

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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A Private Charity Since 1881

## VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

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## **WELCOME!**

*Thank you for joining the Connecticut Humane Society's volunteer program. We request your cooperation in adhering to the policies in this document. Use the blue links to learn more about our programs and services on the CHS website:*

[CThumane.org](http://CThumane.org).

*We look forward to working with you and are always available to answer your questions.*

## **GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers assist in many capacities. Foster volunteers care for pets in their own homes. Dog Walkers, Cat Cuddlers and Critter Cuddlers ensure the pets get exercise and socialization each day. Enrichment volunteers provide pets with mental stimulation. Germ Busters, Cat Assistants and Laundry Room Assistants help keep the building and supplies clean and sanitized. Transport Drivers escort pets to and from medical appointments. Ambassadors represent CHS at community events. These are just some of the many ways volunteers help. Current openings are listed at [CThumane.org/volunteer](http://CThumane.org/volunteer). Speak with your volunteer coordinator if you want to get more involved.

### **Volunteer Benefits**

- ❖ The ability to deduct mileage and other volunteer expenses when itemizing taxes.
- ❖ 1 free adoption after five years of consecutive service. Eligibility must be approved by a manager. Foster volunteers must foster at least two assignments per year to be eligible for this benefit. Free adoptions are for an active volunteer's own household and may not be gifted to someone else.

### **Adoptions**

Information about the adoption process and fees can be found at [CThumane.org/adopt](http://CThumane.org/adopt). Once an animal is cleared for adoption their profile will appear on the website. The day after adoption, they will appear on the Success Stories page:

[CThumane.org/adopt/success-stories/](http://CThumane.org/adopt/success-stories/).

If a volunteer is interested in adopting a pet that is not available yet, they must speak to a manager. If the manager deems the adoption will be a good fit the animal will be on hold for the volunteer for up to 24 hours after the animal is cleared for adoption.

### **Newsletter**

The volunteer newsletter contains program updates, policy changes and new volunteer opportunities. Volunteers are expected to view the newsletter each month. If you opt out of CHS emails you will miss out on this important information. Notify your volunteer coordinator if your email address changes.

### **Portal**

CHS' volunteer portal allows volunteers to view their schedule and service hours. Upload the VicNet Volunteer Portal app from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) or visit [CThumane.org/volunteerportal](http://CThumane.org/volunteerportal) to access the login page. Click the "Password Reset" link to create a password.

## **VOLUNTEER PROTOCOLS & POLICIES**

### **Dress Code**

Volunteers who work on-site must adhere to the dress code:

- ❖ Closed-toe, rubber-soled flat shoes with backs (sneakers or boots).
- ❖ Pants or shorts that come to the knees.
- ❖ Uniform shirt
- ❖ Name badge

Volunteers in uniform are acting as representatives of CHS. Attire should take that into consideration.

Uniform tees and name badges are available for purchase.

Volunteers may request to have their pronouns on their name badge.

Additional items (sweatshirts, vests, etc.) may be ordered from the CHS volunteer store: [business.landsend.com/store/cthumanevolunteers/](http://business.landsend.com/store/cthumanevolunteers/)

Click "apply logo" before adding items to the shopping cart. There will be an additional charge for embroidery and shipping.

Volunteers may also wear items purchased from the [CHS swag shop](#).

Volunteers working with animals should not wear jewelry that may present a danger (ex. dangling earrings, long necklaces). Ear spacers must be solid. Excessive use of fragrance is discouraged.

### **Service Tracking**

Volunteers who work on site must sign in and out for each shift.

### **Attendance**

Volunteers should show up on time for scheduled assignments. If volunteers are not able to come reliably or need to change their schedule, they should speak with their volunteer coordinator.

The volunteer database is periodically updated and volunteers who have not been showing up reliably will be made "inactive" and removed from the volunteer roster.

### **Absence Notification**

Volunteers must notify their volunteer coordinator in advance if they are unable to make a scheduled shift. A minimum of one weeks' notice is ideal. Volunteers may be able to make up a missed shift on another day. Volunteers should notify their volunteer coordinator as soon as possible if they will be late for a shift.

