

# Osceola County Animal Services

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3910 Old Canoe Creek Rd,  
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## Volunteer Handbook

<http://www.osceolacountypets.com/volunteer>



## Contents

Mission Statement	.....	1
About Us	.....	2
Program Description	.....	3
Volunteer Agreement	.....	4
Volunteer Release of Liability	.....	5
Volunteer Opportunities	.....	6
Facility	.....	6
Application Process	.....	7
Volunteer Training	.....	8
Volunteer Communication	.....	9
Partnerships	.....	10
Off-site programs	.....	11
Volunteer Position Descriptions	.....	12



### Osceola County Animal Services Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the best care possible to animals that come to our shelter regardless of circumstance, to be diligent in our efforts to save lives, to educate and assist our community with animal related problems, and work to reduce threats posed by animals to public safety through proactive enforcement, education, assistance, and prevention based programs.



### Service Enterprise Vision Statement

Osceola County Animal Services is dedicated to working cooperatively as one team comprised of staff, volunteers and the community to create life-saving solutions while enhancing public safety. We are a Service Enterprise applicant.





# Animal Services

-Osceola County-

## About Osceola County

Created in 1887, Osceola County is a 1,506 square mile area that serves as the south/central boundary of the Central Florida greater metropolitan area. As of 2016, Osceola County was home to about 336,015 people; a 25.1% increase from 2010.

The city of Kissimmee, the county seat, is 18 miles due south of Orlando. Osceola's other incorporated city, St. Cloud, is 9 miles east of Kissimmee and approximately 45 miles west of the city of Melbourne on the Atlantic coast.



Sunrise at Kissimmee Lakefront Park



## Program Description

Giving hands on care to animals, educating our community, providing administrative support, and more; volunteers improve the lives of the animals in our care every day. We understand that life is busy and by you taking the time to help animals at this shelter, we will be able to save more lives and reach more people. Our gratitude is only surpassed by our enthusiasm to build a successful and comprehensive volunteer program.



We want your volunteer experience to be both rewarding and challenging. We provide the training for all volunteer and foster care positions; therefore, no prior experience is required. Due to the amount of training we require for most of our volunteer positions, we ask for a 6 month commitment working a minimum of 8 hours per month. Volunteers can either come in for a regularly scheduled reoccurring shift on the same day and time each week, or schedule their shifts through our online volunteer scheduling system each month. Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older. Pet foster parents must be 18 years of age and reside in Osceola County.





## Volunteer Agreement (as appears in the volunteer application)

 Each new volunteer must agree to the statements below to complete the application process.

I understand that I am subject to a background check and drug testing in order to be allowed to volunteer at Osceola County Animal Services. This is a County policy that cannot be waived by Animal Services.

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a volunteer, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this application may result in my immediate dismissal.

I give full consent for the County to conduct investigative inquiries about me, including but not limited to criminal background checks. I understand that results from the investigation may disqualify me from volunteering with the County.

As a volunteer, I agree to comply with all of Osceola County Board of County Commissioners' policies and procedures, and understand that failure to do so may result in my dismissal as a volunteer.

I fully recognize that this application, or any information obtained through the volunteer process, may be subject to public inspection pursuant to the Florida Public Records Act.

I agree to adhere to the volunteer code of conduct at all times and understand that failure to do so may result in my immediate dismissal as a volunteer.\*

\*Teen volunteers must also receive parent permission to participate.





Volunteer Release of Liability (as appears in the volunteer application)

 Each new volunteer must agree to the statements below to complete the application process.

I understand that working with animals carries with it inherent risks including the potential for bites, scratches, and falls. I further understand that other risks may exist including possible exposure to zoonotic and communicable diseases. I further acknowledge that any type of volunteer work carries with it certain risks.

