Volunteering at Giddings Animal Shelter

Welcome to the Giddings Animal Shelter Volunteer Handbook

This handbook was created to help our volunteers understand the expectations, procedures, and responsibilities of volunteering at Giddings Animal Shelter. It provides basic information on animal handling, cleaning, safety, volunteer tasks, scheduling, and our volunteer program.

Our goal is to keep our volunteers, staff, and animals safe while making sure everyone is working together consistently and effectively. Please use this guide as a reference during your time volunteering with us. When in doubt, always ask the Animal Control Supervisor or shelter staff for guidance.

Thank you for giving your time and helping us make a difference in the lives of the animals in our care! 🐾

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Volunteer Conduct & Communication Rules

- The Animal Control Supervisor serves as the Volunteer Coordinator. If you have questions, concerns, or need assistance, please speak directly with them.
- Treat all volunteers, staff, visitors, and animals with respect and professionalism.
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation, or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
- Please leave drama at the door. Gossiping, talking negatively about other volunteers, or creating conflict is not acceptable.
- If you have a complaint or concern, you are encouraged to speak privately with the ACO Supervisor so it can be addressed appropriately.
- Complaints may also be submitted anonymously if you are not comfortable speaking directly with the ACO Supervisor.
- If any volunteer rules are broken, Animal Control may document the incident and address the situation as needed.
- Depending on the severity or frequency of the violation, a volunteer may lose their ability to volunteer at the shelter.
- We are all here for the same reason: to help the animals and support our shelter. Please work together and maintain a positive environment.

Volunteer Dress Code Notice

For the safety of our volunteers and animals, all volunteers must follow the dress code below while working at the shelter.

Required Attire

- Closed-toe shoes (tennis shoes or work shoes recommended)
- No sandals, flip-flops, or open-toe footwear

Pants

- Long pants are required for safety
- No shorts, skirts, or ripped pants

T-shirt or comfortable top

- Shirts must provide full coverage
- No tank tops or low-cut shirts

Hair

- Long hair must be tied back securely

Clothing Condition

- Wear clothes you do not mind getting dirty
- Expect exposure to fur, cleaning chemicals, water, and possible stains

Additional Safety Notes

- Dress appropriately for weather conditions.
- Avoid loose jewelry that could get caught or pulled.
- Closed-toe, non-slip footwear is strongly encouraged for kennel areas.

Volunteers who do not meet dress code requirements may be asked to reschedule their shift for safety reasons.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and professional environment for our animals and team.

All Things Cats for Volunteers

Handling Cats

1) Cats Socialized to Humans
   a) Approach Gently
      - Let the cat come to you instead of rushing toward it.
      - Speak softly and move slowly; sudden movements can startle even friendly cats.
      - Offer a hand for sniffing before trying to pet them.
   b) Petting Techniques
      - Most cats enjoy being stroked on:
      - The cheeks
      - Behind the ears
      - The base of the tail
      - Under the chin
      - Avoid the belly unless the cat exposes it willingly—many cats see belly touches as a trap.
   c) Handling & Lifting
      - Support both front and back ends when lifting.
      - Keep the cat close to your body; this makes them feel secure.
      - Avoid dangling or squeezing them.

2) Cats Shy, Frightened or Traumatized **(ONLY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER WILL HANDLE THESE CATS)**

a) Initial Approach
   - Avoid direct eye contact: In the wild, staring can be threatening. Blink slowly instead.
   - Speak softly: Use calm, low tones; avoid loud noises.
   - Stay at their level: Sit or crouch on the floor to appear less threatening.
   - Let the cat approach you: Never corner or chase a frightened cat.

b) Body Language & Signals
   - Signs of extreme stress: crouching, ears flat, tail tucked, hissing, growling, dilated pupils.
   - Signs of mild stress: hiding, slow movements, wary observation.
   - Do not force interaction; respond to cues and withdraw if needed.

c) Gradual Socialization Steps
   - Observation: Spend time in the room without touching, letting the cat watch you.
   - Proximity: Sit quietly near their hiding spot, reading or talking softly.
   - Interactive toys: Use wand toys or feather teasers to engage without forcing contact.
   - Treats & food: Toss treats toward the cat; avoid hand-feeding initially.
   - Gentle hand introduction: Once comfortable, offer a hand near their hiding spot, allowing sniffing.
   - Slow petting: Start with brief strokes on the head or cheeks if the cat leans in.
   - Progress may take days, weeks, or months depending on trauma. Patience is critical.

d) Handling & Lifting
   - Only lift if the cat voluntarily approaches and shows comfort.
   - Support front and rear ends; avoid quick movements.
   - If resistance occurs, put the cat down calmly—never force.
   - If needing to move a cat use a transfer cage or feral cat box.

