



# **Volunteer Handbook**

**Revision A  
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## ***Welcome to Habitat for Cats!***

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing Habitat for Cats for your volunteer experience. This handbook will give you an overview of Habitat's volunteer program.

Achieving the organization's goals is best served by the active participation of citizens of the community. We operate totally by volunteers; there are no paid employees. Habitat for Cats accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the organization and within all appropriate programs and activities. Volunteers are regarded as a valuable resource to this organization, its staff, and its clients, which includes cats, as well as people. Volunteers shall have the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the organization.

Please feel free at any time to approach the Volunteer Manager or any member of the staff or Board of Directors with questions or concerns. Volunteers are an essential part of our organization and we want to take this opportunity to welcome you to our team! We hope your experience will be positive and rewarding.

*Board and Staff of Habitat for Cats*

## 1.0 Introduction

Habitat for Cats' mission, goals and objectives supports the "no-kill" animal welfare philosophy which in general, refers to finding an alternative to "euthanasia" as a means of controlling the pet population for otherwise healthy animals.

## 1.1 Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives

### *Mission:*

- To improve the lives of homeless animals through population control, rehoming and through adoption, and to provide an alternative to traditional kill shelters.

### *Goals:*

- To eradicate homelessness among local animals
- To improve public health by inoculating homeless cats against rabies and other contagious diseases
- To benefit wildlife by decreasing the number of homeless cats who are natural predators of birds and rodents, etc.

### *Objectives:*

- To implement an aggressive Trap-Neuter and Release (TNR) program
- To adopt out as many animals as possible to good homes
- To develop a network of foster homes for animals seeking temporary shelter
- To develop a network of volunteers
- To assist and advise in cat colony management
- To educate the public about animal welfare issues

## 1.2 Purpose of Volunteer Policies

The purpose of these policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to the governing "staff" and volunteers. Habitat for Cats reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Changes to or exceptions from these policies may only be granted by the Volunteer Manager, and must be obtained in advance and in writing. Areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be determined by the Volunteer Manager in consonance with Board approval.

## 1.3 Scope of Volunteer Policies

Unless specifically stated, these policies apply to all non-elected volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken on or on behalf of the organization, and to all departments and sites of operation of the organization.

## 1.4 Definition of 'Volunteer'

A 'volunteer' is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organization. A 'volunteer' must be officially accepted and enrolled by the organization prior to performance of the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as 'employees' of the organization.

## 1.5 Role of the Volunteer Management Group

The function of the Volunteer Management group is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the organization, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer efforts to jointly provide more productive services.

## 1.6 Service at the Discretion of the Organization

The organization accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the organization. Volunteers agree that the organization may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the organization.

## **2.0 Volunteer Management Procedures**

### **2.1 Reference Checks**

Habitat for Cats reserves the right to do reference checks on all new volunteers.

### **2.1 Volunteer of Minor Age**

Volunteers who have not reached their age of majority must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering.

### **2.2 Certificate of Ability**

Any potential volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a physician for either physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their volunteer duties. Volunteers under a course of treatment which might affect their volunteer work will not be accepted without written verification of suitability from their physician. Any volunteer who, after acceptance and assignment by the organization, enters a course of treatment which might adversely impact upon the performance of their volunteer duties should consult with the Volunteer Program Manager.

### **2.3 Maintenance of Records**

A system of records will be maintained for each volunteer with the organization, including administrative information, dates of service, positions held. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Volunteer Management Group in a timely and accurate fashion.

### **2.4 Representation of the Organization**

Prior to any action or statement which might significantly affect or obligate the organization, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from appropriate staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the organization as specifically indicated within their job descriptions.

### **2.5 Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single staff, volunteer, client, or other person or involves overall organization business.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the organization or other corrective action.

### **2.6 Probationary Period**

All volunteer placements shall initially be done on a trial period of 60 days. At the end of this period, either the volunteer or organization staff may request a re-assignment of the volunteer to a different position or may determine the unsuitability of the volunteer for a position within the organization.