I, in consideration of being permitted to participate as a volunteer for Osceola County Animal Services, hereby release and hold harmless Osceola County Animal Services, Osceola County, its employees, representatives, agents, Commission, volunteers, and managers from any and all liability, direct and indirect, and all claims, rights, demands, lawsuits, actions, expenses, damages, or causes of action, which I or my heirs, personal representatives, successors, assigns or anyone claiming by, through or under me, in the event I am injured or killed while performing as a volunteer.

I fully understand that this release includes, but is not limited to any claims, rights, demands, actions, causes or actions, expenses and damages, whatsoever which may arise from any injury, act or omission, caused, occasioned or contributed to, actually or allegedly, by the negligence, sole or concurrent, of one or more of the parties released herein.

I acknowledge that I have read, fully understand and voluntarily agree to this Release and that no verbal inducements apart from this release have been made to me.

I agree that Osceola County Animal Services may photograph my participation in this program, and I hereby release any such photographs to OCAS for use in its programs, publications and for other purposes.



## Team Opportunities

Osceola County Animal Services has designed a volunteer program that offers a wide variety of opportunities for team members to assist with the care, adoption and training of the animals in our care. These opportunities include, but are not limited to:

-  cat care
-  dog care
-  home dog and cat fostering<sup>1</sup>
-  special events
-  pet store partner animal care
-  adoption services on and off site
-  vet clinic internships
-  volunteer services internships



All team members are involved with the day to day operations of the shelter and are invited to participate in committees and other activities that will set the course for the future of the organization.

Additionally, we recognize our team members in various ways for the contributions that they make to our programs and operations.

## Facility

The Osceola County Animal Services facility is located at 3910 Old Canoe Creek Rd in St Cloud. Built in 1996, the shelter has facilities for dogs, cats and livestock as well as a vet clinic.

In 2017, a 3,000 square foot ancillary building as well as a small barn was added to the campus to facilitate greater access to appropriate housing for the animals in our charge.



<sup>1</sup> - May be volunteer or non-volunteer.



## Volunteer Application Process

All potential Animal Services volunteers go through an application process. Although the process is different for high school students (16 - 17) and those over 18 years of age, the process begins by completing an online request to attend an introductory meeting. These online forms can be found at the following address: <http://www.osceolacountypets.com> and clicking on Volunteer. No volunteers under 16 can be accepted.



-  Each potential volunteer must then attend an introductory meeting at the shelter where all opportunities and expectations are clearly explained. Those who remain interested are then directed to the online volunteer application.
-  Applicants over 18 years of age will fill out the application form and agree to a criminal background check conducted by Osceola County's Human Resources Department. The cost for the background check is covered by Animal Services. This can take between two and five weeks to complete.
-  Applicants between 16 and 17 will complete a different application and are not subject to the background check. These applicants will participate in the shelter's teen program, described later in the document.
-  Those who complete the process are then invited for an individual Meet and Greet with the Volunteer Coordinator at the shelter, either right after the orientation or at a later date. This meeting generally takes 10 - 15 minutes and is scheduled so that all expectations of both the volunteer and the shelter are clear.





## Volunteer Training

Training for new team members begins with a Day One shelter overview. During this session, team members tour the shelter and are instructed on parking areas, safety procedures and restricted and non-restricted areas of the facility. Instruction on using the volunteer management system is also included in Day 1 training.

After Day One training, all new team members are required to complete a series of online learning modules, or lessons followed by questions, to introduce them to the various elements of the shelter as well as introduce and reinforce safety procedures and requirements. These online modules, required of all new volunteers for the specific areas of work, are:

-  Shelter Basics - an introduction to the facility and general rules and expectations (1 hour)
-  Dog Care (1 hour)
-  Cat Care (1 hour)
-  Guest Care (2 hours)
-  Animal Enrichment (1 hour)



Volunteers who wish to participate in specialized areas are instructed to complete any of the following online learning modules:

-  Foster Care (2 hours)
  -  Orphan Kitten Care (1 hour)
  -  Vet Clinic Intern (1 hour)
- Additionally, volunteers in specific areas may be invited to undergo training from outside sources, including on site and web based training.



