



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome!

We are so glad you are interested in becoming a volunteer with our organization. Our volunteers are an integral part of conducting our mission of **preventing the cruelty, suffering, and overpopulation of animals**. Every department, program, and service we provide is a tool to help fulfill that mission. Staff, volunteers, and community support are essential in making that happen. You are a **VITAL** part of our organization.

Humble Beginnings...

The Humane Society of Marion County, Inc was founded in 1964 by a few concerned individuals who wanted to care for unwanted and abandoned companion animals in Marion County. Working with a network of foster homes, the organization outgrew its original facility, and it moved into a new facility located at 701 N.W. 14th Road in Ocala in 2004. We now can house three hundred dogs and cats. We also have the HSMC Thrift Store located at 110 N.W. 10th Street.

Essential HSMC Facts

HSMC is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization (the government or national organizations do not fund it), and we do not receive tax dollars. The HSMC relies on supporting the communities we serve through private donations and fundraising activities to fulfill our mission independently from other humane societies and agencies. We do not euthanize any adoptable animals due to a lack of space or length of stay.

Who Can Volunteer?

JUNIOR –13 and under While Junior Volunteers are not eligible to work at the shelter or thrift store, there are plenty of opportunities for our young animal lovers to help the organization. From collecting toys, pet food, and monetary donations, to leading club projects, our Juniors all contribute to the cause.

Marion County Students – Ages 14 to 17 Most high school students need to complete community service hours before graduation, and we gladly work with those students.

Volunteers ages 14 and 15 must accompany someone over 21 while volunteering and through orientation.

Adult Volunteers – Ages 18+ People who love animals and want to help are always welcome!

Court-Ordered Community Service & Career Source - Ages: 18+ If you fit into this category, you do not need to attend this orientation. Please see our front desk for further details. The HSMC works with many local agencies to provide opportunities for those who are **court-ordered & required to complete Career Source hours**. Community Service (CS) Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and may work in our shelter or thrift store.

Safety

All volunteers are expected to exercise caution and perform their duties in the safest possible manner. Volunteers are **not** covered under our worker's compensation insurance for accidents or injuries and accept all responsibility for their safety.

Volunteers should never put themselves in an uncomfortable or potentially hazardous situation. Our staff members are trained to handle those types of problems and should always be called upon if there is ever any question of safety.

If an alarm sounds, volunteers should report to a staff member in a safe place for instructions.

ALL BLACK COLLARED DOGS ARE TO BE WALKED BY STAFF ONLY!

Expectations

What should a volunteer expect from the HSMC?

- Support in choosing the best position in which to serve
- Cooperation, gratitude, and respect for you, your service, and commitment
- Recognition of your contributions through service awards, inclusion in our newsletter, birthday/holiday remembrances, and lunch/dinner celebrations
- Volunteer Bank – Use your hours for rewards
- Evaluations and advancement.

What should the HSMC expect from a volunteer?

- We love that you are coming to help; however, we need volunteers to do things around the shelter. Please always check in with the front desk or other staff for something to do
- A serious commitment of time and talent
- Support for the organization, its departments, mission, and leadership
- Cooperation with and respect for staff, our rules, and other volunteers
- The humane treatment of our animals **always**

Humane Society Volunteer Bank

(Not available for community service hours)

You will now be able to use your volunteer hours for many different things! Hours may be combined, but both volunteers must be present to redeem.

10 hours – Small bag of pet food 20 pounds or less, dog clicker

20 hours – Medium bag of pet food 40 pounds or less, previous event shirt

30 hours – Large bag of pet food 40 pounds or more, dog lead

40 hours - Cat Spay/Neuter Certificate, volunteer shirt, apron, hat, or visor

50 hours – Dog Spay/Neuter Certificate

Different items are added all the time; ask your Volunteer Coordinator for details!

Dress Code

HSMC expects all volunteers and employees to dress appropriately for their tasks. Inappropriate apparel can send an unprofessional message to the public, and some can even become a hazard.