3) Cats Feral **(ONLY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER WILL HANDLE THESE CATS)**

a) Initial Capture & Transfer
   - Never corner a feral cat: They may panic or bite.
   - Trap humanely: Use humane live traps or transfer cages with food bait.
   - Minimize exposure: Move the cat directly to the safe room with minimal handling.
   - Cover traps/cages: Keeps cat calm by reducing visual stressors.

b) Settling In
   - Do not force contact: Let the cat acclimate for days to weeks.
   - Leave food, water, and bedding inside.
   - Avoid loud voices or sudden movements near the cage.
   - Monitor from a distance—stress signs include pacing, growling, hissing, or crouching.

c) Daily Routine
   - Feeding: Offer food at the same time each day.
   - Minimal handling: Only refill water, food, and clean litter.
   - Observation: Note health, eating habits, and behavior.
   - Gradual exposure: Sit quietly nearby while reading or talking softly to normalize your presence.

d) Handling & Transport
   - Always use transfer cages for movement.

- Wear thick gloves and long sleeves when handling.
- Avoid lifting feral cats by hand unless absolutely necessary.
- Use towels to gently restrain if needed (for medical care).

4) Kittens 16 weeks or young
   a) Initial Handling
      - Wash hands before contact; kittens have developing immune systems.
      - Gentle approach: Move slowly, speak softly.
      - Introduce one at a time: Avoid overwhelming them with multiple people or cats initially.
      - Observe: Look for signs of stress—hissing, flattened ears, crouching.
   b) Socialization Steps
      - Early exposure: Start with short, calm interactions (2–5 minutes) multiple times daily.
      - Touch & petting:
        (1) Start with head, cheeks, under chin.
        (2) Avoid belly until the kitten shows trust.
      - Play: Use wand toys, balls, and soft toys to build confidence.
      - Handling practice:
        (3) Gently pick up, support chest and hind legs.
        (4) Encourage nuzzling, gentle cuddling.
      - Gradual people exposure: Introduce different staff/volunteers slowly to prevent fear.
   c) Grouping
      - Littermates: Keep together for comfort and social learning.
      - Other kittens: Gradual, supervised interaction helps social skills.
      - Avoid overcrowding: Too many kittens can stress fragile personalities.
   d) Key Goals by Age
      - 0–4 weeks: Touch, warmth, exposure to soft voices.
      - 4–8 weeks: Handling, litter box introduction, gentle play.
      - 8–12 weeks: Socialization with humans, toys, and littermates; introduce routine feeding.
      - 12–16 weeks: Encourage gentle cuddling, brief laps, and supervised exploration outside the cage.

Giddings Animal Shelter Cleaning Procedures

1) Kittens
   a) Prioritize Kittens
      - Always care for kittens before older cats to reduce stress and prevent them from being blocked from resources.
      - Feed, water, and attend to litter boxes for kittens first.
   b) Preparation
      - Wash hands or use gloves.
      - Gather supplies:
        (1) Fresh food and water
        (2) Clean litter and litter trays (if need be)

(3) Safe cleaning solution
- Towels or cloths
- Trash bag

c) Secure Kittens
- Move kittens gently to a temporary safe area or carrier if needed while cleaning the kennel.
- Keep all kennel doors securely closed.

d) Remove Waste
- Empty soiled litter and bedding.
- Dispose of uneaten or spilled food.
- Remove debris from the kennel floor.

e) Clean Food & Water Bowls
- Refill:
  (1) Fresh water daily
  (2) Fresh food daily, removing old leftovers

f) Clean Kennel Surfaces
- Wipe walls, floors, and bedding areas with a kitten-safe disinfectant.
- Replace bedding with clean, soft material.
- Make sure all surfaces are dry.

g) Return Kittens
- Place kittens gently back into their cleaned kennel.
- Ensure food, water, and litter tray are accessible.
- Observe for comfort and safety.

