

Essential Capabilities of volunteers for Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center



Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center volunteers must:

There are several volunteer opportunities within Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) that are fulfilled by volunteers who work with animals sheltered at MCASAC. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer with MCASAC, volunteers must possess the following physical, mental and emotional capabilities. If you are unable to meet these capabilities due to a disability, please email VolunteerMCASAC@montgomerycountymd.gov

Essential Physical Capabilities:

- Ability to use both hands simultaneously with a high level of dexterity, have relatively quick reflexes, and maneuver well in small or confined spaces (examples: open a door while handling animal; quickly pursue/retrieve an animal who escaped from your control; leash/harness animals of varying sizes, energy levels, and temperaments; bend or squat to leash/harness/pick up an animal).
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to stand for long periods of time.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely in a variety of environments, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty and be able to read paperwork and instructions.
- Ability to assess body condition of animals, and to note signs of injury or illness.
- Ability to hear if animals are growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to speak and effectively communicate in English, both verbally and in written form.
- Ability to handle and restrain animals of different sizes with extreme caution and care.
- Must not have strong allergies to animals and chemicals used in cleaning that are not able to be controlled by medication.
- Capacity to deal with strong and unpleasant odors, fleas, feces, and possible wounds of injured animals with whom we come into contact.
- Ability to effectively perform tasks in a noisy environment (example: loud barking).
- Ability to tolerate the possible exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.
- Ability to wash dishes, clean surfaces, wash and fold laundry with the possibility of touching bodily excrement.

Essential Mental Capabilities:

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures with minimal direction.
- High level of English reading, writing, spelling, and communication skills (example: a volunteer is expected to be able to interpret and document information on an animal's prescription chart).
- Possess problem-solving capabilities.

- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with animals; ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to work independently for periods of time, as well as work within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

Essential Emotional Capabilities:

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance
- Ability to cope with an highly emotionally-charged environment.
- Ability to understand Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) policies and procedures and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing MCASAC.
- Ability to communicate with a variety of people effectively and without judgment or making negative remarks.
- Must be flexible and willing/able to change plans and/or directions at any given moment.
- Must be capable of witnessing highly stressful situations when dealing with both people and animals and not get emotionally involved.

Adapted from HSUS national volunteer Center http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/national-volunteer-center/essential-capabilities/pfl_essential_capabilities_1.pdf