



Five Acres Animal Shelter Volunteer Handbook



The mission of Five Acres Animal Shelter is dedicated to ending pet homelessness, promoting responsible pet ownership, and advocating for animal welfare.

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Welcome and Thank You

From Kate Wall, our Volunteer Program Manager:

Welcome Five Acres Animal Shelter (FAAS) Volunteers! We hope the time you spend with our organization is as rewarding and enjoyable for you as it is for the pets that you will help care for.



When you volunteer with FAAS, we hope you know how much we truly appreciate the work you do and how much of a positive impact you have on both our staff and animals in our care. No matter how you are giving of yourself – whether walking dogs, cleaning up after cats, volunteering at our front desk, helping to fix things around the shelter as a part of our maintenance crew, helping members of our community get resources they need through our AniMeals Pet Food Pantry- your role here is vitally important to our day-to-day operations. We cannot carry out our mission without the support of our incredible team of volunteers!

In advance, we ask that you come ready to be positive, courteous, helpful, patient, responsible, friendly, ready to learn and ready to love on the animals in our care. If during your volunteer time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly. I am here as a resource to your volunteer experience.

With gratitude,

Kate Wall, Volunteer Manager
kate@fiveacresanimalshelter.org

From Jeana Roth, our Executive Director:

On behalf of the entire team at Five Acres, we welcome and thank you for joining our mission! Your support of our work through service allows us to save the lives of pets in need. It is our goal to ensure your time with us is rewarding, positive, and filled with joy.

Animal shelters are a very special place! At FAAS, every pet that walks through our doors is given an opportunity for a new beginning. Your time spent with us helps make their stay at FAAS as happy and healthy as possible.

We thank you for committing your time, talent and energy to our organization. We couldn't do this life-saving work without you!

With gratitude,

Jeana Roth, Executive Director
jeana@fiveacresanimalshelter.org

About Five Acres Animal Shelter

FAAS History

Five Acres Animal Shelter (FAAS) is a nonprofit animal welfare organization, founded in 1973 and serves the St. Charles community, as well as across the state of Missouri and various parts of the country.

Our animals come from local animal control facilities or nonprofit animal shelters, where they are at risk of euthanasia. We also welcome animals through owner surrenders, from citizens who are no longer able to care for their pet(s) due to various reasons. We love and care for these companion animals until we find them new beginnings. We do not euthanize an animal due to space or time. All of our adoptable pets are spayed/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated, and given preventative prior to adoption.

As a nonprofit organization, FAAS heavily relies on donations, fundraising, and the efforts of volunteers to support our mission.

Our Services

Animal Intake

We are a limited admission shelter, which means that we respond to requests from our community about their needs, and best determine what we can safely and responsibly bring into our shelter, based on space, staff, and foster families available. The majority of our pets come through owner surrenders and transports with partner shelters. We do not contract with local towns or cities, thus do not intake stray pets from the community.

Adoption Services

All animals available for adoption are either located at our shelter or in trained foster homes. Animal location is included on their profile on our adoptable animals page of our website, along with their name, a photo, a description of who they are (as best as we know while they have been with us in our care), and approximate age.

Community Resources

As an organization, we believe in supporting pet owners in our community in an effort to reduce animal surrender. We currently operate a free pet food pantry called AniMeals, where community members can acquire free pet food and supplies to help keep their pets in their homes.

No Kill Status & Euthanasia Policy

FAAS is considered to be a 'no kill' organization. To qualify as a no kill organization, shelters must successfully place more than 90% of their animals into new homes.

On occasion, animals at FAAS present with medical illness or behavioral conditions that impact their quality of life or the safety of others. There are instances when humane euthanasia will be decided and performed, if medical treatment or behavioral modification cannot improve their quality of life in our care.

Volunteer Program

Volunteer Requirements

- Volunteers working directly with animals must be at least 18 years of age.
- Volunteers are asked to contribute at least 6 hours a month, dog walkers are asked to commit to at least one shift per week.
- Volunteers are asked to remain active for at least 6 months.
- Adhere to and follow volunteer program guidelines and policies.