2) Socialized Cats

a) Prioritize Cats
- Socialized adult cats should be attended to after kittens (kittens first!).
- These cats are usually comfortable with handling, but maintain calm, gentle interactions.

b) Secure Cats (Optional)
- Most socialized adults can be handled gently in the kennel.
- If a cat is particularly nervous, gently transfer to a small carrier or secure area.

c) Remove Waste
- Scoop out used litter and feces from the litter tray.
- Remove spilled food or bedding debris.
- Dispose of all waste appropriately.

d) Food & Water Bowls
- Refill:
  (1) Fresh water daily or more often if needed
  (2) Fresh food daily, removing old leftovers

e) Clean Kennel Surfaces
- Wipe down walls, floors, and perches with safe disinfectant.
- Replace bedding if soiled.
- Ensure all surfaces are dry before returning the cat.

f) Return & Observation
- Place the cat back in their clean kennel.
- Ensure they have access to food, water, and litter.
- Observe for signs of stress or illness.

3) Feral/ Barn Cats **(ONLY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER WILL HANDLE THESE CATS)**

a) Prioritize Safety
- Feral cats are not socialized—minimize direct handling.
- Always wear protective gloves, long sleeves, and closed shoes.
- Use feral cat boxes or transfer cages for all cleaning and movement.
- Never allow the cat to roam freely in the cleaning area.

b) Secure the Cat
- Keep the feral cat in the cage or feral cat box during cleaning.
- Cover the box partially with a towel to reduce visual stress.
- Avoid reaching into the cage unnecessarily.

c) Remove Waste
- Remove old litter from the tray without opening the cage if possible (some shelters have litter scoop slots).
- Dispose of spilled food or soiled bedding carefully.
- Clean surfaces around the cage to prevent contamination.

d) Food & Water Bowls
- Refill:
  (1) Fresh water daily
  (2) Fresh food daily, removing leftovers

e) Clean Cage/Box Surfaces
- Wipe down walls, floors, and bedding areas with safe disinfectant.
- Replace bedding if soiled.
- Make sure surfaces are dry before returning the cat to the box.

f) Observation
- Observe the feral cat from a distance for:
- Eating and drinking
- Litter box use
- Signs of stress or illness
- Do not attempt to pet or handle unless medically necessary.

Giddings Animal Shelter Deep Cleaning Procedures

1) Front Kennels

a) Daily Animal Care Spot Cleaning
- Cats, if needed, are relocated, one at a time, to a holding cage while the kennel is cleaned.
- Collect all soiled bowls, toys, and blankets in the kennel remove them and replace.

- If urine or feces is observed on the inside of a kennel:
  (1) The Urine and feces are physically removed.
  (2) Use rescue or other kennel cleaner on the soiled area.
  (3) The area is soaked for a minimum of 3 minutes, then rinsed with water and dried.
- Food Bowls are refilled as needed and water bowls are filled with fresh water daily.
- Sift through the litter pans.
- Relocate the animals back to their kennels.
- The Kennel area tidied, trash taken out, and the room swept and mopped daily.
- Any and all soiled dishes and blankets taken to the laundry room for cleaning.

b) Deep Cleaning Disinfection Procedures
- Animal is removed from the kennel to a holding cage or to a new cage.
- When animals are relocated to a new kennel they may only be placed into a disinfected kennel.
- To disinfect a kennel:
  (1) Any blankets, toys, litter pan, and food & water bowls are removed.
  (2) Urine and feces are physically removed from the kennel.
  (3) Rescue and or another kennel cleaner is sprayed on every surface of the kennel.
  (4) A Brush is used to scrub every surface of the kennel.
  (5) 5 minutes is allowed to elapse.
  (6) Every surface of the kennel is rinsed with water and dried.

