



## AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER Group Volunteer Instructions

Thank you for donating your valuable time to Austin Animal Center. AAC welcomes group volunteers to interact with the dogs and cats, or work on other projects at the Center for a scheduled, short term volunteer shift. This guide should help prepare you for what to expect and what is required of you during your visit to AAC.

### **What will I be doing?**

Your scheduled volunteer shift may include working on projects that support animal enrichment, petting and playing with cats, or walking dogs. Keep in mind the shelter environment can be extremely stressful for many animals. Because of this stress, some animals may be reactive in a negative manner. We ask that you not treat these animals as you would your own pet; more experience and caution is necessary. With that in mind, we prefer you feel comfortable and confident handling and interacting with dogs.

### **Where will I be working?**

Your group will meet your volunteer guide in front of the lobby doors at our main Austin Animal Center location unless otherwise arranged. AAC is located at *7201 Levander Loop, Bldg A Austin, TX 78702* (Google maps is a great resource). Please plan for traffic, try to carpool as much as possible, and finding your way to the Center; PLEASE DON'T BE LATE. Parking is available when you first pull on to the Center campus, but can be limited during certain times of the day.

Please plan on coming unless otherwise notified, we may contact your group to cancel or reschedule at any time up to your scheduled shift time. Your dog walking shift will be rain or shine, unless AAC staff determines it is unsafe to be on campus. At which time your point of contact will be notified.

### **What should I wear?**

- Everyone **MUST** wear closed shoes to participate; we recommend athletic type walking shoes if you are scheduled to walk dogs - You will *not* be permitted to walk dogs if you are wearing sandals or other inappropriate shoes.
- Wear appropriate length pants – Bermuda shorts or longer. Pants or shorts with pockets to hold dog treats are helpful but not required.
- Wear corporate or same colored shirts to help us identify who is a part of your group.
- Dress for the weather, protective clothing and accessories from the elements are recommended.

### **What should I bring and not bring?**

- Bring water and hydrate well the night and morning before coming into the shelter as humidity and heat are tough. We also suggest hats, sunscreen and anything to protect

you from the elements. Working outside and walking dogs can be hard (yet rewarding) work!

- Secure valuables before coming into the shelter, there will be nowhere for purses and bags to be secured on our property.
- We don't recommend any type of jewelry, especially earrings/necklaces/bracelets that dogs can jump up and pull on.
- Don't bring children or pets unless the group is explicitly planned to include them in activities
- Bring donations if you want to! We are always accepting donations

### **What should I expect when I arrive?**

Once you arrive at the shelter, make your way to the front doors, which will be locked before 11am. Your volunteer guide will let you into the building and then give you a small orientation including safety training and procedures. We will equip you with all the tools and protocols you need to be successful during your volunteer shift including an explanation of:

- Kennel cards and whiteboards
- Dot system to identify dogs that are accessible
- Mutt Mitts & disposal
- Demonstration of removing/returning dog to kennel
- Where to walk the dogs
- Overview of AAC facilities
- What to do in the event of a loose dog or a dog fight

### **Animal Handling Safety Overview:**

- Avoid touching animals with RED dots, BLUE dots, and ORANGE dots
- Interact *only* with cats and dogs that have a GREEN dot on their kennel
- Partner with another member of your group to walk a large dog--your volunteer lead may pair up larger groups to limit the number of dogs out at one time
- Walk only dogs you feel comfortable handling
- Never intervene in a dog fight - use your whistle call for Staff assistance
- Always keep leashed dogs 10 feet apart - never allow them to touch noses
- Keep dogs moving forward
- Always be aware of your dog & your surroundings to prevent a dog from getting loose

### **What will we provide you?**

- Cats and dogs and project materials!
- Treats
- Hand sanitizer (please sanitize hands in between walking each dog)
- Mutt Mitts (aka poop bags - please pick up after the dogs)
- Leashes
- Whistles

Thank you again for supporting Austin Animal Center and sharing your valuable time with us. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Group Volunteer Coordinator, Nicole Wilson at [nexvolunteer@austintexas.gov](mailto:nexvolunteer@austintexas.gov) or 512-978-0529. For information about other shelter services including the Foster Program and searching for a lost dog, visit our website [austinanimalcenter.org](http://austinanimalcenter.org)

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