

# Volunteer Handbook



La Plata County Humane Society

1111 S. Camino del Rio  
Durango, CO 81303



## Welcome Aboard!

Thank you for being a part of our team! Here at the La Plata County Humane Society we take great pride in our mission and place in animal welfare in La Plata County. Our mission, as this handbook lays out, is to provide a safe and healthy environment for the animals in our care, find safe loving homes for them and take the lead on animal welfare issues in our community.

As a volunteer here there are great opportunities to make a very meaningful difference in the lives of the homeless animals in our care. Every volunteer position that is available makes a difference.

Since our inception, our volunteers have played an essential role in the organization and remain so today, more than ever. Our volunteers at the Thrift Store provide retail assistance that aids in our fundraising efforts through the sale of donated merchandise. All of the proceeds from the Thrift Store go towards the care of the animals. The volunteers at the Shelter have direct contact with the animals and play an essential role in socializing, cleaning and interaction with the general public.

As was mentioned in your orientation our volunteer program is driven by the individual motivations of the volunteers. We have no minimum hour requirements for the vast majority of our volunteer programs. Given this fact it is up to you, the Volunteer, to get involved. We will make you aware of unique opportunities and programs that we develop, but again, it's up to you to get involved.

We hope you find your time here enriching and in-keeping with your motivations for becoming a volunteer. We welcome any feedback that you might have about the program, good or bad. If you have any concerns or ideas please let the Volunteer Coordinator know.

So thank you and welcome aboard. We could not accomplish our mission without you!

Sincerely,

Chris Nelson  
Director of Animal Services



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# La Plata County Humane Society Volunteer Handbook

## Mission Statement

La Plata County Humane Society is committed to enhancing and protecting the lives of companion animals by ensuring the provision of sustenance, safety and shelter, educating the community regarding humane treatment of animals, and preventing pet overpopulation.

The Humane Society was created to provide shelter for homeless animals, to rescue animals in distress, to assist in the investigation and prosecution of reported cruelty and abuse, to attempt to find homes for unwanted animals, and to encourage kindness and responsibility toward all living things through humane education.

## Funding

The Thrift Store, which was created in 1986, provides the main source of funding for the Shelter. The Shelter also receives 22% of its funds from City and County agreements. We also rely on public contributions, fundraisers, and grants to make up the rest of our budget.

## Facilities

Presently the Shelter and Thrift Store are housed together in one building. The Shelter, which was built in 1997, was funded entirely by proceeds from the Thrift Store. A \$500,000 expansion and remodel in 1999 enlarged our Cattery, added ten additional dog kennels, expanded our board/education room and created a new veterinary suite.

## Hours of Operation

### Animal Shelter

11:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00am to 5:00pm  
12:00pm to 4:00pm

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday  
Sunday

### Thrift Store

10:00am to 5:00pm  
10:00am to 5:00pm  
10:00am to 5:00pm  
10:00am to 5:00pm  
10:00am to 5:00pm  
10:00am to 5:00pm  
10:00am to 5:00pm  
11:00pm to 4:00pm



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## **Contact Information**

La Plata County Humane Society & Thrift Store  
1111 South Camino del Rio  
Durango, CO 81303

[www.lpchumanesociety.org](http://www.lpchumanesociety.org)

Shelter Phone: (970) 259-2847

Thrift Store Phone: (970) 385-4322

## **Volunteer Requirements**

- Must complete paperwork and submit a copy of a legal form of ID
- Volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by a legal guardian or a Volunteer Mentor
- Volunteers must attend an orientation for the program they are interested in.
- Volunteers are checked in our databases for any history of animal cruelty.
- Volunteers are required to follow the policies and procedures of the La Plata County Humane Society and Thrift Store.



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# Humane Society

## Pet Adoption

The Shelters adoption service include individual counseling to help insure appropriate matches between pets and their potential adopters. Adoption fees include spaying/neutering, age appropriate vaccinations, a pet care packet, free bag of food for the animal and a microchip.