Examples of inappropriate apparel include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing with holes, having a ragged appearance, dirty, or in poor condition
- Tattoos with inappropriate slogans, pictures, degrading words, phrases, or images that are not representative of a public service organization
- NO showing your midriff, low-cut tops, or underwear showing.
- **Open-toed shoes OR short shorts**

Volunteers are encouraged to wear loose, comfortable clothing that you will not mind getting a little hairy or dirty. Long pants are suggested as protection from scratches or bites.

VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A HSMC T-SHIRT WHICH CAN BE OBTAINED WITH A \$10 DONATION.

Just between us...

PUBLICITY: The Executive Director, President of the Board of Directors, and people designated per their job description are responsible for addressing or responding to the media (including social).

No volunteer shall make statements that may be seen as representative of the opinions and policies of HSMC.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Personal information about volunteers, employees, customers, adopters, or the outcome of individual animal situations is to remain in the strictest of confidence. During their duties, volunteers may obtain information about members of the public surrendering animals, adopting animals, or making donations, and all such information should never be repeated or shared.

VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK: Volunteers provide a valuable service, and if they have information to share with us, we want to hear it. We encourage volunteers to make suggestions, voice concerns, and give ideas. Volunteers are expected to respect the same chain of command that staff members abide by and not participate in gossip or meaningless discussion of other persons or situations.

When in doubt, see your Volunteer Coordinator.

Now that you know all of that, what should you do on your first day?

1. **Come prepared** for what you would like to do that day. (Leash, water, hat &, etc...)
2. Wear your **volunteer shirt** or purchase one for \$10 from the front desk.
3. Use the tablet to **sign in** or the clipboard only if you have/forgotten your PIN.
4. Get a **name tag**.
5. Please check the **upcoming events** calendar to see if there is an event you would like to help with. Contact the corresponding person involved via phone/text or sign up via your volunteer portal.
6. **Check in** with the front desk, cat staff, or kennel staff to see if anything needs to be done.
7. **Please ask** if you are unsure of what to do.
8. Do not ever put yourself in a situation where you are not **100% confident**.
9. Please remember your **first 10 hours** you have no animal contact while we are getting to know you.
10. We have treats, just ask!

Sign-in Station

The Sign-in Station is located to the right inside the lobby's front door. You MUST sign in when you come as a volunteer. You may also use your hours with our Volunteer Bank!



The screenshot shows a digital sign-in station interface. On the left is the logo for the Humane Society of Marion County, a NO KILL Shelter, featuring a heart, two paw prints, and a horseshoe. The main area is titled "Volunteer Information Center" and prompts the user to "Enter your volunteer PIN number". Below this is a text input field and a keypad with buttons for digits 1-9, *, 0, #, a red "Cancel" button, and a yellow "< Backspace" button. A green "Continue" button is at the bottom right. A welcome message at the bottom left explains the station's purpose and provides contact information for becoming a volunteer.

Name Badges

Blank name tags are kept next to the sign-in tablet. The name badge must be worn on-premises. This lets the staff know you are a volunteer and provides you with the credentials to be in off-public areas. It also allows staff and volunteers to learn each other's names. If you are a level two volunteer or higher, your name tag with paw prints is especially important. Your paw prints tell us where you can be and what you know.

Your PIN: Your PIN assigned by the Volunteer Coordinator is given to you at orientation. If you forget your PIN or the tablet is not working, please use the clipboard at the front desk.