Overview of the Volunteer Onboarding process

- 1) All volunteers will complete a Volunteer Application
- 2) Applicants pay the \$20 Registration fee before viewing our Online Orientation
- 3) After you successfully complete our New Volunteer Online Orientation, you will receive an email with instructions on how to access and view the Kitty Cottage e-Learning Module and/or the Canine Clubhouse e-Learning Module, depending on what you identified as your interests on your volunteer application. At this point, we ask that you schedule time with the Volunteer Manager for a Connect with Kate meeting through the SignUp Genius link that is included on several emails. This time is used to discuss the specific needs of the Canine Clubhouse and/or Kitty Cottage and how you can help, answer questions, and to receive your Volunteer t-shirt.
 - a) After successful completion of the Canine Clubhouse e-Learning Module, we require a Shadow Training session to ensure the safety of all involved. You will receive an email asking for your availability to meet with one of our Volunteer Shadow Trainers, whose goal is to make sure you are prepared to walk our dogs. This requires meeting to review and practice hands-on what you learned in the module, in regards to how to enter and exit kennels, how to secure the dog in a leash/modified harness, how to safely exit and re-enter the building, as well as get a better understanding of our property, where to walk dogs and safety tips on how to stay safe in an environment with multiple dogs in any given area. Once you complete the Shadow Training, you will officially be opened up to Dog Walking activities.

You will not be able to view Dog Walking shifts until you have scheduled your Connect with Kate meeting, completed Shadow Training and been approved to walk green level dogs.

****All potential dog walkers are strongly encouraged to proceed with dog walking shadow training if you absolutely feel confident, strong, and capable of handling the dogs in our care. The module gives some very specific examples of how challenging it can be to work with dogs in the shelter environment... PLEASE consider how you would handle or react to situations if you are in those same situations as shown in the module. This video is not an exaggeration; it is representative of situations that happen daily at FAAS.***

- b) After successful completion of the Kitty Cottage e-Learning Module, we require a Shadow Training session to offer you the opportunity to learn 'on the job', working alongside an experienced volunteer. You will receive an email asking you to identify the day and time that would be ideal for you to meet with a trainer. The trainer will take you through specific tasks that you'd be responsible for during that shift. Once you complete the Shadow Training, you will officially be opened up to activities that you learned about during the training.

You will not be able to view Kitty Cottage shifts until you have scheduled your Connect with Kate meeting, completed Shadow Training and been approved to begin signing up on your own.

- c) All 'non-direct animal care' opportunities are open to all volunteers who would like to learn more! If you are interested in one of these opportunities, please email the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteer Opportunities and Positions

Canine Volunteer Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dog walking● Adventure Team● Shelter Buddies● Mobile Events	Feline Volunteer Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Cleaning (AM & PM)● Light duty cleaning● Enrichment & socialization● Evening wrap up	Non-Direct Animal Care Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Front desk● AniMeals Food Pantry● Spay/neuter clinic assistant● Maintenance crew● Special Event Committee● Gift shop● Mobile adoption events● Fundraising events
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Volunteer Placement

Volunteer assignments are made with the skill set, availability, and interests of you in mind. Volunteers should feel comfortable in the job you are asked to do. If you feel uncomfortable with your volunteer position, please discuss the matter with the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteers Rights

- Learn about the job description for each opportunity you are interested in.
- Opportunity to provide feedback regarding your volunteer assignment and experience.
- Expect that records will be kept documenting volunteer experience, specific opportunities that you have participated in, and the number of hours you have donated.
- Recognition and appropriate expressions of appreciation and gratitude for your service.
- Be treated as a colleague with a common goal of caring for animals while you are here with us, no matter the length of stay.
- Be surrounded by a spirit of friendliness and cooperation from our team members.