2) Medical Room Kennels

a) Daily Animal Care Spot Cleaning
- Cats, if needed, are relocated, one at a time, to a holding cage while the kennel is cleaned.
- Collect all soiled bowls, toys, and blankets in the kennel remove them and replace.
- If urine or feces is observed on the inside of a kennel:
  (1) The Urine and feces are physically removed.
  (2) Use rescue or other kennel cleaner on the soiled area.
  (3) The area is soaked for a minimum of 3 minutes, then rinsed with water and dried.
- Food Bowls are refilled as needed and water bowls are filled with fresh water daily.
- Sift through the litter pans.
- Relocate the animals back to their kennels.
- The Kennel area tidied, trash taken out, and the room swept and mopped daily.
- Any and all soiled dishes and blankets taken to the laundry room for cleaning.

b) Deep Cleaning Disinfection Procedures
- Animal is removed from the kennel to a holding cage or to a new cage.
- When animals are relocated to a new kennel they may only be placed into a disinfected kennel.
- To disinfect a kennel:

(1) Any blankets, toys, litter pan, and food & water bowls are removed.
(2) Urine and feces are physically removed from the kennel.
(3) Rescue and or another kennel cleaner is sprayed on every surface of the kennel.
(4) A Brush is used to scrub every surface of the kennel.
(5) 5 minutes is allowed to elapse.
(6) Every surface of the kennel is rinsed with water and dried.

3) Back Room Kennels
   a) Daily Animal Care Spot Cleaning
      - Cats, if needed, are relocated, one at a time, to a holding cage while the kennel is cleaned.
      - Collect all soiled bowls, toys, and blankets in the kennel remove them and replace.
      - If urine or feces is observed on the inside of a kennel:
        (1) The Urine and feces are physically removed.
        (2) Us rescue or other kennel cleaner on the soiled area.
        (3) The area is soaked for a minimum of 3 minutes, then rinsed with water and dried.
      - Food Bowls are refilled as needed and water bowls are filled with fresh water daily.
      - Sift through the litter pans.
      - Relocate the animals back to their kennels.
      - The Kennel area tidied, trash taken out, and the room swept and mopped daily.
      - Any and all soiled dishes and blankets taken to the laundry room for cleaning.

   b) Deep Cleaning Disinfection Procedures
      - Animal is removed from the kennel to a holding cage or to a new cage.
      - When animals are relocated to a new kennel they may only be placed into a disinfected kennel.
      - To disinfect a kennel:
        (1) Any blankets, toys, litter pan, and food & water bowls are removed.
        (2) Urine and feces are physically removed from the kennel.
        (3) Rescue and or another kennel cleaner is sprayed on every surface of the kennel.
        (4) A Brush is used to scrub every surface of the kennel.
        (5) 5 minutes is allowed to elapse.
        (6) Every surface of the kennel is rinsed with water and dried.

4) Once a Cat Leaves
   a) Deep Cleaning Disinfection Procedures
      - Animal is removed from the kennel to a holding cage or to a new cage.
      - When animals are relocated to a new kennel they may only be placed into a disinfected kennel.
      - To disinfect a kennel:
        (1) Any blankets, toys, litter pan, and food & water bowls are removed.
        (2) Urine and feces are physically removed from the kennel.

(3) Rescue and or another kennel cleaner is sprayed on every surface of the kennel.
(4) A Brush is used to scrub every surface of the kennel.
(5) 5 minutes is allowed to elapse.
(6) Every surface of the kennel is rinsed with water and dried.

5) Items used by Cats
   a) Litter Pans
      - Materials Needed: Rubber gloves, mild dish soap, scrubbing brush, pet-safe disinfectant, or diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 32 parts water).
      - Procedure:
        (1) Empty the litter completely and dispose of it safely.
        (2) Wash the pan thoroughly with hot water and soap, scrubbing all surfaces.
        (3) Rinse completely.
        (4) For extra disinfection: some litter pans (especially plastic ones) should go through a bleach wash: soak in diluted bleach solution for 10 minutes.
        (5) Rinse thoroughly to remove all bleach residue and dry completely before refilling.
   b) Food and Water Bowls
      - Materials Needed: Rubber gloves, hot water, mild dish soap, disinfectant, or diluted bleach.
      - Procedure:
        (1) Wash bowls with hot water and soap, scrubbing all surfaces.
        (2) Rinse thoroughly.
        (3) Some bowls, particularly plastic or heavily used bowls, should be disinfected with a diluted bleach solution (1:32) for 10 minutes.
        (4) Rinse thoroughly and air dry.
   c) Toys
      - Soft Toys (fabric/plush):
        (1) Machine wash in hot water with pet-safe detergent.
        (2) Optional: Add a rinse with white vinegar for extra disinfection.
        (3) Air dry completely.
      - Hard Toys (plastic/rubber):
        (1) Wash with hot water and soap.
        (2) Soak in disinfectant or diluted bleach (if material-safe) for 10 minutes.
        (3) Rinse thoroughly and air dry.
   d) Blankets, Bedding, and Towels
      - Materials Needed: Washing machine, hot water, pet-safe detergent, optional disinfectant or vinegar rinse.
      - Procedure:
        (1) Remove solid debris and shake out loose hair.
        (2) Wash in hot water with detergent.
        (3) Add a rinse cycle with white vinegar or pet-safe disinfectant if desired.
        (4) Dry completely on high heat or in direct sunlight if possible.

