Volunteer Manual

Great Falls Animal Shelter
1010 25th Avenue Northeast
Great Falls, MT 59404
Phone: (406) 454-2276
www.greatfallsmt.net

Welcome to the Shelter Sidekicks!

Changing lives, one animal at a time

When you become a volunteer for the Great Falls Animal Shelter, you also become an ambassador for the Shelter and its mission. This manual has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our personnel policy. You will also be receiving our Shelter Policy Manual. Please read all documents carefully so you will be well equipped to answer questions knowledgeably and provide quality care to the animals at the shelter.

Mission Statement

Our volunteer program provides an opportunity for residents to share their time and talents with Shelter animals. Volunteers will also assist in socializing and providing quality care for the Shelter's animals and help find forever homes for as many of our adoptable animals as possible. Volunteers will work to help reunite lost pets with their owners and participate in an array of community activities to educate the public about responsible pet ownership and the humane treatment of all animals.

Goals of the Shelter Sidekicks

- Increase adoptions, in turn reduce the need to euthanize at the Shelter
- Return lost pets to their owners
- Take part in community events/community outreach
- Socialize animals more/make them adoptable
- Improve the image of the Shelter
- Look for opportunities to work with animal advocacy/rescue groups

We believe

- Our volunteers serve as positive Ambassadors for the Great Falls Animal Shelter.
- Our Volunteer Program helps promote responsible pet ownership.
- Our volunteers are a valuable resource to staff.
- Our animals depend on kind, caring volunteers to be there for them.
- Our Volunteer Program is essential in helping our animals find forever homes.

About Us

The City of Great Falls Animal Shelter (GFAS) is an Open Admission Municipality animal shelter. We serve not only the City of Great Falls, but the entire Cascade County and surrounding areas.

Within the City of Great Falls there is some confusion about the different animal organizations. The City of Great Falls Animal Shelter is an entirely separate entity from organizations such as the Animal Foundation, PetPawSee, Humane Society of Cascade County and Aurora's Mystacats.

Approximately 2166 animals are brought into the Shelter on a yearly basis. We have the capacity to house 105 animals at one time, but our average monthly intake is 180 animals. It is the goal of the Great Falls Animal Shelter to have as many animals adopted, placed in foster homes, placed in rescue groups and redeemed as possible. There is a limit, however, to the GFAS resources. We respect quality of life for all the shelter animals and in some cases humanely euthanizing an animal is the final act of kindness that can be shown to a dangerous animal, an animal that has been involved in a bite case, a feral animal, or an animal sick with an illness not treatable using available resources. However, humanely euthanizing any animal is viewed as an alternative, only after careful consideration of the Operations Director and the Shelter contracted veterinarian, and only as a last resort.

The City of Great Falls Police Department handles all Animal Control issues, the GFAS houses and cares for the animals only.

The GFAS is operated under an annual budget of approximately $504,000. Over the last few years GFAS has made many significant improvements to the shelter. Here is just a small list of the improvements made.

- Shelter interior painted
- air conditioning was added to the cat room
- new air flow/heater was added to the isolation room
- a new floor, ceiling tiles, windows with pet screens and insulation were added to the office
- fresh air intake and the dog kennel fans were repaired to increase the over-all health of the animals and staff
- 21 new pass thru doors were installed in the kennels
- sealed kennel floor was installed to control odor and disease
- a flush system in the kennel was installed to increase the cleanliness of the kennels
- Shelter exterior painted
- new building signage
- parking lot was paved and positive drainage was added around the building

Services

Animal Shelter: The Great Falls Animal Shelter (GFAS) provides shelter for stray, abandoned and owner surrendered animals. We house animals brought in by the Animal Control Officers and citizens of Cascade County and numerous other surrounding counties. Each animal is assigned an impound number, given vaccinations and a health assessment when they enter the shelter. They are placed in a kennel where they are kept until they find a new home.