Our Expectations of Volunteers

- Use appropriate language.
- Do not enter intake/isolation rooms or staff-only areas, unless with explicit permission from the respective manager.
- Be able to work with others as a team.
- Do not work with animals unless our staff are on the clock and present.
- Double check that all doors/kennel doors/fences/gates are closed behind you.
- Know your duties and how to complete them properly, correctly, and pleasantly.
- Engage cooperatively with staff and fellow volunteers and maintain dignity and respect among people.
- Initiate learning opportunities to expand involvement based on your specific interests.
- Attend required training sessions and meetings.
- Sign up for volunteer shifts that there is an intention to be present for.
- Record donated time by logging hours for each volunteer shift.
- Remove yourself from a shift on the volunteer's MyImpact page if you are unable to attend.
- Report for your assignment on time.
- Serve as positive representation for FAAS in the greater community.
- Be able to work with others as a team.
- Have capability to work independently.
- Ability to stay focused, aware of your surroundings and pay attention to detail.

Our Commitment to You:

- Provide you with adequate information needed to be successful while you are here.

- Respect your skills and individual needs.
- Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
- Treat you as a valued member of our team, equally important in helping to reach our goals of ending pet homelessness, promoting responsible pet ownership and advocating for animal welfare.

Who will you be working alongside?

FAAS has a team of 20 part-time and full-time employees. You will be working directly with team members - primarily in the Canine Clubhouse or Kitty Cottage and other volunteers. In other departments, you will be working alongside volunteer leaders of the AniMeals, Facilities or Front Desk Team. It is possible you may interact with the public who may be dropping off donations or interested in adopting.

Role of Volunteer Manager:

The Volunteer Manager is responsible for general administration of the volunteer program, including:

- Provide/coordinate orientation and training to ensure volunteers preparedness and safety.
- Assist with scheduling volunteers for shifts and/or events.
- Maintain confidentiality of volunteer records.
- Offer regular and appropriate recognition for volunteers.
- Provide support as volunteers work alongside paid team members.
- Maintain communication regarding needs for volunteer assistance for events, projects and shifts.

Attendance policies and procedures:

Please make your best effort to make commitments that you can fulfill, and ones that you feel qualified to do well. We ask that all volunteers have access to the internet and a private email address, as email is our primary form of communication. If you do not have internet access, please find a friend or relative who can help you or please notify the Volunteer Manager that you will need special consideration.

Volunteers are required to sign up for their shifts on their volunteer calendar. We ask that if you are unable to fulfill a shift, that you remove yourself from the shift. We ask that all volunteers log their hours on their Volunteer MyImpact app or website.

FAAS Culture

Our team members and volunteer values help further the FAAS mission. The way we work together reflects the values that we, as an organization, strive to focus on. We set certain and specific ideals regarding how we communicate, interact and make decisions.

- We seek to understand before being understood. Ask questions if something is unclear.
- We are respectful and kind to others in all situations.
- We encourage all staff members and volunteers to remember why we made the choice in the first place to engage with FAAS to help animals and work to make their lives better, in an effort to find their family.
- We value assuming positive intent and encourage everyone to work together cooperatively.
- We choose to focus on, and recognize, strengths over weaknesses in those working alongside us.
- We commit ourselves to being compassionate to the animals in our care and the experiences they have had, even when we may not have the full picture.
- We are reliable and trustworthy. When we volunteer, we recognize that others will be counting on us!
- Others take time to make your volunteer onboarding experience a smooth one; please make that time that has been invested count. After you have been cleared to start signing up to volunteer, please come back regularly.
- We choose to not engage in negative conversation/interaction at the expense of other people who are also working to help animals at FAAS.

FAAS Public Hours of Operation

We are open to the public for adoptions on the following days and times.

- **Monday:** Closed to the public
- **Tuesday – Friday:** 2pm – 6pm
- **Saturday and Sunday:** 12pm – 6pm

Holidays

While we are closed to the public on major holidays, staff and volunteers still come in to care for animals on a holiday schedule for each building.

- Canine Clubhouse volunteers are invited to sign up for shifts in the morning and again in the late afternoon.
- Kitty Cottage volunteers are invited to sign up for shifts from 9-11:30am and 4-6pm.