### **2.7 Re-Assignment**

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new position shall be interviewed for that position and shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position before they begin work. In addition, any screening procedures appropriate for that specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the organization.

### **3.0 Volunteer Training and Development**

#### **3.1 Orientation**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organization, an orientation on the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting in that effort.

#### **3.2 On-the-Job Training**

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

#### **3.3 Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training**

Staff members with responsible over delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. Those staff that will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.

### **4.0 Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation**

#### **4.1 Requirement of a Supervisor**

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the organization will have a clearly identified supervisory volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

#### **4.2 Volunteer/Staff Relationships**

Volunteers and “staff” are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the organization, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

#### **4.3 Volunteer Involvement in Staff Evaluation**

Examination of their effective utilization of volunteers may be a component in the evaluation of staff persons who are assigned to work with volunteers. In such cases, supervisors should ask for the input and participation of volunteers in evaluating staff performance.

#### **4.4 Absenteeism**

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer’s work assignment or term of service.

#### **4.5 Substitution**

Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences which might be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only be taken following consultation with a supervisor and care should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the position. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers with the organization.

#### **4.6 Standards of Performance**

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards should list the work to be done in that position, measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of the work. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and the volunteer assigned to the position, and a copy of the standards should be provided to the volunteer along with a copy of their job description at the beginning of their assignment.

#### **4.7 Dismissal of a Volunteer**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organization or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Program Manager.

#### **4.8 Reasons for Dismissal**

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of organization equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients (this also includes the cats in care) or co-workers, failure to abide by organization policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

#### **4.9 Concerns and Grievances**

Decisions involving corrective action of a volunteer may be reviewed for appropriateness. If corrective action is taken, the affected volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing their concern or grievance.

#### **4.10 Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the organization for whatever reason and at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision to the Volunteer Manager or a Board member of the organization.

### **5.0 General Information**

#### **5.1 Volunteer Email List**

All volunteers who provide an email address will be automatically added to our volunteer email list, used to send notices about upcoming events and volunteer needs at Habitat for Cats. Your information will not be shared with any other entity. Please let the Volunteer Manager know if you prefer not to be included on this list or if you do not check your email regularly.

#### **5.2 Reimbursement of Expenses**

Volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking business for the organization. The Volunteer Management group shall distribute information to all volunteers regarding specific reimbursable items and procedure for submitting Expense Claim Form. Most reimbursable items are listed on Claim Form. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure. Expense Claim Form should be submitted for payment on a monthly basis if expenses are over \$75.00. If expenses accumulate, payment of the entire claim is not guaranteed to be paid out as one lump payment. Several payment installments may be required

### **5.3 Collection of Income/Donations**

Any income received by a volunteer as a result of Habitat for Cats fundraising, solicitations, payment for HFC services or merchandise or donations will be itemized on an Income Report Form and submitted to the Treasurer.

### **5.2 Access to Organization Property and Materials**

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to organization property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for organization purposes. Personal use of the organization's property is not allowed.

Telephone use for personal reasons will be limited.

### **5.3 Insurance**

Habitat for Cats' General Liability Insurance does **not** cover volunteers should property damage or accidental injury occur because of their performance of volunteer duties. Volunteers must have their own health insurance in the event they are injured while performing their volunteer duties. Volunteers driving their own vehicles to perform volunteer activities are expected to have personal vehicle insurance.



**APPENDIX A – Habitat for Cats Volunteer Application and Waiver Form**

## HABITAT FOR CATS VOLUNTEER APPLICATION (rev 3)

Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_ Age, if under 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### What type of volunteering are you interested in:

Habitat Shelter & Adoption Center \_\_\_\_\_ Habitat Cat Sanctuary \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Care \_\_\_\_\_ Cat Trapping (TNR) \_\_\_\_\_

Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### For how long a period are you hoping to volunteer?

