



## Essential Capabilities of Volunteers

Riverdale Animal Shelter (RAS) has many volunteer opportunities, most of which involve working directly with companion cats, dogs, and other animals. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer at RAS, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities.

*Please note: Reasonable accommodations can be made and will be taken into consideration relative to role placement.*

### Essential Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously. Example: open cage door while handling animal.
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces in the presence of animals.
- Ability to sit and stand for significant periods of time.
- Ability to bend and squat to leash/harness and possibly pick up an animal.
- High level of manual dexterity to handle animals and required tools (such as kennel keys and doors, leashes, etc.).
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged, and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely around the building, observe animal body language without difficulty, and read signs and notes.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to hear calls of alarm such as audible warnings from others or sirens.
- Ability to speak and effectively communicate verbally as well as in written form.
- Must not have strong allergies to animals or chemicals that can't be managed by medication.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odors and possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment.
- Average strength to handle animals and lift, move, and/or transport items with reasonable accommodations (up to 25 pounds).
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.

### Essential Mental Capabilities

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions, trainings, and procedures.
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Ability to understand we cannot put the same expectations on shelter pets as we do for resident pets in a home.
- Ability to work professionally in both an independent and team atmosphere.
- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals; to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, and show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to recognize and report concerning medical needs and/or behavior of animals.

- Ability to receive, incorporate, and sustain instruction and feedback.
- Ability to recognize personal limitations in knowledge, skills, and abilities.

### **Essential Emotional Capabilities**

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to maintain emotional wellbeing and recognize burn out and potentially needed breaks.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally charged environment and in the presence of animals who are homeless, abandoned, injured and/or abused.
- Ability to cope with the reality of humane euthanasia of suffering animals.
- Ability to understand RAS policies and positions regarding companion animals, animal control, and other key animal welfare issues.
- Ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent RAS policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing RAS.

*Please contact the Volunteer Department at [acasvolunteer@adcogov.org](mailto:acasvolunteer@adcogov.org) with any reasonable accommodation(s) you may need to meet the essential capabilities of your volunteer position at RAS.*