FAAS is closed to the public on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Years Eve

Volunteer Policies

Dress Code

- We encourage you to wear a FAAS Volunteer t-shirt or other FAAS branded shirt. Extra volunteer t-shirts are available to purchase for \$10 in the gift shop.
- We ask that you wear a nametag to identify who you are. Sticker name tags are available in the Kitty Cottage kitchen and in the Canine Clubhouse lobby to write your name on when you arrive. Magnetic name tags are available to purchase for \$10 through the Volunteer Manager.

For Dog Volunteers

- **We strongly encourage pants to cover your legs.** We recognize that it gets very warm outside in the summer, but pants are strongly recommended for your own protection! Pants minimize potential scratches and bites.
- **Closed toe shoes are required.** Our grounds are not perfectly graded and weather can also cause the grounds to be less than ideal, so please come prepared to be steady and stable on your feet and potentially get dirty. No sandals, flip flops, crocs, or any other shoe that is not securely attached to your feet will be allowed. This is to keep you safe, as well as the dogs in our care!

For Cat Volunteers

- We strongly recommend pants to cover your legs from unintended scratches or bites.
- **Closed toe shoes are required.** Closed toe shoes to be steady on your feet when moving around the Kitty Cottage where some cats will be free roaming.

For Volunteers in other areas:

Safety is our priority while you are at FAAS. Therefore if you are in a non-animal contact area, please dress appropriately for the area you are working in. For example, lawn/maintenance volunteers should dress for protection if mowing the lawn.

If a volunteer comes dressed inappropriately, a member of our team may ask you to leave to change into something more appropriate from a safety perspective.

Cell Phones

When you are working with the animals, ***please feel free to keep your phone with you, but not in use*** unless needed. We do not allow ear buds to be used while you are volunteering in roles with direct animal contact. It may create an awkward situation if someone is trying to get your attention, but you cannot hear them; and it may distract from keeping attention on the dog or cat. When safe, take pictures and videos!

Smoking Policy

No smoking/vaping while walking dogs, working with animals, or around other people on our property.

Drug/Alcohol Substance Abuse Policy

The possession, sale, or use of mood altering and/or illegal substances while volunteering or occupying the premises of FAAS is a violation of safe volunteer practices.

Any volunteer engaging in these actions will be asked to leave the premises and face immediate dismissal from their volunteer obligations.

Concealed Weapons

While we respect an individual's right to protect themselves, FAAS requests that volunteers refrain from bringing concealed or open carry weapons (i.e. guns or knives) onto the premises or to FAAS events.

Social Media Policy

FAAS relies on our volunteers for promotion through our various social media outlets, including our main FAAS Facebook page as well as our private FAAS Volunteer Facebook group. We ask that you exercise caution when posting on either of these pages/groups.

Please keep in mind that your behavior as a volunteer is a reflection of FAAS. We encourage your participation and engagement in our social media pages! Please make sure to be transparent about identifying yourself as a volunteer at FAAS, be as accurate as possible, and be considerate. Feel free to use your own social media pages to promote adoptable animals and events. We do ask that volunteers do not start any new social media pages that serve as representations of FAAS. If you have questions about this, please contact the Volunteer Manager.

Right to Use Likeness Authorization

As a volunteer at FAAS, you authorize FAAS to use your name, image, and/or photo, unless you specifically request to decline by contacting Kate Wall, Volunteer Manager.

Friends/Children/Pets/Guests

Please do not bring friends or family members to the shelter who are not active in the FAAS volunteer program. Personal pets from home are not allowed to accompany you on your volunteer shift.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you may hear or be exposed to information about animals (e.g. their history, current status) or decisions made by the shelter. Information should be used as needed in the best interest of the animals with team members and should not be shared with other volunteers or anyone outside of the shelter.

Incident Reporting

If an incident occurs while you are volunteering with us, we ask that you immediately notify a FAAS staff member. If there are concerns regarding care or procedures for a dog or cat, it is appropriate to go directly to the Canine Manager or Feline Manager for clarification or guidance. If there are concerns regarding the volunteer program it is appropriate to reach out directly to the Volunteer Manager. If there is an urgent matter or concern regarding behavior of a volunteer or staff member, volunteers may approach any member of the management team at Five Acres.

