



BENTON ANIMAL SERVICES

Volunteer Agreement, Code of Conduct, and Waiver

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Benton Animal Services ("BAS"). Volunteers are valued members of our animal services program and play an important role in supporting animal care, enrichment, adoption, community engagement, and other departmental activities.

The purpose of this agreement is to establish clear expectations for volunteers and to promote a safe, respectful, professional, and productive environment for animals, employees, volunteers, and members of the public.

By participating in the Benton Animal Services Volunteer Program, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

1. Volunteer Relationship

I understand that my service with Benton Animal Services is voluntary and that I am not an employee of Benton Animal Services or the City of Benton.

I understand that I will not receive wages, benefits, workers' compensation benefits, or other employee compensation as a result of my volunteer service except as otherwise required by law.

Expenses incurred while volunteering will not be reimbursed unless specifically authorized in advance by BAS management.

My participation in the volunteer program is by mutual consent. I may discontinue volunteering at any time, and BAS may suspend, restrict, reassign, or end my volunteer service in accordance with program needs, safety considerations, applicable policies, or this agreement.

2. Orientation, Training, and Assigned Duties

I agree to complete all orientation and training required for the volunteer activities I perform.

I understand that certain volunteer activities may require additional training, demonstrated competency, experience, authorization, or supervision.

I will:

- Perform only activities for which I have been trained and authorized;
- Follow established BAS policies, procedures, safety requirements, and staff instructions;
- Ask an employee or designated volunteer supervisor when I am uncertain how to perform an activity safely or appropriately;
- Use BAS equipment, supplies, facilities, and resources only as authorized; and
- Immediately report unsafe conditions, injuries, animal bites or scratches, animal escapes, suspected animal mistreatment, or other significant incidents to BAS personnel.

BAS may determine which volunteer assignments I am qualified to perform and may modify assignments based on operational needs.

3. Professional Conduct

While performing volunteer duties or otherwise acting or reasonably appearing to act as a representative of Benton Animal Services, I agree to conduct myself professionally, respectfully, and in a manner consistent with BAS's mission and responsibilities.

I agree to:

- Treat employees, volunteers, visitors, adopters, rescue partners, vendors, public officials, and members of the public with courtesy and respect;
- Treat animals humanely and follow BAS animal-handling requirements;
- Follow lawful instructions provided by BAS employees;
- Avoid disruptive, threatening, abusive, intimidating, discriminatory, or harassing behavior;
- Refrain from knowingly providing false or misleading information while representing BAS;
- Direct questions to BAS personnel when I do not know the correct answer rather than speculate or provide information I cannot verify;
- Refrain from interfering with employees performing their assigned duties; and
- Conduct myself in a manner that supports a safe and productive environment.

Violence, threats of violence, animal abuse or neglect, theft, intentional property damage, harassment, discrimination, or other serious misconduct will not be tolerated.

4. Representing Benton Animal Services

I understand that while performing volunteer duties, I may be perceived by members of the public as representing Benton Animal Services.

When acting in my volunteer capacity, I will accurately represent BAS programs, policies, and services and will follow established BAS procedures.

I will not represent myself as an official spokesperson for Benton Animal Services or the City of Benton unless specifically authorized to do so.

Media inquiries concerning BAS operations, policies, investigations, animals, employees, or official City business will be referred to the appropriate BAS or City representative.

When I am uncertain about an official BAS position or policy, I will refer the question to BAS personnel.

5. Personal Opinions and Social Media

BAS recognizes that volunteers are private citizens and may have personal opinions concerning animal welfare, government operations, shelter practices, or other matters.

Nothing in this agreement is intended to prohibit lawful speech or activity protected by applicable law.

However, when acting as a BAS volunteer, using BAS resources, participating in BAS-sponsored activities, or otherwise reasonably appearing to represent BAS, I agree that I will not:

- Represent a personal opinion as an official position of Benton Animal Services or the City of Benton;
- Claim or imply authority to speak on behalf of BAS when I have not been authorized to do so;
- Disclose confidential, legally protected, or nonpublic information obtained through my volunteer service;
- Use access provided through my volunteer position to obtain photographs, video, records, information, or other materials for an unauthorized purpose;

- Knowingly publish materially false information represented as information obtained in my official volunteer capacity; or
- Use BAS accounts, equipment, logos, credentials, systems, or other City resources for unauthorized communications.

When identifying myself as a BAS volunteer while discussing BAS matters publicly, I understand that I should make clear that personal opinions are my own and do not represent an official position of Benton Animal Services or the City of Benton.