If you are using it because you have forgotten your PIN, please refer to the clipboard to obtain your PIN on your next visit.

~~~~~When using the clipboard, please: ~~~~~

**Provide all information as requested. IF you do not print clearly or entirely, you WILL NOT receive credit for hours completed.**

**SIGN IN/OUT:** Each volunteer signs in and out with their PIN. You need to sign in and out to credit your hours. Plus, it keeps you showing as a current volunteer. If you forget to clock in or out, the system cannot log your hours. This also helps the volunteer program show its strength as a program. If there are no active hours on your account within the last **6 months**, your report will be deactivated. Your account can be removed if no active hours are shown on your statement within the previous **12 months**.

## Important Information

### Shelter layout



### Office Information

701 NW 14<sup>th</sup> Road  
Ocala FL 34475  
Phone: 352-873-7387  
Main email: [web@humanesocietyofmarioncounty.com](mailto:web@humanesocietyofmarioncounty.com)  
Website: [www.thehsmc.org](http://www.thehsmc.org)

### Volunteer Hours

Thursday-Tuesday – 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM (at the latest)  
Wednesday – 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Closed to the Public)  
Holidays – 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM (at the latest)

### Dog Walking Hours

Thursday-Tuesday – 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM (at the latest)  
Wednesday – 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM (Closed to the Public)  
Holidays – 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM (at the latest)

### Incident/Accident Reports Forms

Every volunteer must immediately tell an HSMC staff member if they are injured (including, but not limited to, scratch, bite, twisted ankle, etc.) while volunteering at the shelter. Incident report forms are available at the front desk and with the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Programs and Services**

In addition to our adoptions and sheltering thousands of homeless animals each year, HSMC offers:

- Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Certificates for dogs and cats
- Happy Paws Pet Food Bank for people in the community who are struggling to feed their pets
- Follow-up counseling to help pet owners avoid having to give up their adopted pet
- Humane Education programs to ensure a humane community like the Bark Bus and Doggone Good Reading
- Safe-Haven program for victims of domestic violence
- Traveling Tails program enriches dogs and people's lives in assisted living facilities
- Lost and Found services to reunite owners with pets
- Foster Care Program for animals that are not yet ready to be adopted for reasons such as age, medical condition, or behavioral condition
- Corporate/Teambuilding volunteer days
- Seniors for Seniors offers citizens at least 65 years old and living in an assisted living facility the opportunity to adopt a companion animal. This program also helps if an owner needs more extended care for the animal adopted in the program.

## **To put our work in perspective**

HSMC takes in almost 2,000 animals yearly.

- We assist hundreds of pets and their owners through outreach services and programs.
- At any given time, there are approximately 250 animals in our care.
- We serve an area of more than 350,000 people.
- All employees work directly with the animals to an extent.
- We have an on-site veterinary team to provide medical care for the animals at our shelter.
- Our operating expenses include all utilities, insurance, building upkeep, and staff to care for and advocate for the animals that come to us.

We work hard to find loving new homes for our resident animals.

- During each animal's stay at HSMC, medical and behavioral care are provided.
- Each dog that comes to HSMC receives a temperament – or personality - test.
- Cats are assessed for FIV and FeLV.
- All adoptions include spay/neuter surgery, microchip, vaccinations, deworming, and flea treatment. Adoption folders that contain pet information and a FREE vet visual appointment are given to all adopters.
- Pit bulls: Much of our canine population consists of Pit Bulls/Pit Mixes because our service area produces an overabundance of these dogs. Many shelters turn away or euthanize Pit Bulls, but HSMC does not. This is a loving, loyal, and highly adoptable breed.



## Locations

### Grooming Supplies

Many brushes and grooming tools are available at the front desk or in the laundry room.

