

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
- Preferred: donate 4-8 hours/month and on a set weekly or bi-weekly schedule
 - Examples: Every Wednesday from 5-7pm or Alternate Saturdays from 2-6pm
 - Must donate at least 8-Hours monthly to be eligible for Volunteer Perks
 - There are Advanced Positions that require at least an 8-Hour or 12-Hour per month commitment
- Must pay Volunteer Fees of \$40 due at Training shift
 - Fees help cover the costs of Volunteer Shirts and Volunteer Database which tracks schedules and hours
 - Fees are per person
 - Fees will be reduced for students who show proof of participation in their school's free/reduced school lunch program
 - Fees will be reduced for adults who show proof of receiving SNAP Benefits
 - Additional shirts and swag can be purchased [Here](#)
- 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 be able to 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.
 - If you are not sure about the requirements, please send an email to volunteer@indyhumane.org for further information.
- 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
- Understand and follow verbal or written instructions

Shelter Volunteer Training:

Training is set up to provide you with the knowledge needed to safely work with and around our animals. 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 New Volunteer Orientation (1 Hour)

- Mandatory for Adult & Children who are at least 13 years old
- Learn facts and essential information about IndyHumane
- Learn about our many Volunteer Program Opportunities
- Agree to and sign Volunteer Code of Conduct

2. Complete a Training for desired assignment

- Mandatory for Adults & Children
- Feline Friend Training
 - 1. Spend a shift with an experienced Volunteer trainer. Learn the procedures and policies to follow for cat care and enrichment. This will help us determine if you are volunteering in the area best suited for you and shelter needs can be met.
- Canine Companion Training
 - 1. Attend and complete our new **Canine Companion Class**. This will cover the basics of dog handling and IndyHumane procedures and policies. This class is offered monthly and online.
 - 2. Complete a **Buddy Day**. On your buddy day, you will see and put into practice the information from the class. A volunteer or staff member will demonstrate the how-to's. Then, the trainee will perform guided practice for the tasks and responsibilities associated with Canine Companion
 - 3. Complete post-Buddy Day form. This is a learning check that allows staff to know who has completed the buddy day and offer any additional support.
- 3. *Request another buddy day/shadow day if you are not yet comfortable doing an independent shift. Everyone learns differently, let us know how to best support you.*

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?

Yes, you are also required to pay the Volunteer Fee. You are considered a volunteer as you must complete training, wear the Volunteer-designated T-shirt, and volunteer alongside your client.

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

You must donate some time each month to stay active in our program. You will not be eligible for Volunteer Perks unless you meet the commitment of at least 8-Hours each month. We like our Volunteers to stay in the loop about our shelter. Volunteers who serve consistently can help with additional tasks. Volunteers who know an animal and their personality can communicate with potential adopters about them more effectively.

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

A weekly commitment and set schedules are helpful in providing the animals with the best care and support. This preference helps to ensure quality training and maintain a consistent level of volunteer coverage. We work to be as flexible as possible to make volunteering accessible, but we ask for clear communication if you anticipate missing multiple shifts. This helps staff and fellow volunteers know what coverage looks like for shifts and take measures to fill in for you when you are unavailable.

Am I only able to donate 8 hours/month?

We ask for a minimum donation of 8 hours per month. You are welcome to donate more if you are being productive. Note: There are advanced positions that will require at least an 8-Hour or 12-Hour monthly commitment. We also want to be vigilant of overextending oneself, as we learn more about the effects and causes of compassion fatigue.

When are Volunteer Shifts?

Volunteer Shifts are available: Between 7:30 am-7:30 pm Monday-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 involves more than just walking the dogs or petting the cats. We want to ensure 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 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 to reduce stress on the animals and people. In addition, some of our Volunteers want to aid in assisting patrons 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 to become proficient. Then you may train for another position. We have many opportunities that can be done concurrently, including helping with Pet Adoption Wagon events.

At what point am I eligible for Volunteer Perks?

Volunteers who meet our monthly requirement of 8-Hours/month 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 consecutive months.

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

All 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 Onboarding 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 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. Please note that we do not have human medical professionals on site.

Can I bring my child with me when I come into volunteer?

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 join our Parent & Me 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 once to see what volunteering may be like, and if it is a good fit for them. Volunteers are eligible to have a friend/loved one do a shadow day after they complete training and volunteer meeting the minimum monthly requirement at least 6 months in a row. Shadow days must be pre-approved by the Volunteer and Camp Manager and the proper paperwork must be completed beforehand. 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 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.

We will take prior experience into consideration for advanced positions.

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

This depends on your availability and our schedule. We will provide pre-scheduled orientations, classes, and training days for you to sign up for. If these dates do not work for you, we will work with you to schedule training days. This may prolong your training process.

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

We ask Volunteers to work with animals they feel comfortable with and are at the level for which you are trained. 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 **animals available for adoption** and post photos and descriptions on social networking sites as long as the photo and info you post are appropriate and honor our core values of respect, compassion, integrity, collaboration, and fiscal responsibility.

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

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

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. Please reach out to the Volunteer and Camp Manager for any questions or additional information.