Formerly called the Humane Society of the
United States and Humane Society International

# Volunteer Position Description

## Veterinarian volunteer

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

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| **Department** | Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) |
| **Work location** | Field clinics; variable locations |
| **Position start date** | Variable based on clinic schedule and assignments |
| **Background check** | Background check includes professional license verification, criminal background, sex offender search and social security number trace |

**Purpose of the position** The Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) program supports the wellbeing of animals, families and communities impacted by systemic poverty and geographic isolation. RAVS veterinary professional volunteers support field teaching clinics in underserved rural communities. Volunteer veterinarians provide direct patient care as well as clinical training and mentorship for veterinary and veterinary technician students in all clinic areas, including performing surgery, evaluating patients, identifying health concerns and recommending treatment according to RAVS standards and protocols.

**Volunteer responsibilities** Based on interests, experience and operational needs, responsibilities may include any or all of the following:

- Provide medical care and supervise and assist veterinary and veterinary technician student teams with physical examination, diagnosis and treatment of animals according to RAVS standards and protocols
- Perform surgery and supervise and train veterinary students in surgery according to RAVS surgical protocols
- 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 difficulty is rated level 5.
    - 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 5.
    - The role requires professional level experience and credential.
    - 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.
- Emotional difficulty is rated level 5.
    - Many of the communities RAVS serves have 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 and protocols, intake/receiving, anesthesia/recovery and surgery.

**Learning opportunities**

- 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
- Opportunities to provide student mentorship and learn and practice clinical teaching skills
- Interaction with professional colleagues 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 on a variety of issues to support our work

**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 the 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 one return travel day.

**Scheduling guidelines** Clinic workdays are typically 12-14 hours (e.g., 6 a.m.-8 p.m.). Hours and schedule may vary.

## Qualifications/requirements for volunteer applicants

- Current professional license to practice veterinary medicine in at least one state or province in the US or Canada required
- Able to meet the requirements specified in the *Essential capabilities* document with or without reasonable accommodations
- Able to communicate with a variety of people effectively and without judgment
- Willing and able to adapt to changing priorities
- Able to understand Humane World or Animals' 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 Humane World or Animals

## Restrictions

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Rabies vaccination 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 Humane World for Animals and the RAVS program and follow directions given by staff
- Must submit the required paperwork and pass a background check before volunteering
- 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** Not applicable

**Supervisor(s)** Senior Program Manager, RAVS

**Number of concurrent volunteers** Variable; 4-6 volunteer veterinarians per standard teaching clinic

## Additional information

- Volunteers are required to 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 on clinic days.