



## Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA Job Description

**Position: Behavior Manager**

**Job Status: Exempt**

**Reports To: Director of Operations**

**Revision Date: 11/10/2021**

### **Position Summary:**

The Behavior Manager is responsible for the overall behavioral health and wellbeing of the shelter population placing concentrated focus on assessment, behavior modification and management, stress reduction, enrichment, shortening length of stay, providing adopter and foster support, and ensuring animals are placed for success in homes. The Behavior Manager develops, executes, and oversees regular in-shelter welfare rounds and foster follow-up, environmental enrichment, and thorough training and behavior management plans. This position works closely with the adoptions, foster, transport and clinic teams with all Enrichment Specialists reporting directly into him/her. All functions are to be performed in keeping with the organization's philosophy of utilizing humane training equipment and methods to achieve desired objectives while minimizing stress on the animal.

### **Essential Duties / Responsibilities:**

#### **Population Management**

- Ensure that every animal in the shelter's care has clear and objective behavior notes in the shelter database to support improved promotion, better matchmaking, and ultimately shortened length of stay.
- Create and manage behavior modification protocols for a wide range of behavioral problems.
- Perform welfare rounds on all animals in the shelter monitoring their behavioral health and identifying those displaying signs of stress or anxiety in need of immediate intervention. Request foster care placement and/or veterinary intervention when appropriate.
- Design individualized training plans for animals in the shelter; measure progress and re-assess training plans and recommendations as necessary. Oversee implementation of said training plans by appropriate staff.
- Ensure all shelter animals are receiving adequate enrichment opportunities resulting in stress reduction and improved quality of life.
- Oversee canine playgroups ensuring adequate training, participation, and effectiveness.
- Maintain a working knowledge of animals 'under behavior modification' and work diligently to improve adoptability and decrease the length of stay of these animals.
- Develop and implement a behavior evaluation system using best practices and current research.
- Ensure that all animal behavior, training plans, and placement recommendations are entered into the shelter database in an accurate, objective, and clear manner. Contribute to daily end-of-day reporting.
- Locate and facilitate rescue placement of any behavior cases deemed eligible for transfer. Any rescue partners must be pre-approved by the CEO.

### **Adopter and Community Support**

- Identify animals that will need additional training and/or support post-adoption and create specialized waivers and behavior plans for adopters.
- Facilitate good adoption matches through conversation; help set realistic, transparent expectations of time, care and financial commitment.
- Provide support for people seeking behavioral help with their foster or adopted pets and actively follow-up with behavior consults. Develop a behavior hotline to aid pet owners in the community with the goal of diverting intake to the shelter.
- Plan and act as trainer for various types of paid training classes for publicly owned animals to serve as a resource for increased pet retention.

### **Staff support**

- Act as lead for all cat and dog behavior-related requests and assessments.
- Ensure staff is provided training so they fully understand and can practice and explain these protocols to customers as needed.
- Ensure staff are trained to use the behavior evaluation system consistently and objectively.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers who interact with shelter animals are properly trained in safe handling and informed regarding specific behavior and training plans in place.
- Conduct and lead productive weekly behavior meetings during which all behavior cases and modification plans are discussed.
- Hold periodic educational seminars for staff and interested volunteers.

### **General**

- Provide prompt, exceptional customer service delivery and clear communication via all platforms – in person, email, phone and notes in shelter software.
- Foster a team environment by working cooperatively with all departments, staff and volunteers, and providing excellent customer service both internally and externally.
- Remain positive and mission-focused while under stress.
- Be attentive to others' needs and willingly assist as required.
- Other tasks and duties as assigned.

### **Physical Requirements & Work Environment:**

- Ability to lift and transport items weighing up to 65 pounds.
- Must be able to control dogs up to 200 lbs. without endangering yourself, others around you, or the animal.
- Fast pace indoors and outdoors with exposure to varying temperatures and weather conditions, potential hazards including disinfectants, high noise levels, potential for animal bites and scratches, zoonotic diseases, and animal wastes.
- Have a high level of manual dexterity.
- The ability to bend and squat.
- The ability to stand and sit for significant periods of time.
- Consistently exposed to animals and animal allergens under conditions with limited alternatives available.
- Daily hours and days of the week may vary according to the needs of the organization. May require evening, holiday and weekend work hours.

**Required Skills / Experience:**

- Recognized certification in dog training or animal behavior required.
- Valid Virginia Driver's License required.
- Must be comfortable safely driving all SPCA transport vans and Compassionate Care-A-Van, abiding by all traffic laws.
- Must have experience assessing and training animals in a shelter environment.
- Must be able to safely and compassionately handle and work with all cats and dogs, including those with medical or behavioral challenges.
- Must practice good judgment and have the ability to actively problem solve and seek answers independently.
- Must have strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to multi-task.
- Must be a team player and self-starter with the ability to work in a fast-paced environment with minimal supervision.
- Must be highly motivated, with strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills.
- Must be professional at all times with the ability to get along well with a variety of people, as well as demonstrate the ability to handle sensitive and confidential situations and information.
- Must have a strong knowledge of animal caregiving with the ability to identify medical and behavioral characteristics of dogs and cats.
- Must possess a strong knowledge of animal body language and positive training techniques.
- Must continually maintain knowledge of current training methods and new best practices.
- Must display compassion and empathy for all animals and human clients.
- Must have the ability to remain calm and focused in the most stressful of situations.
- Computer literate: MS Office, Internet, Google docs and mail.