

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome to Shelter Pet Safety Net! We are pleased to have you on our team. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact us at [bcashelpers@gmail.com](mailto:bcashelpers@gmail.com). We are happy to answer all questions and consider feedback a gift.

## Our Commitment to Volunteers

The Board of Shelter Pet Safety Net truly appreciate your service and your dedication, and we want to make sure you have a rewarding experience. We strive to:

1. Provide you with adequate information, training and assistance so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
2. Provide you with guidance, goals and feedback.
3. Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
4. Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
5. Treat you as a valued team member.

We will provide you with Shelter Pet Safety Net marketing materials (such as business cards) that you can use to advertise our cause.

## Volunteer benefits

We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to helping save the lives of homeless pets. You may:

- Gain invaluable experience through volunteer assignments, which can be beneficial on a resumé;
- Receive formal and informal recognition from Shelter Pet Safety Net;
- Be provided with opportunities to move into leadership volunteer roles as appropriate;
- Receive special invitations to events and activities sponsored by Shelter Pet Safety Net;

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

- Be able to deduct your mileage costs and other expenses relating to your volunteer work on your federal tax return. Please consult with your tax professional for more information.

## Volunteer Knowledge Commitment

We want you to be successful, and part of that involves understanding what we are all about.

### Basic Knowledge of Shelter Pet Safety Net

Please visit our website at

<https://www.shelterpetsafetynet.org>

Also, if you are on Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter, please follow us!

### Requests for Animal Help

As a Shelter Pet Safety Net representative, you may be asked by people in your community for help with specific animal situations. Here are some ways to handle these requests:

- Individuals in Bastrop County seeking help with Spay/Neuter and vaccinations may be directed to our website, to the Bastrop County Animal Shelter's Wellness Clinic, and to our partners Save An Angel and Emancipet.
- Information about Found Animals and Adoption is available on our website.
- If the person has witnessed animal abuse or neglect, tell him or her to report it to local authorities — the local police, animal control department or humane society. Encourage people to report the abuse not only to help

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

the animal in distress, but also to make local officials aware of the severity of the problem.

- Individuals wanting to relinquish a pet in Bastrop County should be directed to the Bastrop County Animal Shelter.
- Individuals (other than foster homes for the Bastrop County Animal Shelter) seeking food assistance for pets should be directed to the Bastrop County Animal Shelter.
- Individuals seeking help with feral cats in Bastrop County may be directed to Bastrop CATS.

## Conflicts of Interest

If you are asked to take part in an activity that you feel conflicts with the vision and philosophies of Shelter Pet Safety Net, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please contact us at [bcashelpers@gmail.com](mailto:bcashelpers@gmail.com).

Volunteers who handle funds for Shelter Pet Safety Net should not handle funds for related organizations such as the Bastrop County Animal Shelter or our other partner organizations.

Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of Shelter Pet Safety Net assets, funds, materials, facilities, time or the services of other Shelter Pet Safety Net volunteers.

Shelter Pet Safety Net has guidelines for our interaction with the Bastrop County Animal Shelter to maintain independence of both organizations. Please request a copy if you are working on something with the shelter.

## Volunteer Commitments

### Updated Information

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

If your phone number, email address, or address changes, let us know for our records. We want you to stay with us, so let us know if you are experiencing any difficulties and we will try to help if we can. If you no longer wish to volunteer, let us know.

## Representing Shelter Pet Safety Net

When you're serving as a volunteer for Shelter Pet Safety Net, what you say and do reflects on Shelter Pet Safety Net as a whole.

### *Personal Animal Welfare Views*

We know volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, and we sincerely accept this diversity of thought. But if there is an issue on which Shelter Pet Safety Net has not taken a position, you should remain neutral on the matter while representing Shelter Pet Safety Net. Any personal comments you make should be clearly identified as personal comments.

### *Dress*

When representing Shelter Pet Safety Net in public functions, meetings, and events, please follow these dress code guidelines. From time to time, Shelter Pet Safety Net may ask for another form of dress for a specific event.

- Situations with animals involved: casual clothing is fine, please no ripped clothing (to start with) or obnoxious slogans. We know animals can make a mess and we expect everyone will get fur on whatever they are wearing.
- Meetings with potential donors: business or business casual dress, depending on the situation.
- Other events without animals involved: neat casual clothing; avoid oversized or sloppy clothing. You may advertise BCAS or Shelter Pet Safety Net on your shirt, hat, etc.

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## *Social Media*

You are encouraged and welcomed to use your own social media platforms to help promote the mission of Shelter Pet Safety Net. You can even start fundraisers on our behalf on Facebook!

Volunteers are expected to portray Shelter Pet Safety Net, the Bastrop County Animal Shelter, and our sponsors and partner organizations in a positive light.

Please use good judgment whenever you contribute to Shelter Pet Safety Net' social media pages. We encourage volunteers to join online conversations and spread the word about Shelter Pet Safety Net but you should not speak as an official representative of Shelter Pet Safety Net unless you are designated as such.

When you are engaging with others via social media on behalf of Shelter Pet Safety Net, please keep in mind the following:

- Be transparent: Identify yourself as a volunteer of Shelter Pet Safety Net.
- Be accurate: Make sure you check your facts. Take every precaution to gather the most current information available. Be the first to acknowledge and correct your own mistakes.
- Provide resources: Link back to our website whenever you can so that people can see where your information is coming from.
- Be considerate: Please do not use profanity, derogatory language or personal attacks, or engage in any other inappropriate conduct.
- Be real: Do not just copy and paste press releases or website content. Take talking points and put them in your own words. (The one exception is when you are quoting someone or using an official statement.)
- Be professional: Do not allow legitimate online explanation of a position or debate to devolve into personal attacks, fights or flame

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

## SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

wars that would reflect poorly on you or Shelter Pet Safety Net. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of your involvement in an online discussion, please disengage or do not get involved in the first place.

