

# **VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

## **POLICY**

Mendocino County Animal Care Services (ACS) welcomes the assistance of volunteers in performing a variety of tasks at the animal shelters, in helping with special projects and programs and in community fundraising efforts.

The purpose of a volunteer program is to help the shelter animals. It is crucial to have procedures and goals in mind as part of the program.

## **PROCEDURE**

There shall be community meetings, held on the coast and/or Inland, open to the public for the purposes of discussing the shelter's programs, projects and needs, how the community can assist the shelter, and so forth, but not to include matters (such as personnel and litigation) that law requires be held confidential. These meetings shall be held on an as needed basis.

Open, easy communication between staff, volunteers, rescue organizations, other shelters and members of the community shall be encouraged. Reasons underlying decisions shall be provided.

The Program Administrator, Volunteer Coordinator or designee shall be the primary liaison with the volunteers and will direct inquiries to other ACS staff and County Departments as appropriate.

Volunteers must fill out an application (see attachment #19) and go through a volunteer orientation before starting. They will be instructed as to how the shelter operates, taught basic safety procedures, given a tour of the shelter, shown how to work with cats and told about the training required to work with dogs. Other volunteer jobs will be made available as needed. The volunteer coordinator will work with volunteers to decide which volunteer tasks are best suited to individual capabilities. Volunteers working with dogs shall receive appropriate training.

Volunteers of all ages are welcomed. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. Children between the ages of 12-18 will need to be approved by an appropriate staff member before they can work without a parent or guardian.

Volunteers of all ages must be dressed appropriately for working in the shelter. Closed toe shoes only. Pants must come below the knees. No sandals or flip flops.

The ACS staff will work with the community in order to provide the daily exercise, affection and socialization that confined dogs and cats need to stay healthy, happy and adoptable. Staff will work with the community whenever possible to accommodate programs that benefit the shelter animals.

If through volunteer fundraising efforts, a veterinary care fund is established and maintained to provide veterinary care for shelter animals beyond what the County budget can support, such fund shall be used when needed.

With the approval of the Program Administrator and/or Volunteer Coordinator staff and volunteer ideas and efforts to reduce the cost of holding animals will be encouraged as long as they are consistent with established kennel policy and procedure.

Staff and volunteers shall take advantage of opportunities for free or reduced cost animal food from approved manufacturers/distributors to supplement costs of animals being cared for in foster home situations.