



# Volunteer Handbook



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# Welcome!

## About ACCT Philly

ACCT Philly is the region's largest animal care and control service provider. Organized in November 2011 and assuming control of animal control operations in April 2012, ACCT Philly is a city-related, 501c3 nonprofit organization, contracted by the City of Philadelphia to provide animal care and control services. ACCT Philly was formed by the City, to serve the City and is overseen by the City of Philadelphia's Managing Director's Office.

Our animal control officers provide service to the city's more than 1.5 million residents, over 142.6 square miles, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. ACCT Philly's facility in North Philadelphia handles more than 20,000 of the city's animals annually, from dogs and cats, to small animals, reptiles, birds and injured wildlife.

In addition to animal control and sheltering, ACCT Philly also supports a foster care program where community members provide temporary homes for sheltered animals and an extensive rescue partnership program where approved rescue partners accept ACCT Philly animals into their adoption programs. Other exciting ACCT Philly programs include a food pantry for low-income pet owners, trap-neuter-return for community cats, a unique Pen Pal and Kneady Cat program to assist dogs and cats at risk... and so much more!

Animal Care & Control Team of Philadelphia  
111 W Hunting Park Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19140  
(267) 385-3800

## Mission Statement

ACCT Philly's mission is to provide shelter, care and life saving efforts for homeless, abandoned, and abused animals and protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Philadelphia, providing a benefit to all of the citizens of the City regardless of race or economic status.

## Core Values- T.R.I.C.E.P.

ACCT Philly is guided by the following core values:

- Transparency- We strive to be open and transparent in everything we do to build trust and mutual understanding.
- Respect- Our goal is to treat every animal and human with the respect they innately deserve.
- Innovation- The backbone of growth is innovation. To better serve the public, we embrace creative, innovation solutions and ideas.
- Commitment- We are fully invested in our promise to provide high quality services to the citizens and animals of Philadelphia.
- Empathy- Understanding feelings, needs, and struggles beyond our own critical to providing compassionate care.

- Professionalism- We pledge to fulfill our mission with superior efficiency, accountability and competency.

Everyone representing ACCT Philly is expected to follow these core values.

### Supporting ACCT Philly

ACCT Philly’s lifesaving work with animals is supported through the generosity of thousands of donors each year. There are many ways you can support ACCT Philly beyond your volunteer service including:

- Make a donation [here](#)
- Become a Monthly Sustainer with automatic, monthly donations [here](#)
- Honor a friend or a loved one with a gift in their name [here](#)
- Donate every time you shop online by clicking [here](#)
- Donate a Kuranda Brand dog or cat bed [here](#)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), “like” and share our stories with your friends
- Follow us on [Twitter](#)
- Purchase one of the many items on our Amazon wish list [here](#)

### Purpose of Volunteer Policies

Animal Care & Control Team (ACCT Philly) volunteer policies are provided to offer guidance and direction to volunteers and staff engaged in ACCT Philly’s Volunteer Program. These policies are intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Volunteers are not employees of ACCT Philly. ACCT Philly reserves the right to modify any volunteer programs or policies at any time.

### Scope of Policies and Procedures

Unless specifically stated, the volunteer program policies and procedures apply to all ACCT Philly volunteers, at all sites of operation.

### Our Commitment to You

The staff members with ACCT Philly are all truly grateful for your dedication to our animals and our mission, and we want to ensure that you have a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. We will strive to:

- Provide you with adequate training and assistance so that you can be successful in your volunteer role within the organization.
- Communicate all expectations, policies, and procedures regarding the volunteer program.
- Respect your skills, knowledge, and individual needs.
- Be professional when you present concerns or suggestions.
- Treat you as a valued team member within ACCT Philly.

The ACCT Philly volunteer program is led by a volunteer coordinator and a team of individual program coordinators and managers. These staff members are responsible for the maintenance of all volunteer programs within their purview.