- Protect sensitive information: Protect Shelter Pet Safety Net' confidential and proprietary information as well as the personal information of others. Get permission to use copyrighted content such as photos or videos, or to cite or reference our supporters, partners or suppliers. Do not disclose or use any confidential or business information about Shelter Pet Safety Net, such as member or donor information. Do not disclose personal information about co-workers, volunteers or former employees.

### *Other Media Contact*

Due to the complexity of media relations, we ask that, as a Shelter Pet Safety Net volunteer, you don't speak for Shelter Pet Safety Net with the media unless authorized to do so. Please send all media inquiries directly to [bcashelpers@gmail.com](mailto:bcashelpers@gmail.com) or a Board member. Please note that media inquiries are extremely time-sensitive and should be forwarded as soon as they are received.

### **Volunteer Assignments**

- Please feel free to be proactive in requesting volunteer assignments when you have time.
- If you aren't sure you have enough time for a specific assignment or role, please ask us. We don't want to overburden you, and we may be able to modify an assignment to fit your schedule.
- Volunteers are expected to complete any assignments for which they volunteer. If you cannot complete the assignment, please notify Shelter Pet Safety Net leadership immediately.

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

## SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

- Event coordinators are expected to commit to the entire event cycle (planning, execution, and follow-up) and manage the assigned volunteers for that event.
- Unless otherwise agreed with Shelter Pet Safety Net, please stay within the parameters of your volunteer position(s) and assignment(s). If you want to do more, just let us know first. We are trying to limit potential conflicts and confusion.
- If a volunteer assignment involves animals – protection and care of those animals is of utmost importance. Any volunteer who mistreats, neglects or abandons an animal at an event will no longer be allowed to volunteer.

### **Electronic Access and Communications**

- Volunteers need regular access to the Internet and a private email address. Your computer should be protected with current firewall and antivirus software.
- Email is our main form of communication to share information, such as volunteer instructions, opportunities and confirmations. We may also communicate by text from time to time, and depending on your phone plan that could involve expense for you. Please let us know if texting is not acceptable.
- Respond to emails from Shelter Pet Safety Net leaders in a timely manner. Leaders are committed to answering emails within 48 hours.
- If you are granted access to any Shelter Pet Safety Net accounts (such as the donor database, PayPal, eBay, SYNC files, among others) you will keep the login information confidential, and you will not share any data from those accounts., even with your own family or other Shelter Pet Safety Net volunteers.

### **Data and Property Ownership**

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

- Understand that all content developed by any volunteer for Shelter Pet Safety Net becomes the property of Shelter Pet Safety Net. This includes, but is not limited to, all graphics, web pages, narratives, research, compilations, instructional texts, text, photos, videos, writings, computer programs, spreadsheets, summaries and recordings. It also includes any royalties, proceeds or other benefits derived from these materials. Of course, volunteers will receive appropriate credit for their submissions.
- Grant Shelter Pet Safety Net rights in all photographic images, video and audio recordings of you made during the course of your assignment.
- Return all Shelter Pet Safety Net property when requested or when your volunteer service ends.

## Volunteer Insurance

Volunteers need to carry their own health, auto, residence, and (if desired) umbrella insurance policies.

Shelter Pet Safety Net maintains insurance that benefits volunteers, though it is intended to be supplemental to the volunteer's insurance when the volunteer's own coverage is insufficient in cases of calamity. Shelter Pet Safety Net insurance coverage would be in effect only when the volunteer is actively engaged in assigned work specifically and exclusively for Shelter Pet Safety Net.

## Confidentiality and Nondisclosure policy

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information of Shelter Pet Safety Net to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of your relationship with Shelter Pet Safety Net.

When you become a volunteer, you agree and understand that any breach of this confidentiality clause will cause Shelter Pet Safety Net immediate and irreparable harm.

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

# SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment policy

Shelter Pet Safety Net is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. In accordance with all federal, state and local laws, Shelter Pet Safety Net expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

Shelter Pet Safety Net expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of volunteering, either explicitly or implicitly
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, hostile or intimidating work environment

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from volunteer service. If you believe you are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the volunteer department.

Shelter Pet Safety Net will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment or intimidation of any volunteer who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment or intimidation may result in release from volunteer service.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*

## SHELTER PET SAFETY NET VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

investigation, the volunteer who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, as a result of the investigation, Shelter Pet Safety Net determines that an employee or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, Shelter Pet Safety Net will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination of employment, release from volunteer service or possible legal action.

### Potential Causes for Termination from Volunteer Service

- Breach of confidentiality
- Neglect, abandonment, or mistreatment of animals
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Inactivity
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- Excessive “no-show” for volunteer assignments
- Not fulfilling the duties of the volunteer position
- Misrepresentation of Shelter Pet Safety Net
- Theft
- Violence or implication of violence
- Excessive insurance claims

### Thank You!

We know this handbook is a lot to digest. If you have any suggestions for improving it, let us know. Best of luck in your volunteer endeavors!

*SPSN may modify this handbook from time to time. Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual or employee relationship with SPSN.*