Adoptions are conducted on-site as well as at various off-site locations and special events throughout the year.

## Adoption Fees

Adult Dogs:	\$99 Lg. / \$149 Sm.
Puppies:	\$199 Lg. / \$249 Sm.
Seniors:	\$49 Lg / \$99 Sm.

Adult Cats:	\$49
Kittens:	\$79
Seniors:	\$29
Barn cat:	\$9

## Population Served

The LPCHS serves all residents of La Plata County, covering a 1,690 square mile area with an estimated population of 51,334. An average of 2,800 animals are received at the shelter each year.

## Statistics for 2020

Adoptions: 1,594  
Animals received: 2,742  
Animals returned to their families: 402



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# **La Plata County Humane Society Services & Programs**

## **Lost & Found Animals**

The LPCHS receives stray and unwanted animals brought in by Animal Protection or the general public from within La Plata County and the four corners area. Veterinary care is provided to the best of our ability for sick and injured animals at that time. We maintain electronic information on stray animals to return lost pets to owners. The remaining animals are put up for adoption.

## **Animal Protection**

The Animal Protection Office is housed within the shelter. They are contracted and 100% funded by the City and County to enforce ordinances regarding the animals of our community. Currently there are 7 full-time officers. Beyond responding to violations in our City and County ordinances, they do welfare checks on horses and livestock, investigate cruelty and often assist citizens with problems they may have with their own animals. They also work with staff and volunteers to educate pet owners regarding responsible pet care options that are available to them.

## **Veterinary Services**

Our on-staff veterinarian and vet-tech provide services for the homeless animals in our care. The veterinary staff is funded through proceeds from the Thrift Store. They monitor the health of the animals, treat minor medical problems, control common infectious diseases, perform spay/neuter procedures, provide emergency care, administer rabies vaccinations and provide for the overall health of the animals in our care.

## **In-house Spay & Neuter**

To insure that the adopted animals from our shelter will not contribute to the cycle of unwanted litters, the Shelter spays/neuters all animals over eight weeks of age before they can be adopted.

## **Community Low-Cost Spay & Neuter Program**

We offer low cost spay and neuter for our community members that cannot afford to have their pets spayed/neutered. Please call 970-259-2847 to schedule an appointment or visit [lpchumanesociety.org](http://lpchumanesociety.org).

## **Pet ID Tags**

Pet ID tags are available in different shapes and sizes at the front desk at the shelter. Pet tags are \$10.99. The front and the back of the tags can be engraved while you wait.

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## **Dog License**

The Humane Society provides pet licensing for the public. It is a city/county law that you license you pet. A proof of Rabies vaccination is required to obtain a dog license. If you live in the city or county the cost for a license for a dog that is already spayed or neutered is \$10.00 per year. If you live in the county and your dog is not spayed or neutered the cost is \$25.00. In the city limits if you have an intact (not spayed or neutered) dog the license is \$25.00 as well as an intact permit which costs \$30.00. The license as well as the permit can be purchased at the shelter or online at [lpchumanesociety.org](http://lpchumanesociety.org). and must be acquired yearly.

## **Animal Cremation**

The LPCHS has the only crematory for pets in Durango. We accept animals for cremation from the general public as well as local veterinary hospitals. The ashes of each animal are kept separate and returned to their owners in labeled containers.

We can usually return your animal's ashes to you within seven to ten days.

Prices of cremation are as follows:

30 lbs. or less	\$100.00	For Private Cremation an additional \$60.00 will be charged to the already set prices.
31 - 60lbs.	\$125.00	
60 lbs. or more	\$175.00	
Simple Cremation	\$40.00	

## **Euthanasia**

La Plata County Humane Society provides euthanasia services for pet owners facing the hardest decision they are likely to face with their pet(s). We have highly qualified staff to assist you and your pet.

Euthanasia services are by appointment only. You may choose to be present during all, or part of the procedure or choose to not be present during any of it.