On an ongoing basis? \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary (for ex, summer only) \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have health insurance coverage? \_\_\_\_\_

Pet owning history: what kind of pets have you owned, and for how long?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever worked with animals (other than your own)? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, in what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_

### FOSTER PARENT APPLICANTS (Fill out this section)

Do you rent or own your home? \_\_\_\_\_

If renting, list landlord's name & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your landlord or your lease allow pets? \_\_\_\_\_

List the number of children & their ages living in household? \_\_\_\_\_

Does anyone living in your household have allergies? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have pets, list each pet and fill in appropriate information:

Pets (cat, dog, etc)	Sex	Spay/Neut Y/N?	Distemper Y/N?	Rabies Y/N?	Feline Leukem tested Y/N?	Feline AIDS (FIV) tested Y/N?	Feline Leuk Vaccinated Y/N?

Please list veterinarian(s) that care for your pet(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever cared for young kittens or injured animals? If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an area in your home that can be used to confine foster pets? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, specify where: \_\_\_\_\_

What type of foster care are you able to provide?

\_\_\_ Bottle-fed kittens    \_\_\_ Weaned kittens    \_\_\_ Adult Cats (specify Male, Female or either)

\_\_\_ Post care of feral cats    \_\_\_ Cats requiring socialization    \_\_\_ Cats requiring medical treatments

Number of foster cats/kittens you can care for at one time: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any factors which could hinder your fostering pets? (vacation, travel schedules, allergies, illness, etc)?

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADOPTION CENTER & SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER APPLICANTS (Fill out this section)**

How often would you like to volunteer?

Once/week \_\_\_\_\_ Special events, as needed \_\_\_\_\_

Twice/week \_\_\_\_\_ Every other week \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all shifts in the following schedule that you are available to volunteer.

Place a #1 and #2 in your first and second choices, respectively.

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
8 am -12 pm							
12 pm – 4 pm							
5 pm – 8 pm							
list other times:							

As a volunteer at the Adoption Center or Sanctuary some of the following tasks **will** be a part of your regular routine.

- Cleaning cat cages
- Handling cats
- Cleaning dishes and litterpans
- Sweeping and mopping floors
- Disinfecting cat cages & areas
- Feeding & watering cats
- Throwing out garbage
- Laundry
- Climbing up/down stair

Are there any tasks listed above that you would not be able to perform? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you allergic to cats or products such as flea products, bleach, latex, straw/hay, etc? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Are you allergic to anything not listed above? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you able to go up and down stairs? \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCES:**

Please give us two names and phone number of people, unrelated to you, that we may contact as a reference.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**HABITAT FOR CATS**

P. O. Box 79571  
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www.HabitatforCats.org  
508-961-2287

**VOLUNTEER CONSENT AND GENERAL RELEASE FORM**

Know all men and women by these presents, that (if over 18 years) I,

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Print your name above)*

consent to the activities, or, if under 18 years of age, we consent to the activities of our child,

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Child's name above)*

under the direction of the agents and volunteers of Habitat for Cats, N Dartmouth, Massachusetts, and furthermore, in consideration of their undertaking of supervision of the aforesaid activities and for other good and valuable consideration, receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, I/we hereby release and agree to hold harmless and indemnify the said Habitat for Cats, MA, from any and all actions, claims, or causes of action arising out of or in connection with, any manner whatsoever, for personal injuries or property damage which may be suffered by the aforementioned person whether or not arising out of any negligence or breach of duty by or flowing from Habitat for Cats, N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts, or its agents or its volunteers.

It is further agreed that there are no collateral or outside agreements of any kind between the parties hereto.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(if under 18, form must be signed by parent or legal guardian)*

Witnessed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my permission for the volunteer staff of the Habitat for Cats, N. Dartmouth Massachusetts to seek emergency treatment for me, \_\_\_\_\_ or, if under 18 years of age, my child \_\_\_\_\_ in case of accident or injury.  
*(Print your name above)*  
*(Print child's name above)*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(if under 18, form must be signed by parent or legal guardian)*