

Shelter Volunteer Requirements & Training

Shelter Volunteer Requirements:

- Must be at least 16 years of age
 - Some opportunities require individuals are at least 18 years of age or at least 21 years of age
- Must commit to donating 8 hours/month and on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule
 - Examples: Every Wednesday from 5-7pm or Alternate Saturdays from 2-6pm
- Must pay Volunteer Fees of \$20 due at Basic Training (Step 2 of Training)
 - Fees help cover the costs of Volunteer Shirts and Volunteer Database which tracks schedules and hours
 - Fees are per person
- Must present Photo ID at Basic Training
- Must be able to communicate professionally, as human interaction is a requirement of all volunteer roles
- Must understand and fulfill all responsibilities of their role independently or have an Adult Partner who can train and volunteer alongside you
- Must read and comprehend detailed policy and protocol information, as well as being able to remember and follow shelter rules
- Must be able to hear, see, and interpret animal behavior and body language
- Must physically fulfill the duties of chosen Volunteer Position.
 - Most volunteer positions require volunteers to: can stand, and/or walk for at least 2 hours; be able to lift and carry up to 20 lbs.; be able to reach and lift; possess vision abilities including close vision, distance vision and depth perception; be able to talk to customers, employees and other volunteers.
- Must be able to emotionally manage a workplace that can be stressful with a positive attitude

Volunteers with Special Needs:

Volunteers who are unable to volunteer independently must have an adult partner, who is at least 21 years of age, to complete training and volunteer alongside them always.

Volunteering independently means that, without assistance, you can:

- Complete training without modifications
- Read our Kennel Cards
- Understand written and spoken instruction
- Handle animals physically
- Understand and complete tasks for the position you choose
- Communicate with other Volunteers, Staff, and Customers

Shelter Volunteer Training:

Training is set up so that you may complete all steps within 4 weeks. Once you have completed these steps, you'll be an IndyHumane Volunteer and can start donating time and love to the animals in our shelter.

1. **Attend a Volunteer Information Session (Week #1 – 1 Hour)**
 - Learn facts and important information about IndyHumane
 - Learn about our Shelter Volunteer Program Opportunities
 - Complete a Shelter Volunteer Application
2. **Complete Basic Training (Week #2 – 2 Hours)**
 - Full Tour of IndyHumane
 - Receive detailed information about the workings of our shelter, disease prevention, and customer service.
3. **Complete an Intro to Shelter Canines/Felines Course (Week #3 – 2 Hours)**
 - All potential Volunteers who will interact with dogs/cats are required to complete this course.
 - Learn the proper way to interact with shelter dogs/cats, learn basic handling techniques, and learn how to deal with problem situations.
4. **Complete a Shadow Day (Week #4 – 2 Hours)**
 - Spend a shift with an experienced Volunteer or Staff Member in the area you are interested in donating time. This will help us determine if you are volunteering in the area best suited for you and our needs can be met.

Shelter Volunteer FAQ

Why do I have to pay a Volunteer Fee? Can it be waived?

Volunteer Fees help IndyHumane cover the cost of Volunteer T-Shirts and the Volunteer Database that helps track and schedule Volunteer hours. As a nonprofit with limited resources, we are unable to waive this fee for applicants.

If I am staff for a client interested in volunteering, am I also required to pay the Volunteer Fee?

You are considered Volunteers as well as you are required to complete training, wear the Volunteer designated t-shirt, and actively volunteer alongside your client, so yes, you are also required to pay the Volunteer Fee.

IndyHumane asks for a minimum donation of 8 hours/month from Shelter Volunteers. If I cannot meet that monthly commitment, may I still volunteer?

You may still volunteer at IndyHumane, but you will not be eligible for Volunteer Perks unless you meet that commitment each month. We like for our Volunteers to stay in the loop about our shelter and the animals benefit more by working with Volunteers who know their personalities and can communicate with potential adopters about them. You are likely to be a more effective Volunteer if you commit to the minimum hours asked of you.

IndyHumane asks Volunteers to commit to a weekly or bi-weekly schedule. Is this necessary?

Our Volunteer Positions require a weekly commitment and set schedules in order to provide the animals the best care and support. This requirement is needed to ensure quality training and to maintain a consistent level of volunteer coverage. We do allow for vacations and needed days off.

Am I only able to donate 8 hours a month?

We ask for a minimum donation of 8 hours a month. You are welcome to donate more as long as you are being productive.

When are Volunteer Shifts?

Volunteer Shifts are available: Between 9am-8pm Monday, Thursday, and Friday, 9am-7pm Tuesday and Wednesday, 9am-6pm on Saturday, and 9am-4pm on Sunday at 2-hour intervals. Some positions require longer shift times.

I just want to walk dogs or pet cats. Why does that require so much training?

Surprisingly, spending time with shelter animals actually involves more than just walking the dogs or petting the cats. We want to make sure the animals consistently receive a high-quality level of care and stay as healthy as possible. To do this, we need to educate our Volunteers about safety procedures and protocols that are currently in place to limit the transfer of disease within our shelter. We also want to educate our volunteers on how to correctly interact with our shelter animals in order to reduce stress on the animals.