Depending on the program/department, staff responsibilities may include but are not limited to:

- Recruit volunteers for specific organization needs and skill sets
- Provide all new volunteers with orientation and training

- Assist with scheduling of volunteers for specific events or programs
- Maintain the safety and confidentiality of volunteers' records and personal information
- Provide appropriate and regular recognition for active volunteers
- Provide updated information about ACCT Philly activities and opportunities
- Process requests from ACCT Philly staff for volunteer assistance, including volunteers for events, initiatives, or special projects
- Provide written documentation of volunteer time or activities when requested

### **Your Volunteer Commitment**

When you serve as an ACCT Philly volunteer, we ask the following of you:

- Have regular access to the internet and a private email address.
- Respond to direct emails from volunteer staff in a timely manner.
- Use the ACCT Philly Volunteer Center (known as Volgistics) to schedule volunteer shifts and log volunteer hours.
- Complete all required paperwork for general and individual volunteer programs.
- Keep your volunteer record updated with your current email address, phone number, and emergency contact.
- Complete any assignments for which you volunteer. If you cannot complete the assignment, please notify your staff supervisor or the volunteer manager.
- Stay within the parameters of your volunteer position(s) and assignment(s)
- Grant ACCT Philly rights to all photographic images, video, and audio recordings made for ACCT Philly or on our property.
- Follow the dress code outlined in this handbook when representing ACCT Philly at functions and events.

# ACCT Philly's Community Responsibilities

## Canine Policies

ACCT Philly is contracted by the City of Philadelphia to hold unwanted and stray dogs that come from within the city limits. Dogs owned or found outside of the city are the responsibility of other neighboring animal control providers. Philadelphia law prohibits dogs from roaming off-leash. A dog running loose is considered "at large" and "stray" if an owner can't immediately be identified.

ACCT Philly also holds dogs for other reasons under the instruction of different City departments such as under quarantine for the Health Department or for the Police Department for police activities. All dogs not being detained for a required "hold" purpose are available for qualified rescue partners to transfer into their own adoption programs.

Dogs are made available for adoption to the public. Unlike intakes, there are no residency restrictions for adopters or rescue partner agencies.

## Feline Policies

ACCT Philly is contracted to house unwanted cats that come from within the city limits. Just as with dogs, cats owned or found outside of the city are the responsibility of other neighboring animal control providers. Philadelphia law allows for owners to keep cats outdoors or as indoor/outdoor pets. ACCT Philly will accept sick, injured, or unaltered cats but healthy ear-tipped cats should be left in their home neighborhood to return home on their own.

ACCT Philly also holds cats for other reasons such as under quarantine for the Health Department. All cats not being detained for a required "hold" purpose or scheduled to be released are available for qualified rescue partners to transfer into their own adoption programs. Cats are also made available for adoption to the public with no residency restrictions.

Stray cats entering ACCT Philly who are determined to be outdoor or community cats and are medically evaluated as qualified for release, will be sterilized (spayed or neutered), ear-tipped, vaccinated and returned to their home neighborhood.

## Other Animals

ACCT Philly responds to requests for service regarding injured and immobile wildlife, reports of illegal animals being kept as pets or offered for sale, and wildlife presenting in immediate danger to health or safety such as wild animals inside the living space of a home. ACCT Philly will not pick up wild animals that are not confined to a humane trap or a room, they will not pick up animals that are inside of a residence's walls, ceiling, crawl spaces, etc.

"Other" animals are available to qualified transfer partners.

### **Dog & Horse Licensing**

ACCT Philly manages the dog and horse licensing programs for the City of Philadelphia and instructs all city residents to obey the law and visit [www.phillydoglicense.com](http://www.phillydoglicense.com) to license their dogs.

### **Code Enforcement**

ACCT Philly Animal Control Officers enforce City of Philadelphia animal ordinances or “codes”. The penalties for violating Philadelphia’s City Codes include tickets and fines payable to the City of Philadelphia.

### **Carriage Trade**

ACCT Philly is involved, along with multiple other City departments, in the monitoring and licensing of the carriage horse operations and stables.

### **Lost & Found Reports**

ACCT Philly maintains a lost and found database for pets as well as a volunteer run [Lost and Found Facebook](#) page for Philadelphia and the immediate surrounding region.

### **What ACCT Philly Doesn’t Do**

ACCT Philly is not a wildlife rehabilitation facility. We can refer you to [The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education](#) with questions or information or the [Pennsylvania Game Commission](#) for more information.

ACCT Philly is not authorized by law to investigate or prosecute animal cruelty complaints. In Philadelphia the [Pennsylvania SPCA](#) conducts humane law enforcement investigations and accepts reports of abuse or neglect.

ACCT Philly does not have the legal authority to enter private property without permission or authorization, seize privately owned animals, obtain warrants, or make arrests.