### **Illness**

Volunteers should not report to work if they test positive for or have symptoms of COVID or any other contagious illness. Absence notification should be given to their volunteer coordinator as soon as possible.

### **Holidays**

CHS closes for major holidays. Scheduled volunteers are not expected to come in, but volunteers may sign up to help.

### **Inclement Weather**

Scheduled volunteers will be contacted by e-mail if they are not needed due to a weather closure or delay and a recording will be posted to the phone system.

### **Injuries**

If a volunteer has an injury that could put them at risk for further injury or put the animals at risk, they should not come in for their volunteer shift until cleared by a doctor.

### **Leave of Absence**

Volunteers who have served for more than six months may request a "Leave of Absence." Volunteers must speak with their volunteer coordinator prior to return as their shift may have been filled. Volunteers who are not able to return at the end of six months will become "inactive."

### **Resignation**

Volunteers should provide a minimum of two weeks' notice when resigning from the program if possible.

### **Confirming Volunteer Hours**

Service reports can be accessed from the [Volunteer Portal](#).

### **Paid Employment**

Volunteers may apply for employment at [CThumane.applicantpro.com/jobs/](https://CThumane.applicantpro.com/jobs/).  
*Volunteer status does not guarantee an interview or paid employment.*

### **Code of Conduct**

CHS is a place of business and volunteers should conduct themselves appropriately. Volunteers are expected to treat the staff, fellow volunteers and customers with respect and must follow the directives of the staff.

### **Promoting Pets**

Do not share photos of pets on social media or publicize them for adoption until they are available for adoption on the CHS website.

### **Personal Phones**

Phones should be silenced. Do not call, text or listen to music while handling an animal.

### **Personal Belongings**

Lockers are available for volunteers. All locks and items must be removed at the end of the shift.

### **Break Room Etiquette**

Volunteers may use the break room to take short breaks. Staff members on break are not available to answer work-related questions.

### **Personal Questions**

Staff (including veterinarians) are not able to answer medical or behavioral questions or provide advice regarding personal pets.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In case of an emergency, such as fire, volunteers should immediately evacuate the building from the nearest exit. Fire department personnel will evacuate the animals if appropriate.

### **Pet Surrender**

Volunteer status does not guarantee acceptance of a pet for surrender. Volunteers are subject to the same intake process that applies to the public.

## **STAYING SAFE WITH ANIMALS**

Anytime people work around animals there can be a risk of injury. It is important that volunteers use the safety techniques that were demonstrated during training.

### **Reporting an Accident**

Accidents and injuries (bites, scratches, etc.) must be reported to the manager on duty *immediately* for state law compliance and to ensure that nobody else is hurt. Volunteers will be asked to complete an incident form.

First aid stations are located in each shelter. Volunteers should follow up with their own physician following any bite incidents to prevent infection.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

CHS has many procedures in place to limit disease-spread amongst animals and prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases which can pass from animals to people. However, there is always a risk when handling any animal. To limit the risk of disease-spread, it is imperative that volunteers:

- ❖ Wash hands or utilize sanitizer after every animal interaction.
- ❖ Immediately report any bite or scratch to the manager on duty.
- ❖ Refrain from handling any pet marked “Staff Only.”
- ❖ Report to staff any animal that is acting strangely or exhibiting signs of illness.
- ❖ Only enter non-public animal holding rooms that you have been assigned to.

### **Adherence with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Policies**

OSHA laws protect workers’ health and safety. According to these regulations, volunteers:

- ❖ Must return cleaning chemicals/safety equipment to the room they came from.
- ❖ Must not have food or drinks in any animal care areas of the building.

### **Keeping Personal Pets Healthy**

Pets at CHS may be carrying diseases that can be transmitted to pets at home. Volunteers should take the following precautions to prevent the transmission of disease:

- ❖ Keep personal pets up-to-date on their vaccinations or vaccine titers.
- ❖ Wash hands thoroughly at the end of each shift.
- ❖ Leave their shoes at the door so they do not track germs into the house.
- ❖ Change their outfit before greeting their pets.

