



Willamette Humane Society - Volunteer Role Description

Dog Handler

Availability: 4:30-6:30 PM Thursdays-Sundays

Purpose of the Role:

Dog Handlers perform duties involved in the daily mental and physical care of shelter animals, including training, socializing, and walking. Our primary goals are:

- Ensure that each of the WHS dogs gets out for a potty-break three times daily.
- Ensure that there is at least one walker per six to eight dogs, so that Dog Handlers do not feel overwhelmed.

Dog Handlers provide our canine friends a chance to stimulate their minds and stretch their legs. We have a walking trail, off-leash exercise pens, and much more. Socialization and exercise are vital to the dogs' happiness and health. WHS believes that humane, safe, and effective training methods make learning fun for both ends of the leash.

This volunteer role has a lot of animal contact. Unlike many dogs belonging to volunteers, many of the dogs at WHS have had little to no training. This lack of training, in addition to their possible large size makes many of our dogs challenging to handle.

Volunteer Role Location:

In the Dog kennel areas and outside around the property.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Model and communicate appropriate, rewards-based dog, fear-free handling skills following shelter standards and protocols.
- Use reward-based, fear-free handling and training methods to stimulate mental activity, enhance adoptable behaviors, and train dogs.
- Provide potty breaks to all "walkable" dogs.
- Provide out of kennel socialization/training periods to dogs.
- Coordinate the kennel door's physical manipulation, control the dog's movements, and be aware of your safety.
- Pick up after the dogs, including scooping poop, cleaning up vomit, and disposing of dangerous toys or bedding.
- Report any health concerns to staff via our communication binder, including but not limited to; diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, blood in stool or urine, coughing, sneezing, lameness, and negative behaviors

Last Updated: [1/6/22]

Updated by: CE Team

Time Commitment:

- Handling our dogs is a high commitment volunteer job. Dog handlers must commit to a regular two hour per week schedule.
- Dog Handling shifts are available all days of the week from 8-10 a.m., 12-2 p.m., and 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Two 1 and 1/2-hour in-person dog handling orientation sessions.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- This position requires a tolerance for loud noise.
- Must be able to handle dogs over 50 pounds.
- Ability to stand and walk for extended periods.
- Must use proficient, rewards-based dog handling skills.
- Requires bending, stooping, and lifting.
- Must have sufficient flexibility to enter and exit the kennel, and bend to leash and unleash dogs of all sizes and energy levels.
- Must be able to deal with adverse weather conditions and a wide variety of dog behavior.
- Enough physical strength to manage dogs that pull on the leash, especially larger red tag dogs.
- Ability to work directly with animal wastes, potentially harmful cleaners, disinfectants, high noise, and potentially hazardous conditions, including the risk of animal bites and zoonotic diseases.
- Must be 16 or older (Partner Pair Teams allowed to work with Yellow Tag Dogs).

Dress Code:

- Closed-toed shoes and socks
- Pants free of rips, tears, or stains that cover and protect skin
- Willamette Humane Society Volunteer apron
- Willamette Humane Society name tag

Benefits:

- Dog Handlers will receive reward-based, low-stress handling, canine body language, and training techniques under the Behavior Department's supervision.
- Dog Handlers will gain valuable canine behavior and training hands-on experience by their direct contact with the dogs.
- Dog handlers will collaborate with staff and other volunteers to support and improve dogs' physical and emotional well-being in the shelter.

WHS is dedicated to establishing, maintaining, and enhancing the bond between companion animals and people of Marion and Polk counties. For more information on volunteering, visit the [volunteer Facebook page](#), join our [monthly newsletter](#), or email volunteer@whs4pets.org.

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