



Volunteer Program Handbook

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About the Animal Protective League (APL)

For over 60 years, the Animal Protective League has been the voice for animals in Springfield and Sangamon County. APL operates a limited admission animal shelter and a high-volume, high-quality, low-cost spay/neuter clinic along with comprehensive animal-welfare programs. APL is a private, not-for-profit organization and operates primarily by donations.

APL's limited admission animal shelter prioritizes intake by sick, injured, abused and abandoned dogs and cats. APL strives to match animals with carefully screened, loving, permanent owners. All animals leave our shelter spayed or neutered, microchipped, and with all age appropriate vaccinations. Over 2,400 deserving dogs and cats are placed in homes every year! APL also has an active group of foster families who provide interim homes until space is available at our shelter.

APL's spay/neuter clinic performs over 10,000 spay/neuter surgeries every year. In addition to the public, we work with other animal shelters, animal control agencies and animal welfare groups within a 90-mile radius of Springfield. Our free transport system picks up animals from various locations and transports them to our facility for surgery and then returns the animals the following day. This allows many other organizations to have access to low-cost spay/neuter services for their own animals as well as animals in their communities. We currently work with 31 partners in 18 surrounding counties.

APL's Mission

The Animal Protective League is a non-profit 501C(3) organization dedicated to caring for ill, injured and abused homeless animals and coordinating the adoption of those animals by responsible pet owners. It further is committed to ending companion animal overpopulation by offering high-quality, low-cost spay/neuter services.

APL Volunteer Program Contact Information

Volunteer Coordinator: Mary Close

Email: volunteer@apl-shelter.org

Office Phone: (217) 544-7387 ext.227

APL Shelter

Contact Information:	Hours:
1001 Taintor Rd Springfield, IL 62702 (217) 544-7387	Office: 8:30 - 11 am Adoptions: 12 - 5 pm Seven Days a Week

APL Spay/Neuter Clinic

Contact Information:	Hours:
1001 Taintor Rd Springfield, IL 62702 (217) 789-7729	Office: 8:30 am - 4 pm Monday - Friday

The APL Volunteer Experience

When you volunteer with APL, you're giving the animals one of the greatest gifts of all — your time. Whether you're spending one-on-one time with the animals, helping out at events, or assisting in some other way, you're helping the animals to feel loved. For that, everyone here at APL is incredibly grateful, especially the animals. We wish you an enjoyable, safe, fulfilling, and rewarding volunteer experience!

To learn more about volunteering with APL and to ensure an even better volunteer experience, please take a few minutes to read this guide.

About this Handbook

This handbook summarizes many of APL's volunteer policies and procedures. All APL staff members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook and will be happy to provide you with further information or clarification if you need it. The APL Volunteer Coordinator may modify, rescind, delete or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If changes are made, we will notify you as soon as possible.

Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual relationship or employee relationship between you (the volunteer) and APL.

What to Expect from APL

The staff members at APL truly appreciate your service and your dedication to help our community and the animals, and we want to make sure you have a wonderful and enjoyable experience. So, we strive to:

- Provide you with adequate information, training, and assistance so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
- Provide you with guidance, goals and feedback.
- Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
- Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
- Treat you as a valued team member along with staff, equally important in helping to accomplish APL's mission.

Volunteer Program Staff Responsibilities

The APL volunteer department is led by a Volunteer Coordinator. This staff member is responsible for the general administration of all volunteer programs in their purview. Depending upon the program, staff responsibilities might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recruit people into appropriate volunteer positions
- Provide new volunteers with orientation and training to be successful
- Assist with scheduling or schedule volunteers for volunteer opportunities
- Maintain the confidentiality of volunteers' records and personal information
- Provide updated information about APL's activities and volunteer opportunities
- Process requests from APL staff for volunteer assistance, including volunteers for events, initiatives, and special projects
- Provide feedback and performance reviews for volunteers

- Provide written references pertaining to the volunteer's experience (hours contributed, length of commitment, position description) if requested

Better Impact

APL uses Better Impact to manage everything related to volunteers. After going through the orientation process, you will receive a link to create your own profile. This is where you can indicate your general interests, sign up for classes and shifts, and track your hours. **It is very important that you use Better Impact's Timeclock to clock in and out for every shift.**

Overview of Volunteer Program

The APL volunteer program operates on a system with three levels. We do this so that you become familiar with shelter protocols, and responsibilities increase as you progress.

