role involves working in these spaces with staff oversight, entrance into these spaces is off-limits. As a reminder, these animals are not yet adoptable, and are here for the following reasons:

- Waiting to be reunited with their owner (stray)
- Medical treatment
- Bite quarantine
- Transfer quarantine
- Behavior & Medical Assessment

It is important that we follow state and federal law in quarantine cases and in medical cases, minimize foot traffic and take proper precautions depending on the condition. Photographing these animals is not permitted.

Essential capabilities of volunteers

To serve as a volunteer safely and effectively, ARLGP volunteers should possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities. **In the event of co-volunteering, the supervising co-volunteer should meet these requirements – see below.*

Essential physical capabilities of ALL volunteers

Experience and familiarity with cats, critters and dogs and their anatomy is desirable. Most positions involve some cleaning and can involve the use of hazardous or toxic chemicals. Must not have strong allergies to companion animals that cannot be managed by medication and must possess an immune system strong enough to tolerate exposure to dander, dust, dirt and zoonotic diseases. Average vision, smell, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, quick reflexes, physical strength, and mental alertness. Ability to walk unaided on various terrain & surfaces. Ability to move safely around the building, and to observe animal body language without difficulty. Must be able to read, understand and observe shelter signage, to speak and effectively communicate verbally as well as in written form.

Essential physical capabilities of volunteers handling animals

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 or for periods of time. Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces and react quickly to prevent animals from escaping their enclosures. These positions require average vision, smell, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, quick reflexes, physical strength, and mental alertness (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). 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. 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 cope with a highly emotionally charged environment involved with euthanasia and animal placement. 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.

Supervision requirement for ALL Volunteers

Once trained, volunteers must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed. Should be able to work independently as well as within a team atmosphere with other volunteers and staff.

Information for overseeing co-volunteers of children and those with disabilities

We are happy to be able to provide experiences for people of all ages and abilities interested in learning about the humane treatment and care of animals. In order to provide these opportunities, we rely on a supervising co-volunteer to help ensure a safe, positive, and successful volunteer experience. Our expectations and requirements for overseeing co-volunteers are as follows:

- Overseeing co-volunteers are always expected to be with their partner, and to actively participate as a volunteer with them.
- Are responsible for having read the volunteer job description and explained the duties and responsibilities to their partner. It is their responsibility to monitor and mentor them through their volunteer time at the ARLGP, until they can volunteer independently.
- Are responsible for having read the Volunteer Manual and have communicated ARLGP's volunteer policies to their partner and are responsible for modelling and reinforcing appropriate and professional conduct, including dress, use of offensive language, calling out of a shift, and how to communicate with ARLGP staff in a constructive and positive manner regarding conflict or feedback.
- Are responsible for their partner's safety and can model and reinforce correct and safe methods and techniques taught during the training.
- Ensure that their partner is adhering to the parameters and details of the assigned position, and that he or she works cooperatively with the staff within the department.

Contagious (and zoonotic) diseases

Shelter animals can sometimes carry diseases that are transmittable to both you and your pets. You should not let this list alarm you, but rather remind you that you are volunteering in a hospital-like environment where these organisms often exist.

The term “zoonotic” refers to illnesses that are contagious to both animals and people. The most effective means of preventing the spread is to:

- Wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap, especially after handling any animal, prior to eating or drinking, and following use of the restroom.
- Immediately disinfect scratches and bite wounds. Please ask a staff member for assistance.
- Let your physician know that you work closely with shelter animals.

Just as you can catch illnesses from animals, you can also unknowingly carry illnesses home to your pets. The most effective means of preventing the spread of illness to your pets (or from your pets to our shelter animals) is to:

- Make sure that your pets have up-to-date vaccinations.
- Let your veterinarian know that you work with shelter animals.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap at the end of your shift.
- Change your shelter clothes before socializing with your animals at home and vice versa.
- Check the soles of your shoes before leaving the shelter to ensure you are not tracking feces into your car and home. Even better, designate a pair of shoes to be your "shelter shoes" and take them off before entering your home.

Below are short descriptions of some common diseases in the shelter.

- **Upper Respiratory Infection (URI):** Refers to several common viral and/or bacterial infections in cats in shelters causing cold like symptoms including sneezing, nasal discharge watery eyes, fever, lack of appetite, etc. This is very contagious to other cats.
Ringworm: A zoonotic fungal skin infection.
- **Fleas:** Small parasitic insects that live on the blood of animals.
- **Internal Parasites:** Refers to several internal parasites including various kinds of worms and other microscopic organisms. Most are contagious to other animals and people.
- **Ear Mites:** Microscopic organisms living in the ears of the host (most common in felines).
- **Mange:** A skin infection caused by mites: two kinds, one is zoonotic, and one is contagious only to other dogs.
- **Kennel Cough:** Cold-like infection in dogs that can be caused by several viruses and/or bacteria.

There are also a host of less common, but potentially very serious diseases including rabies, parvo, canine distemper, panleukopenia, FIP, FeLV, and FIV.