### Cleaning & Restroom Supplies

The following items are located inside the staff/volunteer restroom located by the lockers: cleaning supplies, toilet paper, and paper towels.

### Enrichment

Dog toys, stuffed dog toys, balls, frisbees, and squeaky chew toys are in the laundry room in totes located to the left against the wall. Only non-destructible toys can be put in the kennels, cages, or crates, such as, but not limited to, Kongs and Nylabones. Peanut butter and our HSMC frisbees are in the staff tool room. Please always ask permission before putting peanut butter on kennel frisbees for enrichment (we usually only do this once a week). Enrichment toys are in the Meet & Greet Room on the white shelf.

### Volunteer Daily Log & Vet Tech Notes

These notes need to be completed for any dog that is limping, bleeding, has diarrhea, blood in its stool, or any other health or medical condition. Please always grab a sample of stool if it looks different (please ask staff). Stool must be given to a staff member right away. These notes are located inside the Meet and Greet room. Behavioral evaluation forms need to be completed for any dogs demonstrating signs of possible behavior issues, including, but not limited to, growling, resource guarding, repeated spinning in the kennel, tenseness, or aggression. The sooner any potential behavior issue is reported to HSMC staff, the sooner HSMC staff/trainers can begin working with the dog and treating the problem. Behavioral evaluation forms are in the Meet & Greet room next to the whiteboard and should be placed in the designated folder when completed.

## Volunteer Levels

**Level One:** A level one volunteer is someone who has just been accepted into our volunteer program. This individual has had a basic orientation and has a small list of activities.

**Level Two:** A level two volunteer has volunteered a minimum of 10 hours of service and can now take Dog or Cat 101 and be given more activities.

**Level Three:** A level three volunteer must be 18, has volunteered a minimum of 100 hours of service and must pass Dog or Cat 2.0 to advance. The Volunteer Coordinator must recommend a volunteer for advancement to this level. You are now given more activities and qualified to be a Volunteer Liaison.

**Level Four:** A level four volunteer must be 18 and has volunteered a minimum of three hundred hours of service. The Volunteer Coordinator must recommend a volunteer for advancement to this level. You are now given more activities and eligible to be a Volunteer Instructor.

## Cat Volunteer Levels

### Level One Volunteer:

- Basic orientation & tour of the facility
- Shadow other volunteers who are level 2 and up (or staff)
- Not allowed to open front cages, kennels, or to enter separation room/ISO
- Volunteer on their own with level one activities
  - Dishes & Food Prep
  - Cleaning/Scooping Boxes
  - Assisting with watering
  - Walls, windows, & cages
  - Wiping cat towers
  - Thrift Store
    - Clerical & Mailings
    - Foster Parents
    - Reception & Greeting
    - Kennel work
    - Fundraising

### Level Two Cat Volunteer:

- Minimum of 10 hours & passing Cat 101 required
- Shadow other volunteers who are level 3 and up (or staff)
- Allowed to enter front cat rooms and to open front cages without permission from the staff
- Not allowed to enter separation room/ISO
- Volunteer on their own with level one and two activities
  - Feline enrichment in front rooms or front cages
  - Doggone Good Reading
  - Maintenance, Gardening, & Yard Maintenance
  - Pet-ographer Assistant (in office may work alone, with animals must work with a level three or higher Pet-ographer).

### Level Three Cat Volunteer:





- Minimum of 100 hours, age 18 & Cat 101 required
- Shadow other volunteers who are level 4 and/or staff
- Volunteers at this level will be eligible to receive Cat Training 2.0
- After passing, the volunteer will be allowed to enter the separation room with permission
- The Volunteer Coordinator must recommend a volunteer for advancement to this level.
- May volunteer on their own in level one, two, and three activities
  - Grooming
  - Pet-ographers (Adoptions)
  - Humane Education
  - Doggie Banks
  - Grant Writing
  - Events
- Volunteer Leaders Level 3
  - Foster Liaison (Foster 101)
  - Adoption Follow-Up Liaison (phone calls and follow-ups)
  - Outreach/Promos Liaison (paw pal, events, and thanking partners)
  - Home-Visit Liaison

- Humane Education Liaison
- Seniors for Seniors Liaison
- Kennel Card Liaison
- Feline Enrichment Liaison
- Volunteer Relations Liaison

**Level Four Cat Volunteer:**

- Minimum of 300 hours, age 18, at least two evaluation ratings of above average, passing Cat 101 and passing Cat Training 2.0 required