ACCT Philly is not affiliated with The Schuylkill Center or the Pennsylvania SPCA.



# Program Information

## Orientation and Training

Individuals interested in volunteering will first [sign up](#) to attend a general volunteer orientation where they will learn about the shelter and ACCT Philly as an organization.

After orientation, anyone who has decided to proceed with volunteering with ACCT Philly will complete our volunteer application and wait for their application to be processed and approved.

Once your volunteer application has been approved, you will be contacted by a member of the volunteer management team, as well as specific program mentors or leaders who will give you your next steps for training.

Once you have been fully trained and given a name badge with clearance indicators you are free to schedule yourself for volunteer assignments or events through our online portal, [VicNet](#).

## Manuals & Volunteer Materials

All volunteers will have access to the digital copy of the manual for their volunteer location as well as any appropriate job descriptions and training materials for their program. Print copies can be provided upon request.

Volunteers can access all available job descriptions for open roles [here](#).

## General Information

- Familiarize yourself with, and abide by, all ACCT Philly policies and procedures as presented during orientation, during other trainings, and in written materials provided by ACCT Philly.
- Carry out instructions by staff members as requested.
- Be mindful of staff time and responsibilities, and do not disrupt staff work.
- Keep your contact information, including your emergency contact information, up-to-date at all times for your safety and review your information at least annually for accuracy.
- Complete all forms, waivers, and the code of conduct as required by your volunteer assignments before performing any volunteer work.

## Dress Code

All ACCT Philly volunteers are expected to adhere to the dress code outlined below regardless of volunteer location.

- Volunteers must be easily identifiable to others. Therefore, volunteers must wear their lanyard and name badge at all times.
- Long pants must be worn at all times while volunteering, with the exception of the running team volunteers who have been trained. Skirt, shorts, or the like are not allowed while volunteering.
- Volunteers must wear closed toe shoes: sandals, flip flops and other open shoes are prohibited.
- Unprofessional clothing such as excessively short, tight or revealing items, midriff tops and clothing that includes offensive language, alcohol or tobacco logos are prohibited.
- For your safety, excessively loose-fitting clothing and hoop or dangling jewelry is prohibited while working with animals.

## Recording Hours

All volunteers must sign in and out when entering and leaving the building.

Hours can be logged at home via the [volunteer portal](#).

[Video demo](#) for logging hours.

## Ensuring your Safety

### Accident Reporting

All injuries and accidents must be reported immediately to a supervisor or manager so that the appropriate accident forms may be completed, including a bite report, as required to be filed with the Health Department, when an animal bite occurs. Failure to report an injury or accident will result in termination.

If you are bitten or scratched, wash the injured area with soap and water immediately and contact a supervisor. If the skin is broken or you have concerns, see your physician immediately.

### Zoonotic Disease

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be transmitted from animals to humans and may be introduced or present in the shelter at any time. Potential agents of zoonotic disease transmission include fungi, bacteria, viruses, parasites and arthropods. The most important means to preventing disease transmission include: washing hands frequently (especially before eating or smoking) wearing long-pants and closed-toed shoes, wearing gloves when handling litter pans, food or water dishes or when cleaning up feces, urine or vomit and staying up-to-date with tetanus vaccinations. Persons with suppressed immune systems or other medical conditions may be more susceptible to zoonotic disease. If you have questions or concerns, we urge you to speak with your physician about your risks.

### Euthanasia

Euthanasia occurs at ACCT Philly and volunteers should be prepared to work in an environment where they will encounter animals facing euthanasia (death). It is ACCT Philly's goal to find a live release option for all animals entering the shelter and euthanasia is a decision that is not taken lightly. Animals are selected for euthanasia who have a medical or behavioral issue that may cause them to be less likely to be adopted, in conjunction with the need for housing space for incoming animals. This means that animals considered savable, having treatable or manageable conditions, may be euthanized (killed).

Animals may also be selected when:

- They present an imminent safety risk to staff, volunteers or visitors;
- Have a medical condition that ACCT Philly does not have the ability to treat or manage;
- Have a condition that is highly contagious and a risk to other animals in the shelter;
- Are at the end of their life or have an irremediable medical condition or injury as determined by veterinary staff.

Please show consideration to the shelter staff who are directly involved with making these difficult decisions. If you have a question about euthanasia or the selection process, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator.