Volunteer Opportunities

You can participate in a variety of volunteer activities at APL. We are always looking for ways to engage and include volunteers like you because you help make our lifesaving work possible. Many posted volunteer opportunities can be tailored to your needs, and we are open to discussing other projects of interest to you. A full list of volunteer opportunities is available on Better Impact.

Tier 1:

Overview: New volunteers, volunteers under 13 years old

Requirements: New volunteer orientation, orientation quiz, and welcome tour

Opportunities: General shelter help, dog and cat enrichment, adoption events, special events, (a more extensive list of volunteer opportunities is available on Better Impact)

Classes Available: Shelter 101*, Basic Dog Handler Training, APL Community Programs, Cleaning Cats, Cleaning Dogs (*required for everyone)

Tier 2:

Overview: Active volunteers, Tier 1 mentors

Requirements: 10 hours at Tier 1, Shelter 101, and one other Tier 1 class

Opportunities: Dog walking, kennel cleaning, cat cleaning, front office greeting, pet therapy, photography, (a more extensive list of volunteer opportunities is available on Better Impact)

Classes Available: Advanced Dog Handler Trainings, Advanced Biosecurity, ASPCA Pro Dog Body Language, (additional classes will be added soon)

Tier 3:

Overview: Active volunteers, Tier 1 mentors, Tier 2 mentors, adoption leads, event leads

Requirements: 50 hours at Tier 2 and three Tier 2 classes

Opportunities: Adoption counseling, advanced dog walking, leading events, assisting medical team, (a more extensive list of volunteer opportunities is available on Better Impact)

Classes Available: (additional classes will be added soon)

Youth Volunteers

APL welcomes the involvement of younger volunteers in several different volunteer positions. The goal is the same as it is for our older volunteers: to have a fun and rewarding experience. Below are the policies to ensure that our young volunteers have a safe experience.

For all volunteers under the age of 18, parents or guardians must also complete a volunteer application and go through volunteer orientation. They must also sign a Minor Permission Form, which gives permission for minor children to volunteer. Children under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult volunteer. Please note:

- **It is up to the Volunteer Coordinator to decide which positions are open to minor volunteers.**
- Adult partner volunteers must be either the parent or guardian of the teen OR an adult approved by the teen's parent or guardian.
 - If the partner volunteer is not the parent or guardian, they must also complete a volunteer application, orientation and training classes.
- If you are volunteering to complete school-required community service, you are solely responsible for completing your hours in a timely manner. APL cannot guarantee that you will be able to complete all of your required hours here at the shelter within your school's time-frame. We encourage you to sign up early to get a head start on your hours - last minute requests for hours will not be accommodated.

Youth Age 16-17:

Teens age 16-17 can volunteer in the following ways:

- Volunteers age 16-17 may volunteer independently. They do not need adult partners.
 - Parents or guardians must complete a volunteer application and go through volunteer orientation. They must also sign a Minor Permission Form.
- These teens are held to the same expectations as adult volunteers.
- Volunteers under age 18 cannot transport APL animals in their vehicles.

Youth Age 12-15:

Teens age 12-15 can volunteer in the following ways:

- Volunteers age 12-15 must volunteer with an adult partner.
- Teens and their adult partners can do almost everything that any regular member of the volunteer team can do, and can sign up for any shift that meets their schedule and qualifications. Some activities are not appropriate for all ages and may have an age restriction.

Children Younger than 12:

Children under age 12 can volunteer in the following ways:

- Volunteers younger than 12 must volunteer with an adult partner.
- For the safety of the children and the animals, children under 12 are only eligible for Tier 1 volunteer opportunities.

Junior Volunteer (JV) Summer Program

This 8-week long summer program is for volunteers ages 12-15. During this program, adult shift leads supervise the Junior Volunteers (JVs) in cleaning and attending to the daily needs of APL's dogs and cats. Applications for the JV program become available in January and are due in April.

Adults Volunteering with Assistance

Individuals who do not meet the criteria for independent volunteering must always volunteer in the company of another adult capable of assisting them. APL is not able to provide assistants or mentors on an ongoing basis.

