

JOB DESCRIPTION

Behavior Specialist

The Pennsylvania SPCA (PSPCA) is a non-profit animal welfare organization founded in 1867. Our mission is to protect animals, prevent cruelty and improve the health and quality of life for animals in Pennsylvania.

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

**SUMMARY**:

The Behavior Specialist will perform behavioral assessments on shelter dogs (SAFER+Marder) and cats and conduct training classes for PSPCA volunteers, public and staff. The intent of this job description is to provide a representation of the level of the types of duties and responsibilities that will be required of positions given this title and shall not be construed as a declaration of the total of the specific duties and responsibilities of any particular position. Employees may be directed to perform job-related tasks other than those specifically presented in this description.

**PRINCIPAL DUTIES:**

* Works closely with Manager of Behavior and Enrichment and the rest of the Behavior and Enrichment team
* Evaluate dogs in pending behavior status using provided assessment tool (SAFER + Marder) with another qualified member of the PSPCA staff/volunteer
* Evaluate cats in pending behavior status using provided assessment tool (ASPCA)
* Works closely with Manager of Behavior and Enrichment to schedule and implement trainings
* Conduct Buddy Training classes, Canine Defensive Handling, Feline Behavior and Handling to PSPCA volunteers and staff
* Conduct volunteer lanyard assessments as requested
* Provides input to Canine and Feline Buddy programs
* Contributes to positive climate in which staff and volunteers are motivated and empowered to perform at peak levels.
* May assist staff assigned to bring in or accept the organization’s rescued dogs and cats.
* Teach regular classes according to PSPCA provided curriculum as needed, which is guided by our science-based, positive reinforcement training philosophy and incorporates components to support different adult learning styles.
* Assist in the development of behavior plans for cats and dogs to improve adoptability
* Help to develop and implement enrichment program and identify, treat and prevent behavior issues as available thereby increasing adoptions and decreasing adoption returns.
* Create an environment in which volunteers feel welcome and are given constructive feedback when working in the animal areas.
* Set up and remove all props and equipment needed for clinics as needed.
* Maintain cleanliness and order of the evaluation space.
* Follow PSPCA protocol for animal handling and animal care.
* Promote teamwork, communication, and cooperation between all departments.
* Communicate professionally with staff, volunteers and members of the public.
* Always promote a humane and caring attitude toward all animals.
* Maintain the confidentiality of all information.
* Follow established procedures governing safe work practices; to perform duties in a manner which assures the safety of oneself and others.
* Perform duties in a manner which encourages contributions and business for PSPCA
* Perform other duties as assigned.
* Respond to behavior email and telephone adoption followup and public inquiries
* Promote teamwork, communication, and cooperation between intake, training, and all other departments.
* Ensure that the facilities and equipment are maintained in a safe, clean, and serviceable condition and that staff are trained in the proper and safe use of all equipment, as needed in the performance of their job duties.
* Perform duties in a manner that encourages attainment of goals, contributions and business for PSPCA and its programs.
* Maintain the confidentiality of all information.
* Always treat people and animals with respect, contribute to effective teamwork, promote staff cooperation, and foster public relations beneficial to PSPCA.
* Perform other duties and assist the behavior and enrichment manager as assigned.

**PHYSICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS:**

* Sit for long and short periods of time viewing a computer screen and seeing printed documents.
* Repetitively use hands to type on a computer keyboard and use a computer mouse for long and short periods of time.
* Flex the neck upward and downward; twist the neck and the waist.
* Lift and move objects and animals weighing up to 50 pounds for short distances and to humanely restrain animals when necessary.
* Push/pull moderately heavy objects up to 25 pounds. Walk dogs weighing up to 150 pounds in a variety of weather conditions.
* Bend, stoop, squat, reach above and below shoulder level, grasp and turn objects, stand, and/or walk frequently and repetitively throughout each shift.
* Assess medical and behavior changes in animals both visually and audibly.
* May communicate via handheld radio or cell phone.
* Work environment includes constant exposure to animals and animal allergens.
* Drive an automobile.

**EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Bachelor Degree or certification in animal behavior or related field preferred. CPTD-KA and/or KPA trainer preferred. Equivalent of three (3) years of full-time progressively responsible related experience or any equivalent combination of education and experience working in the area of animal training and behavior, shelter experience preferred.

**EXPERIENCE, ABILITIES AND QUALITIES REQUIRED**

* Previous shelter experience preferred.
* Must possess knowledge of common health and behavior problems in companion animals. Demonstrated knowledge of positive reinforcement methods of animal behavior modification.
* Experience with using positive reinforcement as primary method of animal behavior modification and some understanding of learning theory.
* Demonstrated experience evaluating, rehabilitating, and/or adopting out shelter animals.
* Previous employment or volunteerism at an animal shelter is highly preferred.
* Experience working directly with a wide range of dogs and cats, particularly both large and small dogs. Experience and proficiency in facilitating group classes.
* Effective written and verbal communication skills. A self-starter, facilitator, and organizer.
* Computer literate.
* Affection for animals, concern for their welfare and a willingness to accommodate animals in the work place. Must be able to handle the physical and emotional aspect of work in an animal shelter environment, including euthanasia.
* Ability to communicate with the public, volunteers and co-workers in a pleasant, courteous and tactful manner at all times. Maturity, good judgment, sensitivity and professionalism.
* Demonstrated ability to meet goals and objectives.
* Comfortable and skilled in working with a culturally diverse staff, volunteers and community.
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* Must have a valid Driver’s License and be in good standing with Department of Motor Vehicles

**IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR**: Behavior Manager

**HOURS** FLSA STATUS: NON-EXEMPT POSITION Part-time position hours are dictated by the needs of the organization. Daily hours and days of the week (for both full and part-time positions) may vary according to the needs of the department schedule. Includes weekends and night work.

**INTRODUCTORY ASSESSMENT PERIOD**

The introductory assessment period runs from the date of hire for three months thereafter. For employment in any position with the Pennsylvania SPCA, this introductory assessment period is the period during which the specifics of the job are learned. During this period, either the employee or the Pennsylvania SPCA may end the employment relationship without notice or prejudice.

**EMPLOYMENT**

There is no minimum period of employment guaranteed or implied by acceptance of an employment offer. It is the policy of Pennsylvania SPCA that even exempt positions are governed by the needs of the agency, which means that employment is for no specified term and either the Pennsylvania SPCA or the employee, may terminate that employment at any time. The Chief Executive Officer has final authority over these decisions and determinations.