If you are not comfortable in this atmosphere, supporting ACCT Philly as it works towards a day when the needless killing of savable animals is ended, this may not be a positive volunteer experience for you. We encourage you to explore the volunteering options at one of the many other deserving animal shelters or rescue organizations in our region.

## General Conduct

### Respectful Behavior

As a member of the ACCT Philly Team, you are a representative of the ACCT Philly brand and image and are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. You must be respectful and courteous in your interactions with the public and staff. Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior, harassment (sexual or otherwise), threats, disparaging remarks, discrimination or vulgar language will not be tolerated and you may be asked to cease your volunteer work as a result of such conduct. The code of conduct applies to online and/or written material as well as personal interactions with staff, other volunteers and members of the public.

### Non-Judgmental Policy

ACCT Philly's clientele is widely diverse in race, native language, socioeconomic status, education, background and other factors. ACCT Philly maintains a policy of treating all clients with respect and accepts that most people love their pets, even if they do not have the same resources to care for them as other residents of our city. As an ACCT Philly volunteer you will be asked to set aside all negative assumptions you may have about owners of unaltered pets or whose pets are not living in conditions, or are being cared for in ways, that you are accustomed to keeping pets. The assumption that owners of unaltered pets or those whose pets are living in what you feel are less than ideal conditions, are irresponsible or uncaring is generally inaccurate.

### Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

ACCT Philly volunteers may have access to confidential information (e.g. name, address, financial information) about the organization's clients, donors, fellow volunteers, adoptive families, and rescue partners. It is of the utmost importance to ACCT Philly that this information is maintained at the highest degree of confidence, and that it is accessed only on a need-to-know basis. Any personal information regarding the former owner, adopter, or rescue partner for an animal can only be released by a manager. No physical documents can be turned over without a subpoena, which is handled by the Director of Field Operations. For that reason, a volunteer's unauthorized use of confidential information may be cause for termination.

Volunteers who have specialized access to private information will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

### Attendance Policy

When you commit to a volunteer task or program you become a valuable member of the team and are vital to the success of that program or event. For that reason we ask that you only commit to events or programs that you will be able to fulfill and feel qualified for. We understand that life happens and you may be unable to fulfill a task that you previously committed to. Please notify your program

manager/coordinator as soon as you are able. Failure to notify the volunteer team may adversely affect your future participation in the volunteer program.

### **Parking**

The front parking lot is for the use of our public guests. Volunteers may park in the back employee lot or utilize on-street parking on Hunting Park Avenue.

### **Personal Phone Calls**

Personal phone calls using ACCT Philly's phone system are discouraged except in emergency situations. These calls, when necessary, should be brief and not tie up our phone system.

### **Tobacco Free Workplace**

ACCT Philly is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable and productive work environment for our employees, volunteers and visitors. As such, smoking is not permitted in any enclosed company facility or vehicle. Smoking is prohibited while handling animals.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, clients, contractors and visitors. Smoking shall be permitted in designated smoking areas, at a reasonable distance (e.g. 25 feet or more) outside any enclosed area where smoking is prohibited so as to insure that secondhand smoke does not enter the area through entrances, windows, ventilation systems, or any other means.

### **Causes for release from service**

The following conduct is prohibited and will result in release from volunteer service:

- Causing injury, distress, death or the inappropriate handling of an animal;
- Horseplay or behavior that endangers other persons or property;
- Deliberate or careless damage of property of ACCT Philly or other persons;
- Disregarding safety or security policies; unsatisfactory performance, "cutting corners" or otherwise not following procedures;
- Theft, attempted theft, removal, or unauthorized use or possession, of property of ACCT Philly (including sheltered animals) or other persons including items found on the premises;
- Giving ACCT Philly merchandise or services at a discount or free of charge without authorization;
- Solicitation or accepting compensation from other volunteers, clients or others, (i.e. monetary "tips", "gifts", "gratuities", products or services);
- Bringing or using alcoholic beverages on ACCT Philly property, or using alcoholic beverages while engaged in ACCT Philly business on ACCT Philly's premises except where authorized;
- Possession or use of illegal drugs;
- Fighting or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures;
- Unauthorized possession of weapons on ACCT Philly premises (or while conducting ACCT Philly business offsite) while volunteering;
- The commission of a crime or engaging in criminal conduct while on ACCT Philly property, or while conducting ACCT Philly business offsite;
- Engaging in any behavior that recklessly or willfully violates the rights of others while on ACCT Philly property or while conducting ACCT Philly business offsite;
- Making or implying threats of violence against ACCT Philly staff, volunteers, clients, or the organization as a whole.