Examples include:

- Bite - any bite, cat or dog, must be reported immediately to a manager or team member onsite. We are legally obligated to report certain bites to local animal control. Our staff will provide necessary direction for immediate care and start the incident report which you will need to complete and sign.
- Other issues not presenting a direct safety concern can be taken to a team member or escalated as below until resolved.

Grievances

An efficient, successful shelter and happy volunteers go together. It is important to us that our volunteers have a way to air any problems, large or small, that they may have while volunteering with FAAS. If another person is directly involved, please try to resolve the matter at a personal level first. If the matter cannot be resolved in this way, volunteers should talk with the Volunteer Manager. Volunteers may be asked to complete a formal written report regarding their grievance.

Severe grievances will be reviewed by the Volunteer Manager and Executive Director to decide what disciplinary action, if any, is required. Depending on the severity of the grievance, disciplinary action can range from a verbal warning up to and including termination of the offending volunteer's services from FAAS.

Escalation process:

1. Discuss with a FAAS manager, if not resolved move to next level:
2. Discuss with Volunteer Manager, if not resolved move to next level:
3. Discuss with the Executive Director.
 - a. The HR Committee Chair of the FAAS Board of Directors may be included through the Executive Director.

Discrimination/Harassment policy

Five Acres is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. If you feel you have been subject to discrimination/harassment, please talk with the Volunteer Manager, and we can discuss next steps.

Retirement/Resignation

Volunteers may leave FAAS for a variety of reasons. When a volunteer decides to stop volunteering at FAAS, they should inform the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteers who retire or resign may also be asked to complete a Volunteer Exit Interview Survey so that the staff can take any necessary steps toward corrections or improvements in our animal care and/or volunteer program.

Volunteers who retire or resign and then decide to return to FAAS may need to go through the New Volunteer onboarding process before they can be re-accepted. This would include rewatching the New Volunteer Orientation, and Shadow Training to learn about the opportunities.

Termination

FAAS reserves the right to suspend or terminate a volunteer. In most cases, the volunteer will be given a verbal warning and be asked to improve upon the behavior or action. If no improvement is made, the volunteer will be suspended or terminated. If the behavior in question is so extreme that it causes an unsafe environment, the volunteer faces immediate termination. Volunteers who are terminated from a volunteer position will not be welcome back as a volunteer at FAAS. Volunteers who are suspended from a volunteer position leave with the understanding that, if the circumstances surrounding the suspension are favorably resolved, they may be invited to return.

Causes for release/termination

FAAS holds the right to release a volunteer from their duties/service due to reasons/behavior that does not advance the mission of our organization. These reasons may include the following, but not limited to:

- Breach of confidentiality or release of confidential information
- Falsifying statements on the volunteer application or subsequent forms
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Failure to sign up for shifts and log hours using the MyImpact system
- Theft of property or misuse of shelter equipment or materials
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Unprofessional conduct
- Excessive no-show for shifts without notifying someone on staff and removing self from the schedule
- Misrepresentation of FAAS
- Violence or implication of violence, abuse, or theft
- Illegal or unsafe acts
- Abuse, harassment, or mistreatment of other volunteers, staff, or members of the public

Volunteer Performance Support

Occasionally, if a Team Member/Manager feels they have made attempts to clarify protocol or policy in place with a volunteer without resolution, they will reach out and ask the Volunteer Manager to contact a specific volunteer to discuss what is working, what needs clarification, areas for growth, and ways to support or improve your volunteer experience. It may be necessary at times for us to end your volunteer relationship if a situation arises where mutually agreeable terms cannot be settled on.

Your Personal Pets & Safety:

Shelter animals can sometimes carry diseases that are transmittable to you and/or your pets. While highly unlikely, we strongly recommend that your animals at home be current on all vaccines and preventatives, and that you are up to date on tetanus. The term “zoonotic” refers to illnesses that are contagious to both animals and people. Below are short descriptions of some common diseases seen in a shelter environment. FAAS does vaccinate all animals to standard veterinary protocols.