- Allowed to enter separation room without permission
- The Volunteer Coordinator must recommend a volunteer for advancement to this level.
- May volunteer in all approved activities
  - Pet-ographers (in back cat rooms with permission)
  - Volunteer Leaders Level 4
    - Basic Orientation Liaison
    - Cat 101 Liaison
    - Community Cat Program Liaison

**Cat Paw Prints**

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>Cat - Level two volunteer that has taken basic orientation and passed Cat 101.</p>                                              |
|  | <p>Cat - Level three volunteer that has taken basic orientation, passed Cat 101, and Cat 2.0.</p>                                  |
|  | <p>Cat - (Age 18+) Level four volunteer has taken basic orientation, passed Cat 101, Cat 2.0, and completed 300 or more hours.</p> |
|  | <p>All Volunteers – (Loyalty Paw) This paw is for volunteers committed to serving the HSMC for one year or more.</p>               |

## Dog Volunteer Levels

### Level One Volunteer:

- Basic orientation & tour of the facility
- Shadow other volunteers who are level 2 and up (or staff)
- Not allowed to open front cages, kennels, or to enter separation room/ISO
- Volunteer on their own with level one activities

Dishes & Food Prep

Assisting with watering

Fundraising

Thrift Store

Washing walls, windows, and cages

Clerical, Mailings, and Office Help

Foster Parents

Reception & Greeting

Kennel work

Lobby Greeter

### Level Two Dog Volunteer:

- Minimum of 10 hours & Dog 101 required
- Allowed in the adoption kennel area
- Not allowed to enter ISO
- Shadow other volunteers who are level 3 and up (or staff)
- Own and maintain a dog clicker and a slip lead
- Volunteer on their own with level one and two activities
  - Canine Enrichment in kennels after passing Dog 101 (green dogs)
  - Doggone Good Reading
  - Maintenance, Gardening & Yard Maintenance
  - Pet-ographer Assistant (in office may work alone, with animals must work with a level three or higher Pet-ographer).

### Level Three Dog Volunteer:

- Minimum of 100 hours, age 18 & Dog 101 required
- Shadow other volunteers who are level 4 and/or staff
- Own and maintain a dog clicker and a slip lead
- Volunteers at this level will be eligible to receive Dog 2.0
- The Volunteer Coordinator must recommend a volunteer for advancement to this level
- May volunteer in all approved activities

Doggie Banks

Special Events

Grant Writing

Walking Dogs (must get permission for every blue dog)

Volunteer Leaders Level 3

Adoption Follow-Up Liaison (phone calls and follow-ups)

Humane Education






Pet-ographers (green/blue dogs)

Bathing Green Dogs

**Level Four Dog Volunteer:**

- Minimum of three hundred hours, age 18, passing Dog 101 and Dog 2.0 required
- May volunteer on their own in level one, two, three, and four activities
- May walk red dogs with permission
- The Volunteer Coordinator must recommend a volunteer for advancement to this level
  - o Grooming & Bathing (green, blue & red)
  - o Trainers & Walking
  - o Pets Day out
  - o Volunteer Leaders Level 4
    - Training Liaison
    - Basic Orientation Liaison
    - Dog 101 Liaison
    - Training 2.0 Liaison

**Dog Paw Levels.**

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p>Dog - Level two volunteer that has taken basic orientation and passed Dog 101.</p>                                                                                                                    |
|  | <p>Dog - (Age 18+) Level three volunteer that has taken basic orientation, passed Dog 101 and Dog 2.0.</p>                                                                                               |
|  | <p>Dog - (Age 18+) Level four volunteer has taken basic orientation, passed Dog 101, Dog 2.0, and completed 300 or more hours.</p>                                                                       |
|  | <p>Dog - (Age 18+) Level four volunteer that has taken basic orientation, passed Dog 101, passed Dog 2.0, has been approved by the executive director to be in ISO, and completed 300 or more hours.</p> |
|  | <p>All Volunteers – (Loyalty Paw) This paw is for volunteers committed to serving the HSMC for one year or more.</p>                                                                                     |



## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT & POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Substance abuse:** The HSMC has adopted a zero-tolerance policy for substance abuse, workplace violence, and sexual harassment. This applies to our staff members and volunteers alike. Any volunteer who presents for their scheduled shift noticeably under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave, and appropriate assistance is given. Any volunteer who brings alcohol or drugs onto HSMC property will be escorted from the premises, and their volunteer relationship will be immediately terminated.