- Expectations for Assistants - In addition to helping someone have a fun and fulfilling time as a volunteer, assistants are there as backup just in case anything goes wrong. For this reason we hold assistants to the same high standards as we do regular volunteers when it comes to training. Assistants should pay attention during classes and be able to demonstrate the same core concepts that we expect of all other volunteers.
- Assistants are expected to take all required training classes, submit a volunteer application, and conduct themselves in-line with APL's standard volunteer rules.
- Your first step to volunteering is attending orientation!

Generally speaking, adults who require regular assistance with physical or cognitive tasks in their daily lives will not be able to volunteer with us without an assistant.

Requirements for Independent Volunteering

- Classes: Individuals must attend and pass all required classes, as requested by the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Safety: Individuals must be able to remember and follow all instructions and safety rules. Individuals must be capable of recognizing and reacting appropriately to potentially unsafe situations.
- Communication: Individuals must be able to clearly communicate questions or problems via speech or handwriting.
- For animal care volunteers: Individuals must be able to bend and lift up to 25 pounds. Individuals must be able to pick up and hold a cat appropriately, keep control of all size canines on leash, and must be able to read animal body language adequately. Orientation and training is provided and must be completed before actively handling animals at APL.
 - We are happy to work with each volunteer independently to create a plan to enable participation in certain activities while maintaining safety for volunteers, staff, and our shelter animals, if needed.
- Physical Activity: Individuals must have stable footing and good hand-eye coordination. Individuals must be able to see and hear as the shelter is a chaotic environment and volunteer safety is paramount. Individuals must be able to navigate safely through busy kennels and on uneven ground.

APL reserves the right to make reasonable additions or exceptions to a volunteer's requirements depending on each individual's circumstances.

Your Volunteer Commitment

When you serve as an APL volunteer, we ask the following of you:

Your Volunteer Profile

- Please log in to Better Impact to create or access your volunteer profile.
- Use Better Impact to schedule your volunteer shifts and log your volunteer hours as applicable.
- Log your volunteer service hours on Better Impact's Timeclock. Your volunteered time is important for the shelter for grant purposes, community support, and program development as well as volunteer appreciation. The hour log can also be used to submit to schools, businesses and organizations for proof of completion of required volunteer service hours.
- Complete all required paperwork for acceptance into our volunteer programs.
- Keep your volunteer record updated with your current email address, phone number and USPS mailing address. (Your information will not be sold, traded or given to any other organization.)
- If applicable to your volunteer position, by the last day of each month, input your volunteer hours worked for that month. Instructions will be provided.

Representing APL

When you're serving as a volunteer for APL, what you say and do reflects on APL as a whole. We know volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, and we sincerely accept this diversity of thought. But if there is an issue on which APL has not taken a position, you should remain neutral on the matter while representing APL. Any personal comments you make should be clearly identified as personal comments.

Social Media

Online communication tools such as blogs and social media networks (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) are becoming the go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with APL and our many efforts to help save lives. For that reason, and because your behavior as a volunteer reflects on APL, please use good judgment whenever you contribute to APL's social media pages. We encourage volunteers to join online conversations and spread the word about APL and the animals, but you should never speak as an official representative of APL.

When you are engaging with others via social media on behalf of APL, please keep in mind the following:

- Be transparent: Identify yourself as a volunteer of APL.
- Be accurate: Make sure you check your facts with your Volunteer Coordinator before posting. Take every precaution to gather the most current information available. Be the first to acknowledge and correct your own mistakes.
- Provide resources: Link back to our website whenever you can so that people can see where your information is coming from.
- Be considerate: Please do not use profanity, derogatory language or personal attacks, or engage in any other inappropriate conduct.
- Be real: Do not just copy and paste press releases or website content. Take talking points and put them in your own words. (The one exception is when you are quoting someone or using an official statement.)

- Be professional: Do not allow legitimate online explanations of a position or debates to devolve into personal attacks, fights or flame conflicts that would reflect poorly on you or APL. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of your involvement in an online discussion, please disengage or do not get involved in the first place. Send the link to your Volunteer Coordinator.
- Protect sensitive information: Protect APL's confidential and proprietary information as well as the personal information of others. Get permission to use copyrighted content such as photos or videos, or to cite or reference our supporters, partners or suppliers. Do not disclose or use any confidential or business information about APL, such as member or donor information. Do not disclose personal information about co-workers, volunteers, staff, board members, or former employees.