- **Upper Respiratory Infection (URI):** Refers to several common viral and/or bacterial infections in cats in shelters causing cold-like symptoms including sneezing, nasal discharge, watery eyes, fever, lack of appetite, etc. This is very contagious to other cats.
- **Ringworm:** A zoonotic fungal skin infection.
- **Fleas:** Small parasitic insects that live on the blood of animals.
- **Internal Parasites:** Refers to several internal parasites including various kinds of worms and other microscopic organisms. Most are contagious to other animals and people.
- **Ear Mites:** Microscopic organisms living in the ears of the host (most common in felines).

- **Mange:** A skin infection caused by mites: two kinds, one is zoonotic, and one is contagious only to other dogs.
- **Kennel Cough:** Cold-like infection in dogs that can be caused by several viruses and/or bacteria.
- There are also a host of less common, but potentially very serious diseases including rabies, parvo, canine distemper, panleukopenia, and FIP.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, FAAS staff are equipped with procedures for safety efforts in situations of a tornado, earthquake, fire, and active shooter. Emergency preparedness kits are located in each building on campus. If you are present during an emergency, please find a staff member immediately. Staff will provide direction. Please comply.

Better Impact - Our Volunteer Management Software Program

We ask ALL direct animal care volunteers to sign up for your intended shift prior to coming to FAAS. This is done through your MyImpact app or by signing in to the Better Impact Volunteer page. This is helpful for our Animal Care Team to know who and when they can expect to have help from volunteers!

We also ask that you log your hours after volunteering... this is so important, as we are a nonprofit and apply for grants regularly. When we can show how much support we have from our community, grant funders are much more likely to support us, knowing that we have your support to reach every task we set out to accomplish!

Better Impact Volunteer Management Software Program

Better Impact is the software FAAS uses to assign access to volunteer roles and allows volunteers to sign up for 'shifts' and then record hours. Signing up for 'shifts' helps the team members know how much help they will have. Logging your hours helps us with grant writing and helps us understand how many hours it takes to run the shelter.

You can access this program on a computer or by downloading the MyImpact app on your phone. When you created your Better Impact account to complete your volunteer application, you chose a Username and Password for your account. You will log in using that information.

We ask you to change your privacy settings by going to 'My Profile'. Instructions on how to do this are on the home screen of your Better Impact page or the home screen on the MyImpact app. This allows other volunteers and team members to see who signed up. If you do not adjust privacy settings, you will show as 'Anonymous'.

Once you have been trained for roles you will see them as 'Opportunities'. These opportunities have dates/times as well as a number of volunteers allotted. You will be able to see where there are openings for the opportunities you have been granted access to. If you need access to an opportunity - like a Mobile Event - contact the Volunteer Manager who can make that happen for you. All opportunities have requirements associated with them that determine what you can have access to.

- Signing up for shifts

- The list of opportunities you have been granted access to will be listed under Opportunities. Some have specific dates/times, others do not.
- The shifts available will be shown and the number of openings per shift will be seen.
- Select the date(s) you are interested in. Click Sign Up. In some cases you can see who else is also signed up to work with you.
- You can also add the shifts to your calendar by clicking Add to Calendar.

- Schedule

- The schedule option allows you to see what shifts you have signed up for. If you need to remove yourself from the schedule, this is the place to do it! Select the shift you need to change and click on the REMOVE option.

- **Logging Hours**
 - The Hours section allows you to view past logged hours.
 - To log hours from the Hours section, select Five Acres Animal Shelter from the “Log hours for” option
 - Enter the activities for which you are logging hours
 - Check that the date represents that date you volunteered. If not, change it and click Set Date.
 - Enter your hours and minutes.

- **Confirm information on My Profile**
 - Please take a moment and review each of the areas in the My Profile section. The training module for the Canine Clubhouse and Kitty Cottage can be found here in the training section, depending on what you identified on your application as your interests. If you’d like access to a module, but it is not appearing on your Training page, please contact the Volunteer Manager.

- **Emergency Contact**
 - Under Additional Info in My Profile, there are fields for Emergency Contact Information. Please review this and make sure it is current and accurate. If something were to happen to you while volunteering, this is the information we would use to contact someone.