   Additional Tips

   Always wear gloves and protective clothing when using disinfectants or bleach.

Wash hands thoroughly after cleaning.

Keep cleaning solutions away from food areas and cats until items are fully rinsed and dried.

Deep cleaning should be done at least weekly, once an animal leaves or after any illness to prevent contamination.

Rotate blankets, toys, bowls, and litter pans to ensure all items are regularly disinfected.

Volunteers

1) Tasks
   a) General Cleaning in the Shelter
   b) Wash Dishes (scrub, bleach bath, rinse dry)
   c) Scoop Litter Boxes
   d) Deep clean single enclosures
   e) Deep clean meet ‘n greet room
   f) Sweep & mop all floors
   g) Laundry
   h) Clean & sanitize carriers
   i) Break Down cat Kennels
   j) Brush cats
   k) Clean Windows
   l) Organize Storage room
   m) Organize and straighten up shelving
   n) Restock Storage Room

2) Conduct and Appreciation
   a) Volunteers are a vital part of what makes Giddings Animal Shelter amazing and organized. It is important that we treat our volunteers as valued team member and that we regularly voice our appreciations for all they do. Under no circumstances, should a Giddings Animal Shelter employee discuss anything negative related to Giddings Animal Shelter with or in front of volunteers. Should volunteers have concerns they can be directed to the Animal Control Supervisor. If staff is having an issue with a volunteer not following protocol or being rude to the public, the staff should take that concern to the supervisor.

All Things Dogs for Volunteers

HANDLING DOGS

1. Socialized Dogs
   a. Approach
      - Allow the dog to see and sniff you before touching.
      - Speak in a calm, friendly tone.
      - Avoid loud noises and sudden movements.
      - Approach from the side rather than directly head-on.
      - Offer the back of your hand for sniffing before petting.
   b. Petting Guidelines

      Most dogs enjoy being petted:
      - On the chest
      - Along the shoulders
      - At the base of the neck
      - Along the back
      - Behind the ears

      Avoid:
      - Tight hugging
      - Hard pats on the head
      - Handling paws or tail unless the dog is comfortable

      Watch for signs of stress or overstimulation:

      - Turning head away
      - Lip licking
      - Stiff body posture
      - Growling or avoidance

c. Handling & Movement
   - Use a leash when removing dogs from kennels.
   - Support chest and hindquarters when lifting small dogs.
   - Keep the dog close to your body for security.
   - Never grab abruptly by the collar.
   - Avoid dragging or forcing movement.

2. Shy, Frightened, or Traumatized Dogs (ONLY ANIMAL CONTROL WILL HANDLE THESE DOGS)
   a. Initial Approach
      - Avoid prolonged eye contact.
      - Turn slightly sideways to appear less threatening.
      - Speak softly in calm tones.
      - Kneel or crouch rather than standing over the dog.
      - Allow the dog to approach voluntarily.
      - Never corner or chase.
   b. Stress Signals

      Extreme Stress:
      - Trembling
      - Growling or snapping
      - Tail tucked
      - Ears pinned back
      - Showing whites of eyes
      - Cowering

      Mild Stress:
      - Lip licking
      - Yawning
      - Avoiding eye contact
      - Slow, cautious movement

If stress escalates, stop interaction immediately.

   c. Socialization Process
      - Spend quiet time nearby without forcing contact.
      - Toss treats gently; avoid hand-feeding initially.
      - Introduce leash slowly and positively.
      - Begin gentle petting only when the dog shows comfort.
      - Progress may take days, weeks, or months.
   d. Handling
      i. Use proper restraint tools as needed.

ii. Never drag or force.
iii. Use transfer kennels when necessary.