### **Ringworm**

Ringworm is a fungal infection of the skin that can pass from animals to people. It is spread through direct contact with a person or animal who is infected or by coming in contact with an infected object (towels, toys, etc.). Animals who appear healthy may start to show symptoms of a ringworm infection at any time. An infected animal may have areas of missing fur.

On a human, symptoms usually appear 4-14 days after contact. Symptoms include scaly, itchy lesions that may or may not be in a ring formation. Seek medical advice if symptoms are present. Volunteers who have ringworm should notify their volunteer coordinator. To prevent its spread, lesions must be covered while working in the shelter and volunteers with ringworm or who have had ringworm in their home must take a break from fostering CHS pets.

To learn more about ringworm and to see photos of what it looks like, visit the Center for Disease Control's website: <https://cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/ringworm/index.html>.

### **Giardia**

Giardia is a microscopic parasite that causes diarrhea. Humans can contract Giardia from animals by handling infected feces. Pets who test positive for Giardia will have a posted sign on their cage and volunteers must wear gloves when handling these animals and should wash their hands immediately once the gloves are removed.

### **Bite Quarantine**

Animals that have bitten are handled in accordance with state rabies laws. Depending on their vaccination history, either euthanasia for rabies testing or a 10-day quarantine may be required. Animals in quarantine will have a “Staff Only” sign on their cage. Volunteers **must** follow the directives on these signs for their own safety and the safety of those around them. Minimum contact is mandatory to avoid additional bites/exposures.

### **Pre-Exposure Rabies Vaccines**

Pre-exposure rabies vaccinations are designed to protect people from unknown exposure to rabies. These shots are not required to become a volunteer. Volunteers who would like to receive a pre-exposure vaccine should consult with their doctor.

### **Infectious Disease Management**

- ❖ Color-coded room signs indicate the level of illness in each room. Volunteers must follow the posted instructions. Volunteers must not enter rooms coded orange or red.
- ❖ If working in a room where contagious animals are housed, volunteers must step on the footbath (foam disinfecting mat) on the way into and out of the room.
- ❖ Volunteers must wash their hands thoroughly after each cat interaction, but before handling the paperwork for that animal. Volunteers must wash hands or use hand-sanitizer between walking dogs.
- ❖ Dog waste must be picked up.
- ❖ Cleaning tools (brooms, squeegees, etc.) must only be used in the room they are kept in. Color-coded tape indicates which room they belong in.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **Social Networking**

Volunteers are encouraged to follow CHS on Facebook, X and Instagram and can share and repost CHS postings. When posting about CHS:

- ❖ Share information about pets who are available for adoption; link directly to the pet’s profile on the CHS website.
- ❖ Be respectful of fellow volunteers, co-workers, clients and competitors. Do not post anything derogatory.
- ❖ **Do not** post information or photos about pets that are not currently available or pets owned by clients.
- ❖ **Do not** post anything confidential, including the names of clients and information regarding euthanasia or intake decisions.

### **Blogs**

If a volunteer mentions CHS on a personal blog or website, include this wording: *The views expressed on this website/blog are mine alone and don't necessarily reflect the views of the Connecticut Humane Society.*

## **IT POLICY**

Volunteers who are granted access to CHS' database should keep all passwords confidential and should only access information necessary to complete their job. Volunteers should not use company technology to view personal e-mails, make personal phone calls or for any personal benefit. Volunteers should not have any expectation of privacy in anything that is created, stored, sent or received using CHS technology.

Volunteers are prohibited from using any technology to view, listen to or communicate offensive, defamatory, or disruptive content.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE POLICY**

Volunteers may not be under the influence of any illegal drug or alcohol while in the workplace, while on duty or while operating a vehicle or equipment owned or leased to CHS.

Volunteers may use physician-prescribed medications, provided that the use of such drugs does not adversely affect job performance or the safety of the volunteer or other individuals in the workplace.