**Violence:** Any volunteer who threatens or exhibits violent behavior toward another volunteer, employee, customer, or animal will be immediately terminated, and appropriate action taken depending on the nature and severity of the incident. Weapons of any kind are prohibited on HSMC property.

**Sexual harassment:** While sexual harassment is not easy to define, a good guideline is that any sexual attention should be avoided. If a volunteer is found to be exhibiting unwanted sexual attention toward another volunteer or employee and makes that person uncomfortable in the performance of their duties, the offending volunteer's relationship with the HSMC will be immediately terminated.

**Publicity:** The Executive Director and President of the Board of Directors are those charged with addressing or responding to the media. No volunteer shall make statements that may represent the opinions and policies of the HSMC. As an active volunteer, you are considered a representative of HSMC, so please be a good ambassador when posting/responding, regardless of the subject matter. Be courteous and use good sense. **DO NOT** contact the media, plan an event, solicit donations, etc., without prior permission from the staff.

**Confidentiality:** Personal information about volunteers, employees, customers, adopters, or the outcome of individual animal situations is to remain in the strictest of confidence. During their duties, volunteers may learn information about members of the public surrendering animals, adopting animals, or making donations, and all such information should never be repeated or shared. In addition, information regarding animals in the isolation area should never be shared with the public.

**Professionalism:** Volunteers are always expected to uphold the same standards of professionalism as staff members. Always be friendly with the public!

**Incident Reports:** Please use assigned accident/incident reports to report if you are injured while volunteering with HSMC.

**Check animal log sheets:** Dogs and some cats have tracking sheets to ensure each animal has received playtime or a walk each day.

**Dress code:** HSMC expects all volunteers to dress appropriately for their position.

Examples of inappropriate apparel include, but are not limited to, short shorts, clothing with holes/ragged appearance/tattered/in poor condition, sweatpants, tights, shower clogs/flip flops, stretch pants, clothes composed of see-through/netting material, apparel with degrading words/slogans/images that are not representative of a public service organization. Kennel volunteers may wear scrubs. If the above policy causes religious concerns or concerns based upon any other legally protected class, please contact the Executive Director to discuss an appropriate religious accommodation. Always identify yourself as a volunteer. Wear a volunteer tag and HSMC gear, so we know you're not a member of the general public.

**Important animal care/behavior notes:** Please check and follow all notes on the animals' kennels/cages. Valuable information regarding an animal will always be posted on their kennel.

**SANITIZE, SANITIZE, SANITIZE:** This is especially important for cat volunteers.

**Dog Walkers:** Remember to keep dogs away from each other to avoid personality conflicts, and be sure to clean up their stool! Dogs that have not been tested have a color code on their cage and are not quite ready for adoption. Please only work with dogs on your level.

**NOT PERMITTED WHILE VOLUNTEERING:**

- Family, friends, cell phones, and smoking. Your focus must be on the animal you are working with.
- Isolation (ISO) animals: The animals that are not available for interaction should not be advertised, photographed, or spoken about. These animals are often behind the scenes for medical, behavioral, or investigation purposes.

**Volunteering is a two-way street!**

Dog & cat kisses are great stress relievers, plus every time you show up, it gives the animals **HOPE**.

Please keep showing up, and do not count on someone else when you do not.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT. I UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES MAY RESULT IN THE TERMINATION OF MY VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF MARION COUNTY.

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Print name

Signature

Date