Animal Protection: Citizens who may be concerned about an animal's welfare can call the Great Falls Police Department and speak with an Animal Control Officer at 406-727-7688 and they can do an animal welfare check. Occasionally, we are called upon by the Great Falls Police Department and the Cascade County Sheriff's Office to assist in the removal and housing of animals in crisis. GFAS will maintain the animals at the shelter while legal proceedings are underway and may be responsible for placement of the animals at the conclusion of the court case.

Pet Adoptions: GFAS has many adoptable animals awaiting their forever home. Each potential adopter completes an application and begins the adoption process.

Population Control: Per Montana Code 7-23-4202, GFAS requires all animals that are adopted from GFAS be altered upon adoption.

Cremation Services: GFAS provides pet cremation services to the Great Falls community and surrounding areas. After cremation is complete the pet ashes are put into individual urns and returned to their owners. All fees go to the ongoing care of the shelter animals.

Microchipping Services: The public can purchase microchips for their dogs and cats from GFAS for a fee (however, microchipping is already included in the cost of dog and cat adoptions).

Licensing Services: Per City Ordinance Section 6.8.040 all dogs and cats over the age of 6 months, must be licensed. A license may be purchased for an annual fee of $15 for an altered animal and an annual fee of $30 for an unaltered animal.

Volunteer Opportunities: GFAS provides the opportunity for people to volunteer at the shelter. There are a variety of volunteer jobs such as Dog Walking, Dog Grooming, Animal Behaviorist, Office Assistant, Adoption Counselor, Special Projects, Public Education, Fundraising, and Special Events. Volunteers help socialize and assist with training the many animals in the shelter helping to make them more adoptable as well as educating the public on responsible pet ownership.

Shelter Contact Information and Hours

Address/E-Mail
1010 25th Avenue Northeast
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 454-2276
Website: www.greatfallsmt.net
Facebook: facebook.com/GreatFallsAnimalShelter
E-Mail: lmcelhinney@greatfallsmt.net

Hours
Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Kennel Hours: Monday through Friday 11:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

After Hours Emergency
Call (406) 727-7688

Animal Control
Call (406) 727-7688

Administrative Staff

Deputy City Manager: Jennifer Reichelt
jreichelt@greatfallsmt.net
Office: (406) 455-8417
Cell: (406) 788-9172

Operations Director: Lynn Formell
lformell@greatfallsmt.net
Office: (406) 452-1358
Cell: (406) 217-2212

Volunteer Coordinator: Laura McElhinney
lmcelhinney@greatfallsmt.net
Office: (406) 452-1068
Cell: (406) 564-3685

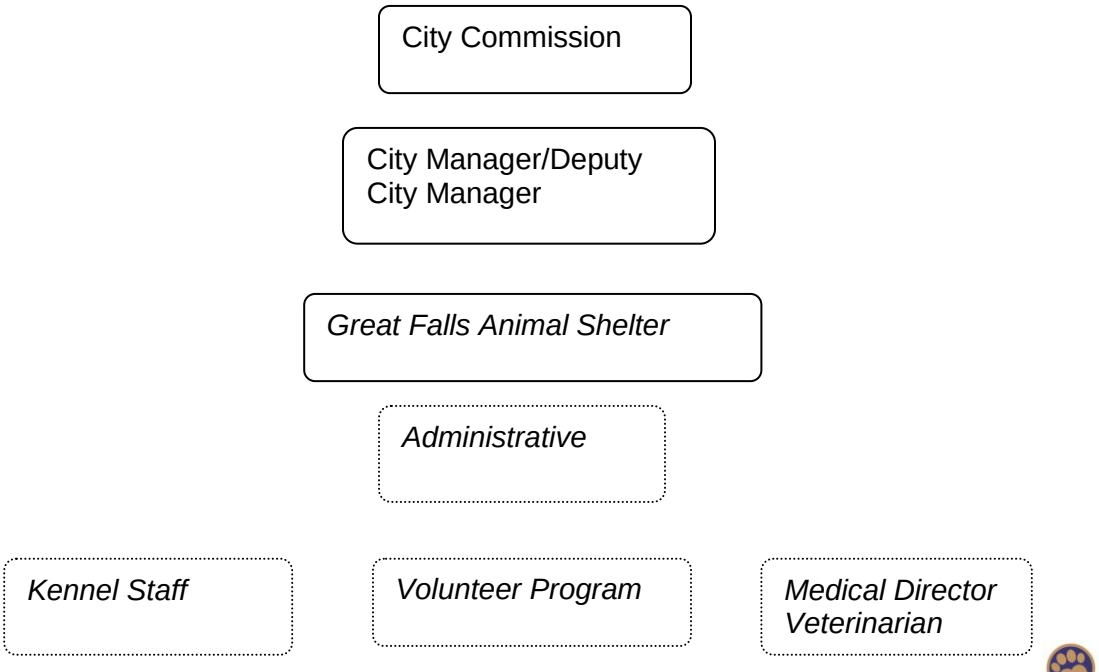
Kennel Office Clerks: Tiffany Staigmiller & Rose Ann Friedrich
tstaigmiller@greatfallsmt.net or rfriedrich@greatfallsmt.net