Trainees receive volunteer credit for completing each one of the modules or other formal training. The completion of each training exercise is recorded in the shelter's online volunteer management system.



## Volunteer Training (Continued)

Osceola County Animal Services takes pride in constantly updating and refining both our existing training modules and programs and adding new learning opportunities for both our volunteers and our community at large.

Volunteers who have selected to be a foster home for needy animals are only required to take the Foster Care and Kitten Care training modules, as well as completing and submitting the correct application.

## Teen Volunteer Program

Animal Services offers a special, intensive program for volunteers 16 and 17 years old. Held a minimum of once a year, this program requires participants to do the following, after completion of the application process:

-  Complete online modules as assigned
-  Participate in onsite training and practice sessions, scheduled regularly

Due to the program's rigorous schedule, participating students must understand that scheduled workdays and assignments cannot be missed. An agreement to this effect must be agreed to by all participating students and their parents prior to the student starting the program.



## Team Communication

Communication with our team members is generally conducted through face to face training and discussion as well as through electronic mail. Our communication vehicles include:

-  eNewsletter, updated and emailed to volunteers weekly (800+views/ month)
-  Foster Newsletter, subscription based and updated when needed
-  Emergency Newsletter, updated and emailed as needed during emergencies
-  Volunteer Website\*, containing training modules and other information
-  Facebook and Instagram sites for onsite volunteers as well as foster volunteers.

Additionally, email communication is used to contact volunteers concerning events, meetings and other shelter business. The shelter's volunteer management system, Volgistics, is also used to communicate with volunteers both onsite and off.



### Volunteer Resources Home





## Partnerships

Animal Services maintains partnerships with numerous entities to help achieve our mission. These entities include schools, businesses and non-profits that can assist in the adoption of all animals in the facility. These partnerships include but are not limited to:

 <b>ASPCA</b> American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	 <b>Best Friends</b> ANIMAL SOCIETY Best Friends Animal Society	 <i>The</i> DAWN BRANCHEAU <i>Foundation</i> Dawn Brancheau Foundation
 Harmony High School Vet Clinic Program	 <b>KUA</b> KISSIMMEE UTILITY AUTHORITY Kissimmee Utility Authority	 <b>PET ALLIANCE</b> of Greater Orlando Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando
 <b>PETSMART</b> Petsmart of Kissimmee Centerview Blvd	 <b>PET SUPERMARKET</b> Pet Supermarket Kissimmee & St Cloud	 <b>SNiP It!</b> Snip It Clinic Kissimmee



## Name Tags

Each volunteer has a name tag that is to be worn whenever volunteering either at the shelter or at an off-site event. This tag informs staff and visitors of the volunteer's qualifications to complete certain tasks and be in restricted areas of the facility. Each icon indicates a qualification.



## Off -site Programs

Off-site programs for volunteers of Animal Services include the following:

-  Adoptions: at local pet stores; held periodically
-  Pet Care: at local pet stores
-  Foster Care: at the homes of volunteers and employees
-  Trap and Release (TNR): through Snip It Clinic
-  Special Events: at various venues
-  Fundraisers: at various venues
-  Volunteer Recognition: on site and other locations



## Volunteer Position Descriptions

Shelter Basics - Day 1 is the first step in a new volunteer's journey through our program. Participants will:

-  tour the OCAS facility
-  be introduced to rules and procedures
-  may work briefly with dogs and cats
-  questions answered by the coordinator.



### Qualifications/Prerequisites

The successful candidate must meet one of the two following sets of criteria:

Adults (over 18 and out of high school):

-  attend information session
-  complete application process
-  complete background check
-  clearance by Osceola County Human Resources



High School students\*:

-  attend information session
-  complete application process
-  parent permission form signed and returned

\* - These procedures may differ during specific teen volunteer sessions.