### **Company and Personal Property**

Equipment provided to you by ACCT Philly should not be used for personal use, nor removed from the physical confines of ACCT Philly – unless it is approved for use in off-site volunteer activities. Be sure to safeguard any personal belongings brought to ACCT Philly or off-site locations. ACCT Philly cannot reimburse you for lost or stolen property.

### **Harassment Policy**

ACCT Philly strictly adheres to a policy to have a workplace that is free of harassment, sexual or otherwise, and ACCT Philly will not tolerate any such conduct or behavior. ACCT Philly intends to provide an environment for staff, volunteers and visitors that is pleasant, professional and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses which might interfere with the performance of ACCT Philly's day-to-day activities. Unlawful harassment of any sort – verbal, physical, visual – will not be tolerated.

Any volunteer who becomes aware of an incident of harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to a supervisor. When management becomes aware of the existence of harassment, it is obligated to take prompt and appropriate action.

## **Working with ACCT Philly**

### **News Media Requests**

ACCT Philly is in the news regularly, and sometimes representatives from the media will ask volunteers for interviews or information while they are on duty. Volunteers should inform the media representative that they are a volunteer and cannot speak on behalf of the agency then direct the media request to the manager or supervisor on duty. Volunteers should take care not to present themselves as representatives of ACCT Philly. The term "media" includes all TV, radio, film, video, Internet, or other outlets, as well as reporters, producers, photojournalists, filmmakers, and anyone else associated with these media.

### **Brand Use & Social Media**

ACCT Philly understands that many of its volunteers have personal blogs, Facebook accounts and other social media profiles or accounts. To ensure that information is not misinterpreted as official ACCT Philly communications, ACCT Philly's logo may not be used by volunteers or others, as a part of an identity photo for any social media account, website, blog or other communications. Likewise, ACCT Philly's name may not be used in or as a part of personal email addresses created at Gmail, Hotmail or other free email services because it may be misinterpreted as an official ACCT Philly email communication by the receiver. The ACCT Philly name and logo may only accompany official ACCT Philly communications.

### **Representation of ACCT Philly**

Volunteers should take care not to present themselves as representatives of ACCT Philly and may not:

- Enter or make any contractual or financial agreements or obligations on behalf of ACCT Philly
- Use ACCT Philly's logo or name on printed or electronic materials without permission
- Fundraise using ACCT Philly's name, logo or public materials such as photographs or videos
- Make any public statements, written or verbal, appearing to represent ACCT Philly

- Lobby individuals, groups, organizations, government bodies or elected officials on behalf of ACCT Philly

### **Photographs & Video**

Periodically, volunteers are asked by ACCT Philly staff or representatives to be included in photographs and/or video for marketing purposes; agreement for the use of your image is implied as part of your volunteer agreement. In addition, volunteers may be asked to take photographs or video for marketing purposes. Volunteer photographers and videographers waive all right to compensation for work produced for ACCT Philly or on ACCT Philly property.

### **Resignation and Termination**

We hope that you find your volunteer experience engaging and enjoyable and that you will remain with us for many years. If you do find it necessary to resign your volunteer assignment, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the direct program manager to notify them of your plans. We understand that the ability and desire to volunteer changes throughout a person's lifetime and we promise to support your decision.

On occasion we find it necessary to ask volunteers to leave our service. We reserve the right to terminate a volunteer's service for any reason including, but not limited to, violation of policy as outlined in this manual, volunteer trainings or subsequent communications.

Service of volunteers is at the sole discretion of ACCT Philly. Volunteers who fail to meet the standards of the organization or of their individual program may be coached, counseled and/or released from service. ACCT Philly may, at any time and for whatever reason, decide to release a volunteer or terminate a volunteer program.

*When our system shows three months or more of inactivity you may be removed from the system. If you plan on taking a leave of absence please inform the Volunteer Coordinator.*

### **Addressing Questions or Concerns**

All general ideas, questions, or concerns can be communicated through the form in our volunteer portal, VicNet. Any emergent issues should be addressed in person with staff.