Veterinarian Technician: Jill Van Overbeke
jvanoverbeke@greatfallsmt.net

Agency Structure

The Great Falls Animal Shelter is part of the City of Great Falls. Oversight is directed by the City Manager and Deputy City Manager. The Shelter consists of administrative staff, kennel staff, a contracted veterinarian, and volunteers. The Animal Control officers are directed by the Police Department.

The following flow chart depicts the agency structure and hierarchy:



Shelter Policy

Please review the Shelter Policy Manual for a general understanding of our policies. .

Volunteer Guidelines

The Great Falls Animal Shelter relies on its volunteers to be dependable and effective during their volunteer hours. By meeting these commitments, the program operates smoothly and the maximum benefit is derived for the animals.

Dress Code

When working at the Shelter we must be conscious of our appearance to the public. It is also important to be able to function comfortably and safely with our volunteer tasks. We recommend wearing casual pants or jeans and non-skid rubber-soled shoes. For safety the following items may not be worn while volunteering: slip on shoes (flip-flops, sandals), open toed shoes. Jewelry such as dangling earrings or other piercings, necklaces, and bracelets are also prohibited. These can be caught by an animal's paw causing injury or damage to yourself or the item.

Personal Belongings

GFAS is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We encourage you to lock any unnecessary clothing items, purses, or any other personal items in your vehicle.

Signing In/ Out

All volunteers need to record their hours each shift on the log sheet located in the Volunteer office.

Visitors and Personal Guests

Unless your friend(s) are in the volunteer program and on the same work schedule as you, volunteers may not bring friends along to 'help out'. If your friend is interested in volunteering please have them contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Grievances

If you have any issues with GFAS' policies, with a staff member, or another volunteer, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace

Alcohol and drugs are not permitted on the premises of GFAS. Any volunteer under the influence will not be permitted on the property and may be subject to termination.

Injuries

All injuries and accidents, including bites and scratches, must be reported immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator. If the Volunteer Coordinator is not available report the injury to the Operations Director. A First-Report Injury report must be completed by both the volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any portion of the building. You may smoke in the area of the truck bay only. Please use the ashtrays provided.

Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

The GFAS intends to provide a workplace that is free from physical and verbal attacks, harassment, property crimes, threats, or any other violent or sexual acts. Harassment of any kind may result in disciplinary action.

If you experience or witness any type of harassment in the workplace, it should be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator. If the Volunteer Coordinator is not available report the harassment to the Operations Director. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation. Threats will be evaluated and appropriate follow-through will be pursued.

Authorized Personnel Only Areas

Certain areas of the Shelter are off-limits to volunteers, unless specifically authorized to enter. These include the isolation room, triage room, behind the front office counter, director's office, and the crematorium. All Authorized Personnel Only areas are clearly marked.