In addition, some of our Volunteers are expected to aid in assisting customers during their shift. We want to make sure our volunteers have the information they need to assist customers and help with visitations.

All volunteers attend the specific training required for their volunteer position. Volunteer training includes the tasks required for the position, safety procedures and protocols required, and animal handling.

May I volunteer in more than one area?

We require that you start off in one area and volunteer consistently (meeting the monthly requirement of 8 hours/month) for at least 6 months after which you may train in another area.

At what point am I eligible for Volunteer Perks?

Volunteers who meet our minimum monthly requirement are eligible for special discounts for IndyHumane Services (Retail, Vaccine Clinics, and Adoptions). You become eligible for Volunteer Perks after you complete training and volunteer consistently for at least 3 months in a row.

I am a minor who wants to volunteer. May my parent or someone else communicate with you on my behalf?

All of our volunteer positions are adult-level roles. To serve successfully in their chosen role, students need to be comfortable completing all steps of the Volunteer Intake Process independently:

- Completing the application
- Scheduling and completing the required training
- Handling all individual phone and email correspondence independently
- Following safety protocols and procedures
- Managing their own individual volunteer schedule using our online scheduling program

We understand and appreciate that parents want to be a part of the volunteer process in which their child is involved. We do, however, have a policy that we need to be able to communicate directly with all of our individual volunteers for optimal guidance and to promote mutual understanding. Students must be able to provide an individual email address so that we can contact them directly. Due to this policy, we are also unable to accept email or phone correspondence on a student's behalf. Students need to be able to individually manage all correspondence as it relates to volunteering.

Can I be a Volunteer if I have a criminal record?

IndyHumane does not accept volunteers with a criminal record in relation to (1) sexual offense, (2) violent crimes or (3) animal neglect or cruelty. IndyHumane requires all persons applying to volunteer to state any past criminal record and reserves the right to conduct a background check on any volunteer.

If I am injured while volunteering, does IndyHumane cover the costs of my medical treatment?

No. Volunteers are responsible for their own medical care. We have First Aid Kits available on site for minor medical issues.

Can I bring my child with me when I come in to volunteer?

Children under the age of 16 years are not eligible to participate in our Shelter Volunteer Program. You may not bring anyone with you to volunteer who has not completed training. If you are interested in volunteering alongside your minor child, you will want to look into Parent & Me Days Volunteer Program.

Can family members or friends come with me when I volunteer?

Minors may not have anyone shadow them. Family members and friends who are at least 18 years of age may shadow Adult Volunteers, after Volunteers complete training and volunteer meeting the minimum monthly requirement at least 6 months in a row, once to see what volunteering may be like, but these situations must be pre-approved by the Director of Volunteer Services and the proper paperwork must be completed before hand. They may shadow you just once.

Do I need to have experience to volunteer?

No prior experience is needed to volunteer in our entry level positions, but we do require all volunteers to have good communication skills and a willingness to learn. We supply all the training needed for each entry-level position.

Some of our advance positions (photography and grooming as examples) require professional training/experience.

If I already have experience at another shelter, do I have to complete all of the training required at IndyHumane?

All shelters are separate and our training and opportunities are different. You must complete all training required at IndyHumane regardless of previous experience and training.

How long will it take me to get through all the training required?

Training is set up so you can complete it in 4 weeks. If you miss a step of training, you may have options to set up one-on-one training or you may need to wait until the following month to complete training.

After I complete training, am I assigned animals to work with?

We ask Volunteers to work with animals they feel comfortable with. Spending time with animals you are not comfortable with may lead to negative issues.

We also know Volunteers have their favorites, but we ask you to be mindful of animals that clearly have not had a lot of interaction. Throughout training you will learn how we track what animals have had interaction.

What are my main duties when working with animals?

Volunteers are expected to help keep our shelter tidy. This means all are responsible for spot cleaning cages, kennel areas, and yards.

Volunteers are expected to do their best, while adhering to shelter policies, to make animals more adoptable. This can be done by teaching basic commands, grooming, and speaking with customers about the characteristics of animals being worked with.

Volunteers are also expected to report any medical or behavior changes noticed in animals to the appropriate staff members in a timely manner.

May I take photos of the animals and post them on social networking sites?

You may take photos of adoptable animals and post photos and descriptions on social networking sites as long as the photo and info you post are appropriate and show IndyHumane in a good light. You may not take photos and post photos of animals that are not yet available for adoption.

How can I protect my animals and family members at home from possible spreading of diseases I may come into contact with while volunteering?

Volunteers should change out of clothes worn while volunteering before going home and interacting with pets and family members. This includes the shoes worn as well.

Wearing gloves and washing hands/arms while/after interacting with shelter animals, doing laundry/dishes, and touching any supplies used should increase your protection.

Lint rollers are available for use at the shelter.

Volunteers should never interact with animals they are not cleared to spend time with.

What diseases/viruses affect animal shelter most commonly?

Volunteers should research Parvovirus, Panleukopenia, and Calici. These are viruses/diseases most commonly seen in shelters.