

Veterinary and veterinary technician student volunteer position description

The following explains what we typically expect from volunteers in this role, but expectations of the role may change at any time.

Department	Rural Area Veterinary Services
Work location	Field clinics; variable locations
Background check	Background check includes criminal background check, sex offender search and social security number trace.
Purpose of the position	The Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) program has opportunities for veterinary student and veterinary technician student volunteers to support field teaching clinics in underserved rural communities. Student volunteers gain hands-on experience in all clinic areas including patient evaluation, anesthesia, surgery, and client communication under supervision by experienced veterinarians and veterinary technicians and adherence to RAVS standards and protocols.
Volunteer responsibilities	Based on interests, experience and operational needs, responsibilities may include any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform physical examinations and provide medical care of animals according to RAVS standards and protocols. ▪ Act as patient advocate and monitor anesthesia for surgery patients from premedication evaluation through recovery. ▪ Work with Recovery Lead to provide care and monitoring of patients until fully recovered and discharged. ▪ Perform aspects of surgery under supervision based on practical skills assessment and according to RAVS surgical protocols (veterinary students). ▪ Communicate with clients and community members regarding pet care needs and treatments. ▪ Assist with clinic setup, inventory, breakdown and cleaning. ▪ Maintain thorough and complete medical records for all patients treated.
Level of difficulty 1=easy/5=demanding (physical, mental, emotional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical difficulty is rated level 5; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clinic setup and breakdown can require heavy lifting. ○ Clinic days can be long (12-14 hours) and require extended periods of standing, walking, bending or kneeling. ○ Environmental conditions are variable and may involve work indoors and outside in extreme temperatures, sun, wind, etc. ○ Sleeping areas are often indoor camping-style which may impact sleep quality and comfort. ▪ Mental difficulty is rated level 4; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clinics are fast-paced; the role requires flexibility, problem-solving, multitasking and the ability to pay close attention to detail. ○ Effective client and team communication is essential throughout the clinic.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emotional difficulty is rated level 5; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many of the communities RAVS serves has been deeply impacted by concentrated poverty resulting from systemic inequity and historical oppression. Conditions for animals and human clients can be difficult and animal patients may be experiencing a range of health or welfare concerns. Case management and communication must be approached with cultural humility and information shared in a supportive, creative and judgement-free manner. ○ Euthanasia may be performed for individual animals when quality of life is compromised.
Expected environmental conditions	Clinic buildings vary in space and amenities. Indoor settings may be loud with dogs barking and other clinic noise. Volunteers may work indoors and outside in extreme temperatures and variable weather conditions.
How often volunteers work on-site	Volunteers work entirely onsite during assigned field clinic.
Orientation/training	Volunteers are expected to complete online training prior to the start of the clinic and attend daily onsite orientations to include general clinic flow, protocols and intake/receiving.
Learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased awareness and exposure to animal welfare and access to care challenges in underserved communities. ▪ Experience in small animal medicine, surgery and anesthesia in a high-quality field setting. ▪ Interaction with professional volunteers and students from a variety of clinical backgrounds provide opportunities to learn and share information, protocols and approaches. ▪ Opportunity to learn about the organization's mission and take action to support our work.
Position start date	Variable based on clinic schedule and assignments.
Initial minimum commitment	Volunteers commit to a minimum of one field clinic. Most are one week in length, but this can vary depending on the type and location of clinic. A week-long clinic typically requires a commitment of 1-2 travel days to reach the clinic location, 5 days of clinics, followed by 1 return travel day.
Scheduling guidelines	Clinic workdays are typically 12-14 hours (e.g. 6 AM – 8 PM) Sunday through Friday. Hours and schedule may vary.
Qualifications/requirements for volunteer applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Able to meet the requirements specified in the <i>Essential capabilities</i> document with or without reasonable accommodations. ▪ Able to communicate with a variety of people effectively and without judgment. ▪ Able to adapt to changing priorities. ▪ Able to understand the HSUS's policies and positions and the RAVS approach, and able and willing to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing the HSUS or RAVS.

Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must be at least 18 years old. ▪ Rabies vaccination and acceptable titer check within the last two years is recommended. Volunteers unprotected against rabies will be able to handle animals at clinics only after signing a liability waiver. ▪ Appropriate attire, including long pants and closed toe shoes required while volunteering. ▪ Must be able to learn and follow guidelines and policies of the Humane Society of the United States and RAVS program and follow directions given by staff. ▪ Must submit required paperwork and clear background check before being assigned. ▪ Must complete all required pre-clinic training/orientations.
Tools/equipment provided (including personal protective equipment)	Aside from a personal stethoscope, all equipment and supplies needed for clinic work are provided by RAVS or partner community. Appropriate PPE (e.g., masks, gloves) will be provided as needed.
Optional tools/equipment	n/a
Supervisor(s)	Anne Marie McPartlin, Senior Program Coordinator, RAVS: 315-771-7611; amcpartlin@humanesociety.org
Number of concurrent volunteer openings	Variable, 10-20 student volunteers per standard teaching clinic
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volunteers must follow current team health/safety practices, including wearing a mask, if necessary, as communicated by RAVS staff. ▪ Volunteers must bring personal stethoscope, personal comfort and sleep gear, and any supplies necessary to meet personal medical or special dietary needs. ▪ Individuals with a range of experience and interests are welcome to apply. Clinic assignments are made to provide a balance of skills and experience on each team. ▪ Volunteers are responsible for transportation to and from the designated meeting site, and all transportation during the trip. Basic lodging (often indoor camping) and food will be provided by the host community on clinic days.
Updated	8/5/24



Essential Capabilities of Volunteers

Rural Area Veterinary Services

Revised 08/06/2024

To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer with Rural Area Veterinary Services, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities. Your acceptance of a volunteer position with RAVS indicates you believe you possess these basic capabilities. Some accommodations can be made and will be taken into consideration relative to role placement. Please contact the RAVS volunteer manager (ravsvolunteer@humanesociety.org) prior to confirming your clinic assignment regarding any reasonable accommodation(s) you may need in order to meet the essential capabilities of your volunteer position.

Essential Physical Capabilities

- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to bend, squat or kneel in order to leash/harness and pick up an animal.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely in a variety of environments, to be able to observe animal body language, and to be able to read paperwork and instructions.
- Ability to handle and restrain animals of small to large size with extreme caution and care. This requires average vision, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, physical strength, and mental alertness.
- Must not have strong allergies to animals and chemicals used in cleaning that can't be managed by medication.
- Ability to cope with a loud environment due to animal noises.
- No known concerns tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm, mange and other parasites.
- Ability to work in outdoor environments and indoor facilities without consistent climate control, including potential extreme heat or cold, high humidity and inclement weather, including sun, wind, rain or snow.

Essential Mental Capabilities

- Fluency in the English language including high level reading, writing, spelling and communication skills.
- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- Ability to learn and implement information and protocols in a fast-paced environment with frequently changing operational needs and priorities.
- Ability to be aware of potential risks when working with the animals; ability to remain calm with animals or people who are stressed, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to work independently for periods of time, as well as work within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff, proactively seeking help when needed.

Essential Emotional Capabilities

- Ability to manage unexpected animal behavior.
- Ability to communicate with a variety of people effectively with compassion and without judgment
- Ability to work in an emotionally charged environments, interacting with people and animals living in extreme poverty and who do not have access to consistent animal care resources, witnessing difficult conditions and recognizing that some people may not choose or be able to follow our recommendations.
- Ability to understand the Humane Society of the United States' policies and positions and the RAVS approach, and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing the Humane Society of the United States or RAVS.
- Must be flexible and willing/able to change plans and directions in the moment.