3. Unsocialized or Feral Dogs (ONLY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER WILL HANDLE THESE DOGS)
   a. Safety First
      - Wear gloves, long sleeves, and closed-toe shoes.
      - Use catch poles, control poles, or humane traps as required.
      - Never corner the dog.
      - Minimize noise and stimulation.
   b. Housing & Routine
      - Provide food, water, and bedding.
      - Maintain consistent feeding times.
      - Limit direct handling.
      - Monitor from a distance for stress or health concerns.
   c. Transport
      - Always use secure transfer kennels.
      - Avoid direct hand contact unless absolutely necessary.

Giddings Animal Control CLEANING PROCEDURES (DOGS)

4. Puppies (Priority Care)
   a. Order of Care
      - Puppies are always cared for before adult dogs.
   b. Preparation
      - Wash hands or wear gloves.
      - Gather:
        1. Fresh food and water
        2. Clean bedding
        3. Safe disinfectant
        4. Towels
        5. Trash bag
   c. Cleaning Procedure
      - Move puppies to a safe temporary area if needed.
      - Remove soiled bedding and waste.
      - Dispose of old food.
      - Wash and refill bowls.
      - Disinfect kennel surfaces.
      - Allow proper contact time (minimum 3 minutes).

- Rinse and dry completely.
- Replace bedding.
- Return puppies and observe.

5. Socialized Adult Dogs
   - Separate dog from area needing to be cleaned by the guillotine door or leash and remove dog if necessary.
   - Remove waste and soiled bedding.
   - Wash and refill food and water bowls.
   - Disinfect kennel surfaces.
   - Allow minimum 3-minute soak time.
   - Rinse and dry completely.
   - Return dog and observe for stress or illness.
6. Unsocialized Dogs (ONLY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER WILL HANDLE THESE DOGS)
   - Use transfer kennel, catch pole or two-man team for all movement.
   - Never allow loose roaming during cleaning.
   - Remove waste carefully.
   - Disinfect all surfaces thoroughly.
   - Observe eating, drinking, and stool from a distance.

DEEP CLEANING PROCEDURES

7. Daily Spot Cleaning (All Kennel Areas)
   - Relocate dog if necessary.
   - Remove bowls, toys, and bedding.
   - Physically remove urine and feces.
   - Apply kennel cleaner.
   - Allow minimum 3-minute contact time.
   - Rinse and dry.
   - Refill bowls with fresh food and water.
   - Sift or clean designated elimination area.
   - Return dog.
   - Sweep and mop floors daily.
   - Take soiled items to laundry.
8. Full Deep Cleaning & Disinfection
   a. Performed:
      - Weekly
      - After illness
      - When a dog leaves the kennel

b. Procedure:
    - Remove dog to holding kennel or separate from dirty area using guillotine door.
    - Remove all items.
    - Remove visible waste.
    - Spray disinfectant on all surfaces.
    - Scrub thoroughly.
    - Allow 5-minute contact time.
    - Rinse completely.
    - Dry fully before reuse.

CLEANING DOG SUPPLIES

9. Food & Water Bowls
    - Wash with hot water and soap.
    - Disinfect with diluted bleach (1:32) for 10 minutes when necessary.
    - Rinse thoroughly.
    - Air dry completely.
10. Toys
    a. Soft Toys:
        - Machine wash in hot water.
        - Dry completely.
    b. Hard Toys:
        - Wash with soap and water.
        - Soak in disinfectant if material-safe.
        - Rinse and dry.
11. Blankets, Bedding & Towels
    - Remove debris and hair.
    - Wash in hot water with detergent.
    - Dry completely on high heat.

VOLUNTEERS

12. Volunteer Tasks
    - General shelter cleaning
    - Wash dishes
    - Scoop kennel and runs
    - Deep clean enclosures
    - Deep clean meet & greet room
    - Sweep and mop floors

- Laundry
- Clean and sanitize carriers
- Break down kennels
- Brush dogs
- Take dogs on walks or let them run around in the dog areas (DOGS APPROVED BY ANIMAL CONTROL3)
- Clean windows
- Organize storage
- Restock supplies

13. Conduct & Appreciation

Volunteers are a vital part of Giddings Animal Shelter's success and organization. They must be treated as valued team members and regularly thanked for their contributions.

a. Staff must not discuss negative internal matters in front of volunteers.
b. Volunteers with concerns should be directed to the Animal Control Supervisor.
c. Staff concerns about volunteer conduct should be reported to the supervisor for resolution.