You are encouraged and welcome to use your own social media platforms to help promote adoptable animals, events, volunteer opportunities, advocacy, outreach and more. However, APL volunteers are prohibited from starting any new social media properties that represent the organization. If you have any questions about this, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator.

Computer-Related

- Volunteers need to have regular access to the Internet and a private email address. Email is our main form of communication to share information, such as volunteer instructions, opportunities and confirmations.
 - If you do not have computer access, talk with your Volunteer Coordinator to discuss alternate means of communication.
- Respond to emails from the APL volunteer staff in a timely manner. Staff are committed to answering emails promptly.

Expenses and Insurance

- Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for APL.
- Carry your own insurance coverage. APL does not carry health, medical, liability, automobile, worker's compensation or disability insurance coverage for any volunteer.

Volunteer Benefits

We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to helping save the lives of homeless pets. So, depending on where you decide to volunteer your time and talents, you may:

- Be able to participate in certain online communities provided for APL volunteers
- Receive formal and informal recognition from APL staff
- Be provided with opportunities to move into leadership volunteer roles as appropriate
- Receive special invitations to events and activities sponsored by APL

Your mileage costs and other expenses relating to your volunteer work may also be tax-deductible. Please consult with your tax professional for more information.

Standards of Conduct and Customer Service

APL upholds the highest standards of conduct and service for the sake of saving the lives of animals. When you are serving as an APL volunteer, we ask that you please do the same. Here are a few service guidelines that we kindly request you follow.

Be Professional. As an APL volunteer, please present an image that is both professional and appropriate to your working conditions. Remember, you represent APL and the first impression you create may be a lasting one. Keep the following in mind:

- You should have a well-groomed appearance. Closed-toe shoes should be worn at all times. We recommend pants (or capris), but if you choose to wear shorts, they should be no shorter than mid-thigh. Spaghetti straps and tube tops are not allowed.
- APL t-shirts and name badges should be worn and be visible at all times when representing APL. Other attire should be clean and appropriate for the setting.
- For Events: Booth and exhibit areas should be kept neat and free of debris. Literature should be displayed neatly and be easily accessible. Eating, drinking and gum-chewing are not recommended at event booths when visitors are present. No volunteer should ever smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs when representing APL in public.
- Cell phones should not be out unless being used for a volunteer activity (i.e. taking pictures of videos of APL animals).
- For your safety, excessively loose-fitting clothing and dangling jewelry is prohibited while working with animals.

Be Responsible. Service begins and ends with individuals. While you cannot control what others do, you can guarantee the quality of your own volunteer work. Strive to be a positive APL role model, and don't be afraid to ask for help from staff when you need it.

Be Positive. A positive attitude is contagious. Approaching your assignment with enthusiasm and dedication will positively impact members, potential members and staff.

Some other tips:

- Raise concerns and share ideas in a positive fashion; focus on solutions, not problems.
- Respond positively to complaints; never argue with anyone or dismiss someone's point of view.
- Offer additional services and information; add value to each interaction.

Be Friendly, Courteous and Helpful. Common courtesy goes a long way toward making a favorable impression on our current and potential members, volunteers, adopters, donors, corporate partners, the general public and APL staff.

Remember the following:

- A smile goes a long way. Smile when someone approaches you at an event or function.
- Use the person's name whenever possible and don't forget good manners.
- Practice active listening: Give your undivided attention to the person with whom you are speaking.

- Treat each person with kindness, and as an individual.
- Please don't use slang and technical jargon or terms that the other person may not understand.

Be Knowledgeable. To help complete our life-saving mission, it is crucial that you keep up-to-date with what's happening at APL. The public sees you as someone who represents APL, and they expect prompt, courteous and accurate responses to their questions and concerns, regardless of your individual specialty or field of knowledge. Know and understand APL's mission and guiding principles. If you don't know the answer to a question, please ask a staff member or your Volunteer Coordinator.

The above are only guidelines to providing great service. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgment. When in doubt, remember the Golden Rule: "We treat all living creatures as we ourselves would wish to be treated."