## **HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

CHS prohibits harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, pregnancy, disability, status as a Vietnam-era veteran or other veteran as well as any other category protected by an applicable federal, state, or local law. This prohibition also includes sexual harassment. CHS will take strong disciplinary steps, up to and including discharge, against any volunteer who engages in conduct which violates this policy.

CHS prohibits not only actions which are severe enough to be unlawful but also conduct and comments that do not violate state and federal law, but which are still inappropriate in the workplace.

### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment consists of unwelcome or unsolicited verbal, written or physical conduct based on personal bias including actions based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, pregnancy, disability, status as a Vietnam-era veteran or other veteran as well as any other category protected by an applicable federal, state, or local law, that are sufficiently severe or



pervasive so as to unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other such verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It exists where a co-worker, superior or non-employee of the Society exercises or threatens to exercise his or her authority to affect the job, duties, earnings or career of another person working at the Society (including prospective staff or volunteers) in order to obtain a sexual favor. It also exists when unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

The use of disability-related or racially derogatory jokes or comments, racial or religious epithets, or ethnic slurs which have the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, and insults or intimidation demonstrating age bias, are also examples of the type of conduct prohibited by this policy. These examples are not all inclusive.

### **Reporting Policy**

Every CHS employee and volunteer is responsible for making sure that our workplace is free from all forms of prohibited harassment. Any person who experiences or witnesses harassment by anyone at CHS, including supervisors, co-workers, volunteers, or any other person affiliated with the Connecticut Humane Society, must report the harassment to his or her shelter manager, the volunteer manager, or director of human resources.

### **Prohibition for Retaliation**

CHS prohibits retaliation against any person for having raised a complaint of harassment or discrimination in good faith. CHS encourages everyone to report harassment or discrimination of any kind immediately.

### **Procedure for Handling Complaints**

Complaints of prohibited harassment will be investigated as promptly and confidentially as possible. The allegations of the complaint and the identity of the persons involved shall be maintained on a confidential basis, subject to the need to conduct a full and impartial investigation, remedy violations, monitor compliance and administer the policy. The investigation will include discussion with the complaining party, the complained-of party, and witnesses. A written report will be completed with recommendations concerning remedial action, if necessary. The executive director and director of human resources will determine the appropriate corrective action, if any, notify the complained-of party and the complaining party of the decision, and implement that decision.

Further, it is the right and obligation of an employee or volunteer to report any complaints to a shelter manager, the volunteer manager, or the HR director.

## DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Connecticut State Law does not require a non-profit agency to accept or retain a volunteer that is deemed a poor fit for the organization.

### Unsatisfactory performance

Performance may be deemed unsatisfactory if a volunteer violates policies and procedures, fails to complete tasks in a competent, timely manner or fails to maintain an adequate attendance record. Volunteers will be notified if there is a lack of satisfaction with their performance and will be given instructions to correct the issue. Volunteers may be reassigned to a more appropriate job. If performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the volunteer will receive a written warning. If the volunteer fails to correct their performance after a written warning, the volunteer will be dismissed from the program. Volunteers may request additional training for their job at any time.

### Misconduct

Misconduct is grounds for *immediate* dismissal by the volunteer coordinator.

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- ❖ Inhumane or mistreatment of animals
- ❖ Impolite or belligerent attitude
- ❖ Stealing, dishonesty, or falsification of any CHS records
- ❖ Violating the drug and alcohol use policy
- ❖ Sexual harassment

## OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- ❖ Become a donor: [CThumane.org/donate](http://CThumane.org/donate)
- ❖ Donate supplies: [CThumane.org/wishlist](http://CThumane.org/wishlist).
- ❖ Organize a fundraiser or pet food drive: [CThumane.org/serviceprojects](http://CThumane.org/serviceprojects).
- ❖ Check if your employer offers matching grants for volunteer service.

## FINAL NOTE

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the volunteer program. Please notify your volunteer coordinator if any of your contact information changes.

We welcome suggestions for improving our operations. Ideas should be brought to your volunteer coordinator or may be submitted through the [Virtual Suggestion Box](#).