How to Sign Up for Volunteer Hours

Step 1: Complete Your Paperwork

Before signing up for volunteer hours, you must complete:

- Volunteer Information Sheet
- Volunteer Waiver

Once both forms have been completed and turned in, the shelter will send you an invite to our Google Group/Google Doc via email.

Step 2: Access the Volunteer Schedule

After receiving your invite:

- Open the Google Sheet/Excel sign-up schedule.
- You will be able to view the available volunteer dates and comment on the dates you would like to volunteer.

Step 3: Request a Date

- Find the date you would like to volunteer.
- Comment on that date using ONLY your initials.
- Volunteer spots are first come, first served.

- The ACO Supervisor will add you to the schedule.
- Please check the schedule before coming to the shelter to make sure you are officially scheduled.

Volunteer Sign-Up Rules

- Use ONLY your initials**.** Do not put your full name, phone number, address, or other personal information on the schedule.
- More than one volunteer may sign up for the same time slot.
- We ask that no more than 3 volunteers be scheduled at the shelter at one time.
- Volunteer dates are available up to 3 months in advance.
- If you cannot make your scheduled time, call the shelter as soon as possible so we can update the schedule.
- The ACO Supervisor monitors the schedule daily and may make changes due to adoption events, shelter closures, staff needs, or other circumstances.
- Please check the schedule before arriving or call the shelter to confirm your volunteer time.

Thank you for volunteering your time and helping the animals at Giddings Animal Shelter! 🐾

Path to Paws Volunteer

Our Three-Tier Volunteer Program gives volunteers the opportunity to grow their skills and responsibilities while supporting the animals and our community. Everyone starts at Bronze – Level 1 and works their way up through Silver – Level 2 and Gold – Level 3 by completing volunteer hours and gaining experience. Level 2 and Level 3 volunteers will receive a shelter-provided T-shirt to wear while volunteering.

BRONZE — LEVEL 1

Getting Started — 20 Hours

- Everyone begins at Level 1.
- Complete 20 hours of volunteer service.
- Learn basic shelter cleaning and daily routines.
- Gain an understanding of the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the shelter running.

SILVER — LEVEL 2

Animal Care & Engagement — 40 Hours

- Complete 40 total volunteer hours.
- Build on the skills learned in Level 1.
- Participate in more activities involving the animals.
- Assist with animal enrichment, socialization, and care.
- Work around animals approved by or under the supervision of Animal Control Supervisor.

GOLD — LEVEL 3

Community Outreach & Leadership — 80 Hours

- Complete 80 total volunteer hours.
- Take on greater responsibilities at the shelter and in the community.
- Help at adoption events and public outreach activities.
- Assist with taking animals to approved events and community activities.
- Help promote adoptions, fostering, and responsible pet ownership.
- Become a trusted, experienced volunteer who can take on additional responsibilities.

Volunteer levels are not set in stone and may be adjusted based on an individual's prior experience, training, skills, and demonstrated abilities. **Animal Control Supervisor and shelter staff may assign volunteers different responsibilities or allow them to advance levels when appropriate. All volunteer duties and animal interactions are subject to staff approval and supervision to ensure the safety of both the volunteers and the animals.**

Volunteer Information Sheet

Contact Information

Name: _____ Date: _____

DOB: _____

Phone Number: _____

Home Adress: _____

E-mail Adress: _____

Driver License Number: _____ DL State: _____

Probation Information

Probation OFC: _____

Probation OFC Phone Number: _____

Probation Agency: _____

Hours Needed: _____

Emergency Contact Information

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

What Days Are You Available?

