

# VOLUNTEER POSITION: Small Animal Socializer



**DEPARTMENT:** Feline & Small Animal Department

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** Volunteer Team, Feline & Small Animal Manager, and staff

## **SUMMARY OF ROLE**

Small Animal Socializers provide enrichment and play time for our critters (bunnies, guinea pigs, rats, etc.), which helps them to be more adoptable and ensures they remain healthy and happy during their stay. Socializers also assist with daily shelter operations.

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

- **Schedule:** Weekly; volunteers are expected at the same day & time every week.
- **Duration of Assignment:** 6-month minimum commitment; there is a high level of training involved in this position. Volunteers may continue in this position for as long as they wish after the initial 6 months.

**PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Exact duties will vary depending on the volunteer's shift time and the needs of the department. Possible duties include:

- Provide socialization and enrichment which may involve floor play time, petting, creating food puzzles and games, grooming, or talking
- Hand out fresh greens and veggies
- Spot clean cages and refill food and water as needed
- Assist with general tidying of the small animal areas: sweeping, mopping, cleaning glass, and other duties as assigned by department staff
- Abide by protocols of safe animal handling, disease control and prevention
- Work collaboratively and professionally with shelter personnel and volunteers to achieve an efficient, well-run environment for all

## **VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS**

**Requirements\*:** Volunteers in this position must possess the following skills and capabilities:

- 16 years of age or older
- Able to volunteer as an individual, but work in a team when required
- Able to be flexible in the assigned position and assist with other duties as requested

## **Skills**

- Preference is given to people with small animal experience, but will train those that are interested and willing to learn about small animal care
- Must be open to learning to care for all types of small animals that come into our care
- Able to take direction well and to work both independently and as a member of a larger team
- Strong communication skills and able to follow instructions clearly and efficiently, sometimes with minimal supervision.
- Dependable and responsibly able to communicate with the volunteer management team if unable to make a shift.
- Basic reading comprehension and writing in English - written signs are placed around the shelter to communicate important health and safety information.

## **Physical Capabilities**

- Able to squat, bend, twist, and lift frequently within confined space with hard floor.
- A degree of dexterity in hands and fingers to safely open animal enclosures and operate necessary cleaning tools like disinfecting hoses and sprayers.
- Walking on wet floors with appropriate non-slip footwear.
- Bend, lift and crouch to access equipment and supplies.
- Be on your feet for the duration of a two-hour shift.
- Able to bend and lift up to 20 pounds to remove cage tops and remove animals from their cages
- See well enough to read animal body language and read important instructional signage.
- Hear well enough to detect animal warning vocalizations.

## **Mental/Emotional Capabilities**

- Understand, remember, and follow instructions (both written and verbal).
- Work independently with minimal or no supervision (once trained), while also recognizing limits in knowledge/abilities and asking for help when needed.
- Work cooperatively with other people and take direction and feedback from peers, staff, and/or leadership.
- Recognize potentially hazardous situations and respond appropriately or notify the appropriate person.
- Comfortable around loud noises such as barking dogs and industrial washing machines.
- Remain calm when faced with unexpected animal behaviors or other challenging situations.

\*If you or someone you are representing may need some assistance or reasonable accommodation to meet these requirements, please contact [volunteer@arlgp.org](mailto:volunteer@arlgp.org) before submitting your application.

## **TRAINING REQUIRED**

- ARLGP Orientation & Volunteer Planning Sessions (online & in-person)
- Fear Free Shelters Certification strongly recommended but not required
- Willingness to participate in occasional continuing education sessions

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

As a vibrant and busy shelter, volunteers can expect an often fast paced, and sometimes emotionally charged atmosphere. While performing the duties of the job, volunteers may be exposed to odors or airborne particles including animal fur, dander, and cleaning products. The noise level in the shelter can be loud, depending on the area.

Volunteers performing care roles may be exposed to animals experiencing higher levels of stress, cleaning chemicals, or contagious diseases. The ARLGP recommends maintaining basic hygiene included but not limited to changing out of clothing worn at the shelter after a volunteer shift and regularly washing hands.

**Peanut Allergen Warning:** At the Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland peanut products may be found in any area where animals are present, especially with dogs. Peanut butter is commonly used to provide enrichment and medication, and volunteers may come in contact with these products or animals who have recently consumed these products if working onsite. While peanut products are uncommon in cat areas, there is shared equipment and laundry between species that may carry a risk of peanut exposure. Additionally, peanut products may be in food served to humans at the ARLGP.

## **DRESS CODE**

When volunteering at the shelter, 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 don't 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 general guidelines for dress:

- Clothing must be clean, free of excessive tears, holes, or rips, allow for frequent bending, stooping, and lifting, and may not be excessively tight or revealing, or hang down in such a way as to expose undergarments.
- Appropriate footwear is always required. Shoes should be comfortable & closed-toed with a rubber sole. No high heels, sandals, or flip-flops
- Please always wear your nametag
- 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 League