## Dog Care

-  Walking dogs
-  Socializing dogs
-  Bathing dogs

## Qualifications/prerequisites

-  Must have completed Day 1 training
-  Must have completed online Dog Care Module
-  Completion of Enrichment Module (recommended)



## Training

-  Three (minimum) separate one hour sessions working with a mentor or lead on walking, bathing and socializing dogs
-  Includes safety rules on removing dogs from kennels

## Cat Care

-  Socializing cats
-  Photographing cats for publicity

## Qualifications/prerequisites

-  Must have completed Day 1 training
-  Must have completed online Cat Care Module
-  Completion of Enrichment Module (recommended)
-  Completion of Kitten Care Module (recommended)



## Training

-  Two (minimum) separate one hour sessions working with a mentor or lead



## Guest Care

- 👤 Assistant - leads guests to correct areas to view pets
- 👤 Specialist/Lead - chosen by staff, proven guest care and paperwork skills

## Qualifications/prerequisites

- 👤 Must have completed Day 1 training
- 👤 Must have completed online Guest Care Module (must achieve 80%)
- 👤 Must be familiar/practice adoption paperwork

## Training

- 👤 Three (minimum) separate one hour sessions working with a mentor or lead
- 👤 Practice at pet store with a lead
- 👤 Selection by staff only for specialist position



## Animal Care Lead

- 👤 Supervises and trains new volunteers
- 👤 Assists staff with adoption and/or veterinary tasks

## Qualifications/prerequisites

- 👤 Selection by staff
- 👤 Completion of all online modules Training
- 👤 Minimum of one year successful volunteering; at least 100 hours
- 👤 Demonstrated expertise in one or more areas of shelter



## Foster (18 or over)

-  Takes animals needing time away from the shelter into the home for a period of time
-  Includes cats and dogs
-  Purpose: socialization, gain weight, recover from surgery, work on behavior

## Qualifications/prerequisites

-  Must have completed foster application
-  Must have approval of family to foster
-  Must have completed online Foster Care Module
-  Must have completed online Kitten Care Module
-  Must have attended meeting at shelter
-  Must be willing to commit to the animal(s) for a period of time

## Training

-  Attend shelter training session

Note: Shelter supplies all needed materials and veterinary care required of each animal in foster care





## Non - volunteer foster

-  Takes animals needing time away from the shelter into the home for a period of time
-  Includes cats and dogs (mainly kittens)
-  Purpose: socialization, gain weight

## Qualifications/prerequisites

-  Must have completed foster only application
-  Must have approval of family to foster
-  Must have completed online Foster Care Module
-  Must have completed online Kitten Care Module
-  Must be willing to commit to the animal(s) for a period of time

## Training

-  Complete online foster only learning module

Note: Shelter supplies all needed materials and veterinary care required of each animal in foster care





## Vet Clinic Assistant

-  Volunteers in vet clinic assisting staff with animal health tasks
-  Can be an adult volunteer
-  Can be a high school intern

## Qualifications/prerequisites

-  Recommendation of shelter staff or school supervisor
-  Complete application process for veterinary suite

## Training

-  Complete all online modules
-  Complete all basics training (cat, dog and guest care)
-  Complete live Veterinary Assistance training class

This opportunity is mainly reserved for high school and college interns and space is extremely limited.

## Pet Store Animal Care

-  Cares for pets located in area stores that partner with Osceola County Animal Services
-  Assists with pet adoptions at stores

## Training

-  Complete all basics training for cats and dogs
-  Complete Guest Care Module
-  Observe lead at site to learn procedures



# Animal Services

-Osceola County-

Other opportunities include:

## Photographer

 Requires dog and/or cat care training

## Animal Handler for photographer

 Requires dog care training

## Pet Profile Author

 Requires shelter basics

 Requires access to computer

## Clerical Assistant

 Requires expertise in specific areas

## Facilities Assistant

 Requires shelter basics

 Requires light training on using equipment



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-Osceola County-

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