Monday Hours: _____ Start Date: _____

Tuesday Hours: _____ Completion Date: _____

Wednesday Hours: _____

Thursday Hours: _____

Friday Hours: _____

Volunteers, what do you feel comfortable with or what type of animal do you want to work with:

_____

_____

CITY VOLUNTEER RELEASE, WAIVER OF LIABILITY & PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I hereby request that the City of Giddings, Texas ("City") allow me as the Volunteer to volunteer my time, talent and abilities to assist the City of Giddings, Texas in carrying out its mission of service to the citizens of Giddings. As consideration for the City allowing me as the Volunteer to serve as a volunteer, I hereby agree as follows:

I acknowledge and agree that I, as a Volunteer, am not an employee of the City. Under no circumstances will I, as a Volunteer, represent that I am an employee of the City. Any and all of the activities that I, as the Volunteer, shall perform will be as a volunteer only. I understand and agree that I, as the Volunteer, will not receive any form of compensation or remuneration for these volunteer services. I also understand and agree that I, as the Volunteer, am not entitled to any employee benefits from the City. I understand and agree that the City may, at its discretion, discontinue the Volunteer's services at any time with no prior or written notice and without cause or reason. I also disclaim any ownership interest in anything I produce as a city volunteer.

If any activity to which I as the Volunteer am assigned presents risks that I do not want to take, then it is my responsibility to state that concern to the applicable City employee or the volunteer coordinator at the volunteer site and announce the decision not to engage in that activity. I agree that I shall abide by all safety rules that are applicable at the site at which I will be performing volunteer duties, will properly use any personal protective equipment that may be provided, and will always perform volunteer activities in a safe and prudent manner.

I agree that I will abide by the policies and directives of the City, as well as all applicable statutes and ordinances. I authorize that the City may seek emergency medical treatment on behalf of me in case of any accident, injury, or illness that should occur involving me as the Volunteer. I agree that I accept and assume the risk and responsibility for harm, injury, or damage that may occur to me as a volunteer while performing volunteer activities. **I expressly agree to indemnify and hold harmless the City from any and all obligations and liabilities related to any harm that may come to me. I hereby release the City of Giddings and its officials, officers, directors, employees, advisors, agents, representatives, patrons, and volunteers from any liability for any cost, loss, or damage to me or my property arising out of or in connection with my activities and/or time spent in connection with the volunteer work.**

In consideration for I, as the Volunteer, being allowed to provide volunteer services for the City, I do of my own free will knowingly execute this Volunteer Agreement and Release which I have read and fully understand. I understand that information from my application and resume may be subject to release to the public under the Texas Public Information Act.

A. Acknowledgement of Risks

1. I fully understand and hereby acknowledge activities such as performing as a city volunteer has inherent risks, dangers, and hazards; and
2. My participation as a volunteer may result in injury, illness, or death; and
3. These risks may be the result of inherent risks from participation, or may even be caused by the negligence or other acts of the city, officials, officers, directors, employees, advisors, agents, representatives, patrons, and volunteers.

B. Assumption of Risks

1. I hereby assume all risks of danger or injury to myself from performing as a volunteer; and

2. I hereby assume responsibility for all losses or damages involving myself, regardless of cause.

C. Release from Liability

1. **I hereby voluntarily waive, release, discharge, hold harmless, defend and indemnify the City of Giddings, its officials, officers, directors, employees, advisors, agents, representatives, patrons, and volunteers, from any and all claims, actions or losses for bodily injury, property damage, wrongful death, loss of services, or otherwise, which may arise from my participation in the volunteer activity.**

2. **I specifically understand and acknowledge that I am releasing, discharging and waiving claims or actions that I may have presently or in the future for all acts or omissions of the City, its officials, officers, directors, employees, advisors, agents, representatives, patrons, and volunteers, to the extent allowed by law.**

D. Venue

The venue for any dispute arising out of this instrument shall be Lee County, Texas.

I have read this Release and Waiver and by signing it agree with its terms. It is my intention to exempt and relieve the City of Giddings from any and all liability related to my participation as a city volunteer.

Participant:

_____	_____	____	_____
Printed Name	Signature	Age	Date

If participant is under 18 years of age, Parent or Guardian must read the above and complete the following:

I have read this Release and Waiver and by signing it agree with its terms as it applies to my child. It is my intention to exempt and relieve the City of Giddings from any and all liability related to my child's participation as a city volunteer.

Parent / Guardian/:

_____	_____	____	_____
Printed Name	Signature	Age	Date