Animal Incidents

When you work closely with animals, you can sometimes be bitten, scratched or injured in another way. Your safety is always our priority, but if you do happen to get hurt, please let an APL staff member or manager know immediately. Dog bites will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but we recommend seeking medical treatment immediately for any cat bite due to the possibility of infection. You must complete a Volunteer Injury & Incident Report, preferably on the same day.

Volunteers spend a lot of time with APL's animals and may be the first to notice when an animal appears ill or injured. If you notice any unusual behavior or a health concern, do not assume that staff already knows about the issue. Volunteers must report any concerns regarding behavior and/or health to staff immediately.

Attendance Policies and Procedures

When you commit to a volunteer position, you become a valuable member of our team and play an important role in the success of APL's mission. For that reason, we ask that you please not make a commitment that you may be unable to fulfill, or take on responsibilities for which you feel unqualified. In order to remain an "active" volunteer, we ask that you volunteer at least 4 hours per month. After 6 months of inactivity, you will be marked as "inactive." Re-training might be required to move back to "active" status.

Cancellations and 'No-Shows'

We understand that life happens and you may not always be able to make it to your volunteer shift. If you are not available to complete the volunteer shift(s) for which you have registered, please log into Better Impact and cancel your shift(s) or contact your Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. By doing so, this will make the shift available to other volunteers. **If you need to cancel within 24 hours of your shift, please text or call your Volunteer Coordinator to let them know.**

If you can't perform the duties of your volunteer position or meet required deadlines, and you don't notify the volunteer department or your staff contact in advance, your participation in the volunteer program may be adversely affected. We encourage you to try to avoid this situation; by not fulfilling your commitment, you will miss out on some wonderful opportunities to help homeless pets.

Regarding specific "no-show" policies, please consult with your Volunteer Coordinator.

Personal Leave of Absence

If you are unable to volunteer due to unforeseen circumstances, you may take a leave of absence for any period of time. Please discuss your needs with your Volunteer Coordinator or designee.

Conflicts of Interest

As a volunteer for APL, you should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, or interfere with the timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, or that could discredit APL or conflict or appear to conflict with APL's best interests. The success of APL rests on its reputation and the goodwill of its many supporters.

Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of APL assets, funds, materials, facilities, time or the services of other APL volunteers and employees. Violations of this policy may result in release from volunteer service with APL. If you are asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of APL, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Sexual Harassment Policy

APL expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of volunteering, either explicitly or implicitly
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, hostile or intimidating work environment

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from volunteer service. If you believe you are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, notify your Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

APL will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment or intimidation of any volunteer who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment or intimidation may result in release from volunteer service.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the volunteer who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, as a result of the investigation, APL determines that an employee or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, APL will take appropriate corrective measures.

Diversity

APL is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. In accordance with all federal, state and local laws, APL expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental

disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

Volunteer Performance Support

Our goal is to make sure all our volunteers have wonderful, rewarding experiences with APL, while providing the best care possible to the animals. For this reason, some volunteer programs offer volunteer training, support programs and performance feedback.

Performance feedback sessions give APL staff a chance to meet with volunteers one-on-one to review the position description, discuss what's going well, and identify goals and areas for improvement. If, as a volunteer, you have not acted in APL's interests, it may be necessary to end the volunteer relationship. Volunteer management staff may end your volunteer relationship at will.

When the relationship between APL and a volunteer is terminated, all APL property, if any has been issued, must be returned to your Volunteer Coordinator immediately. All volunteer benefits will terminate as of that date.

Causes for Release from Volunteer Service

Here are some potential causes for release from volunteer service:

- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Inactivity
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- Excessive "no-show" for volunteer shifts
- Not fulfilling the duties of the volunteer position
- Misrepresentation of APL
- Damaging property through intent or neglect
- Theft
- Violence or implication of violence

Grievance Procedure

If you have any questions or challenges regarding your volunteer assignment, please bring them to the attention of your Volunteer Coordinator.

Your Volunteer Coordinator will make every effort to provide you with an opportunity to raise your questions in confidence and without fear of reprisal or discrimination. Every effort will be made to investigate in a timely manner and settle the issue on a fair and equitable basis.

Volunteers like you are one of the keys to helping save the lives of countless pets. Thank you so much for caring about the animals and for giving them your time, energy, and affection.

We wish you a long, happy, and rewarding relationship with APL!