The cost for euthanasia services are as follows:

Dogs \$100.00      Cats \$75.00

Please call: 970-259-2847 to schedule an appointment.

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# Shelter Volunteer Program

The Humane Society utilizes approximately 200 committed volunteers who work in nearly every area of the organization. Volunteers must attend a one hour orientation before they can start. Training for the Thrift Store and the Shelter are conducted separately. For most positions there are no set time requirements for participation. Programs that require time commitments are explained below.

Previous experience with animals is not required to become a volunteer as training will be provided. A variety of volunteer positions are available that allow individuals to work directly with animals, the general public, and at the Thrift Store. There are programs that require additional training that is provided free of charge and by appointment only, see below for program details.

## **Dog Walking**

Dog walkers are an essential part of our volunteer program because they provide much needed exercise, socialization, and training for the dogs at the Shelter. By volunteering to walk dogs at the Shelter you are enhancing the quality of life for the dogs and improving their chances of being adopted. We ask that dog walkers work with the dogs on basic commands such as sit, stay, lie down, etc. See below for dog walking procedures and policies. Dog walking takes place during regular business hours.

## **Play Yard for our Dogs**

Daily play yard is an important program to help the dogs socialize and get a much needed break from the kennel. Dogs are brought to the play yard in small groups by volunteers. The volunteers help to monitor the groups and guide the dogs to enjoy their play time appropriately. Training for this job is required, as well as a commitment to work one morning a week. If you are interested in learning more about play yard, please contact the volunteer coordinator at [Carolyn@lpchumanesociety.org](mailto:Carolyn@lpchumanesociety.org) or 970-259-2847 ext 120.

## ***General Dog Walking Guidelines***

- Safety and health of the animal is the first priority. You are responsible for the animal during your walk. Never put yourself or the animal in unsafe or dangerous situations.
- Volunteers must be at least 18 years old to volunteer at the Humane Society.
- All volunteers must attend an orientation before walking dogs.
- Dogs can be walked during regular business hours, until 3:00 pm daily.
- Dogs must be available for adoption, be at least 6 months old and be spayed or neutered in order to be walked.



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### ***Do's for Dog Walking***

- Praise the animal on good behavior and work on general obedience commands such as sit, lie down and stay. Use treats for positive reinforcement. Treats are available in the kennel.
- Pick up each dogs feces while out walking. Bags are available by the front door of the shelter.
- Walk dogs for a **MAXIMUM** of 30 minutes. (Unless as part of Mobile Pets or Adoption Patrol)
- Maintain control of dog at all times. Never take a dog off of its leash.
- Walk dogs only on the path behind the shelter.
- When passing through Lobby area, maintain control of the dog and move quickly through common areas.
- Wait by Kennel door for a staff member to retrieve a dog for you to walk.
- Have fun!

### ***Don'ts for Dog Walking***

- Do not allow dog to come in contact with river water.
- Do not let dogs off leash, for any reason.
- Do not let dog sniff feces along the trail.
- Do not allow dog to come in contact with any other dogs.
- Do not leave the dog unattended for any length of time.
- Do not enter into individual kennels. (unless part of morning play yard program)
- Volunteers are not to protest the decisions made at the Shelter relating to any animal. These decisions are up to the Staff at the Humane Society, all decisions are made with the best interest of the animal at heart. If you have any concerns or questions please bring them up with the Volunteer Coordinator.

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## **Cattery Work**

Volunteers can help in a variety of ways in the cattery by helping fill water bowls, brush, and socialize the cats. Volunteers can also help with laundry and dishes. Helping the general public with adoptions is also a part of being a Cattery volunteer.

Cattery opportunities are typically during regular business hours. Volunteers can come in prior to business hours to help with cleaning in the cattery. Cleaning before business hours requires additional training and must be scheduled in advance with the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Thrift Store**

Volunteers are always needed in the Thrift Store which is a pivotal part of our organization. Without the funds provided by the Thrift Store the Shelter would not be able to operate. Volunteers are needed to help with sorting merchandise, hanging clothes, stocking shelves, operating the cash register and whatever else the day demands.