Confidential Information

GFAS volunteers may become knowledgeable of important and/or sensitive information. All volunteers are required to hold all confidential information that they may obtain, directly or indirectly, concerning clients, animals and staff. Volunteers may not seek to obtain confidential information from a client. Intentional or unintentional violation of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including my removal as a volunteer by GFAS and/or possible legal action by others (i.e., clients, customers)

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Discipline/ Termination

The Great Falls Animal Shelter promotes a disciplinary philosophy of fairness, which encourages growth and improvement, rather than focusing on punishment and negative feedback. Volunteers who commit minor violations of policy and procedure will be verbally counseled in an effort to achieve acceptable compliance. Examples of minor violations could include tardiness and absences. Continued violations could result in additional counseling or dismissal. Serious violations, including animal abuse, abusive, or harassing behavior to staff or customers, possession of drugs or weapons, and/or

disclosure of confidential information could result in the termination of service. GFAS may terminate a volunteer with or without cause.

Code of Ethics

As a volunteer representing the Great Falls Animal Shelter, your conduct and interaction with staff, other volunteers and the public is expected to always be courteous and professional. You are making a commitment to the staff and the animals of GFAS to be reliable and carry out your volunteer duties to the best of your abilities.

Volunteer Opportunities

Dog Walking: Work directly with our adoptable canines to increase the chances of our canines finding their forever homes. Help them feel less lonely and improve behavior problems by getting out of the kennels for a walk or a romp in the outdoor kennel.

Dog Grooming: Groom our adoptable canines to increase their chances of finding their forever homes. Dog Walking training is required before a volunteer can be a dog groomer volunteer.

Foster Caregiver: Provide the temporary care of animals not ready for adoption with the goal of helping reduce the City's euthanasia rate. The program seeks to find forever homes for animals once they are ready for adoption. Foster caregivers get to participate in a rewarding experience that changes an animal's life by providing them a second chance to find their forever home.

Office Assistant: This position will have numerous duties, dependent on the day and the volunteer. Some duties may include: daily office assignments, data entry, web site photo updates, bulletin board updates, lost & found reports, contacting rescue groups, creating brochures etc.

Resource Research: To assist staff with administrative duties and help search and verify Rescue organizations, Foster Homes, Grant Opportunities and other resources the Shelter may need.

Special Projects: This position will have numerous duties, dependent on the day and the volunteer. Some duties may be performed off site. Some duties may include: creating brochures, creating education pamphlets, photography, grant writing, mailing out reminders etc.

Public Education: Go out to the public and educate about spay/neuter, licensing, and pet ownership. The shelter needs representation at public events, schools etc. Create education pamphlets; sell licenses at public events etc.

Fundraising: The shelter has very limited resources. Have fun and help raise money for our shelter animals. The Volunteer Coordinator and these volunteers will seek out the fundraising events and complete the task from start to finish.

Special Events: This position will have numerous duties, dependent on the day and the volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator and these volunteers will seek out events to benefit the shelter animals or the shelter staff may have events they need help with.

Receipt and Acknowledgment of the Volunteer and Shelter Policy Manuals

The Volunteer and Shelter Policy Manuals are important documents intended to help volunteers become acquainted with the City of Great Falls Animal Shelter. The Manuals should serve as a guide; they are not the final word in all cases. Individual circumstances may call for individual attention.

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate receipt and acknowledgment of the Volunteer and Shelter Policy Manuals.

1. I have received and read a copy of the Volunteer and Shelter Policy Manuals. I understand that the policies and rules described therein are subject to change at the sole discretion of the City of Great Falls at any time. I understand that these Manuals replaces (supersedes) all previous Volunteer materials.

2. I understand that, should the content of the Volunteer and/ or Shelter Policy Manuals be changed in any way, I may be required to provide an additional signature to indicate that I am aware of and understand any new or updated policies.

3. I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and have received a copy of the Volunteer and Shelter Policy Manuals.

Signature of Volunteer	Signature of Parent or Guardian (If Volunteer is under the age of 18)
Printed Name of Volunteer	Printed Name of Parent or Guardian
Date	Date

Signature of GFAS Representative	Date	Printed Name of GFAS Representative