While there is no contact with the animals at the Thrift Store keep in mind that the more income that the Thrift Store generates, the better the animals' lives get.

## **Dog Washing and Grooming**

Volunteers can help by giving our dogs much needed baths. This is an important roll because a clean dog is not only a healthier dog, but makes dogs more adoptable. Although the kennel staff will give baths to the dogs that need them, they are often too busy with other essential tasks. By helping as a dog washer/groomer you are a tremendous help not only to the animals but to the hard working kennel staff. A short orientation is required before you can begin this opportunity.

## **Mobile Pets**

This program allows the animals from the shelter to visit local nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and hospitals. It places animals in a social environment and provides healing therapy from the clients of these facilities. There is additional training required for this program as well as a background check and TB test. Training is on a one-on-one basis and can be scheduled with the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Adoption Patrol**

Volunteers in this position walk dogs in downtown Durango to help get them out into the public and increase awareness for the shelter. Volunteers are eligible for this program after constantly volunteering for one year, and must provide their own transportation and have a valid drivers license. A background check and an additional orientation is also required for this position. Orientations can be scheduled with the Volunteer Coordinator.

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## **Dog Training and Project Dogs**

Volunteers with these programs help specific dogs with basic commands and general socialization issues. Additional training is required and a set time commitment will be agreed upon between the Volunteer and Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers must be willing to make a solid time commitment to these programs due to the nature of the training and work involved. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

## **Humane Education Instructor**

Volunteers in this position will visit local school groups, children's tour groups, adult civic groups and other community organizations to educate the participants about animal welfare and proper animal care and interaction.

## **Special Events**

All volunteers are welcome and encouraged to help out with special events throughout the year. Interested volunteers are occasionally needed for activities such as finding sponsorships, making decorations, distributing flyers, organizing events, working at public relations booths and much more. Special events will be advertised throughout our volunteer network.

# **Other Volunteer Information**

We *greatly* appreciate and depend on all of the time that our dedicated volunteers put into our organization. Some benefits of being a Humane Society volunteer are listed below:

- Free Training
- Discount for volunteers working at the Thrift Store.
- Opportunity to meet other volunteers in the community

Satisfaction of knowing you are making a big difference in the lives of the homeless animals of La Plata County

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## Helping Hands, Caring Hearts



### **Policies & Procedures for Animal Shelter Volunteers**

1. Volunteers must fill out paperwork, provide a current ID, become a member, and attend an orientation to begin volunteering.
2. Please sign in on the volunteer tablet located at the front desk.
3. Wear a volunteer ID tag at all times to help staff identify you.
4. Volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a legal guardian or parent.
5. Volunteers must sign a liability waiver.
6. As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to adhere to directions that are given to you by Humane Society staff.
7. Please do not enter “staff only” areas unless authorized by a staff member. This includes the Euthanasia animal quarantine rooms, courtesy hold and veterinary suite.
8. Please refrain from answering the phone unless you have been trained in this area by a staff member.
9. Do not enter our facility under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or have them in your possession.
10. Do not use shelter phones or personal cell phones to make calls relating to adoptions or confidential information about the Humane Society and any of the animals in our care.
11. Do not use any equipment in the shelter unless trained by a staff member.
12. Volunteers are not allowed to handle dogs that are not up for adoption yet.
13. Volunteers are not to protest any decision made at the shelter relating to any animal and the disposition thereof. If there are concerns please bring them up to the volunteer coordinator.
14. Volunteers may not approve or decline adoptions, release impounds or strays. Volunteers may not answer questions asked by the media, inspectors or give interviews regarding the policies of the Humane Society or Animal Control.
15. Any questions, concerns, or suggestions should be brought to the attention of the volunteer coordinator.
16. Inform a staff member immediately if you are injured while volunteering.