6. Questions, Concerns, and Problem Resolution

BAS encourages volunteers to raise questions, concerns, suggestions, and animal-welfare issues.

If I encounter a problem while volunteering, I agree to promptly bring operational or safety concerns to the appropriate BAS employee or volunteer supervisor so the issue can be evaluated and addressed.

Concerns involving an employee or volunteer may be reported to BAS management. Concerns involving BAS management may be reported through the appropriate City administrative process.

Nothing in this provision is intended to prevent a volunteer from exercising any right protected by law.

7. Confidentiality

During my volunteer service, I may have access to information that is confidential, legally protected, sensitive, or not intended for public disclosure.

I agree not to improperly access, copy, photograph, record, disclose, distribute, or use confidential or protected information obtained through my volunteer position.

This may include, when applicable:

- Personal identifying or contact information;
- Employee or volunteer information;
- Information relating to active investigations or enforcement matters;
- Veterinary or animal records subject to restrictions on disclosure;
- Security information, passwords, access credentials, or restricted facility information;
- Information concerning members of the public obtained through BAS systems or records; and
- Other information identified by BAS or the City as confidential or protected from disclosure by law.

Questions regarding whether information may be released should be referred to BAS management.

I understand that records belonging to a municipal agency may be subject to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act and that BAS or other authorized City personnel—not individual volunteers—will determine how requests for City records are processed.

My confidentiality obligations continue after my volunteer service ends to the extent permitted or required by law.

8. Animal Handling, Ownership, and Release

I understand that animals in BAS custody or control may only be handled, moved, fostered, transported, reclaimed, adopted, transferred, or otherwise released in accordance with BAS policy and applicable law.

I will not:

- Remove an animal from BAS custody without authorization;
- Give away, sell, transfer, adopt, foster, or otherwise release an animal without authorization;
- Alter an animal's official status or records without authorization;
- Promise an animal to an adopter, rescue organization, foster, or other person unless authorized to do so;
- Introduce animals or conduct animal interactions contrary to BAS procedures; or
- Make independent medical, behavioral, placement, euthanasia, or disposition decisions for BAS animals unless specifically authorized as part of my assigned duties.

I understand that final decisions concerning animals in BAS custody are made by authorized BAS personnel in accordance with applicable law and City policy.

9. Animal Welfare

The humane treatment and safety of animals are fundamental requirements of the BAS Volunteer Program.

I will immediately report suspected abuse, neglect, inappropriate handling, unsafe housing, significant medical concerns, or other animal-welfare concerns to appropriate BAS personnel.

I will not strike, intentionally injure, abuse, torment, improperly punish, or deliberately place an animal at unnecessary risk.

Animal abuse or intentional neglect may result in immediate removal from the volunteer program and referral to appropriate authorities when warranted.

10. Health, Zoonotic Disease, and Safety Risks

I understand that working with animals involves inherent risks. These risks may include, but are not limited to:

- Bites;
- Scratches;
- Kicks;
- Falls;
- Allergic reactions;
- Exposure to bodily fluids;
- Exposure to parasites;
- Exposure to zoonotic or infectious diseases;
- Injury caused by animal behavior;
- Injury involving equipment, vehicles, cleaning products, or shelter facilities; and
- Other foreseeable and unforeseeable risks associated with animal-care and shelter activities.

I agree to follow BAS sanitation, personal protective equipment, disease-control, animal-handling, and safety procedures.

I understand that I am responsible for determining, in consultation with my healthcare provider when appropriate, whether my personal health circumstances make participation in particular volunteer activities advisable.

I understand that BAS may restrict volunteer access to animals, areas, or activities when necessary for disease control, safety, animal welfare, or operational reasons.

11. Injuries and Incidents

I agree to immediately report any bite, scratch, injury, exposure, accident, escape, security issue, or other significant incident occurring during my volunteer service.

I agree to cooperate with incident reporting and documentation requirements.

I will not conceal an animal bite, scratch, escape, injury, or other reportable incident.

12. Visitors, Guests, and Minors

Only individuals authorized by BAS may participate in volunteer activities.

I will not bring friends, family members, children, or other guests into restricted volunteer areas or permit them to participate in volunteer activities unless specifically authorized by BAS.

Minors may participate only in accordance with BAS's current age requirements, supervision requirements, and parent or legal guardian consent procedures.

13. Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, and Impairment

I will not perform volunteer duties while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, or any substance that prevents me from safely performing assigned activities.

Possession or use of illegal drugs while volunteering or on BAS property is prohibited.

Weapons on City property or during BAS activities are governed by applicable federal and state law and City policy.

14. Attendance and Scheduling

If I accept a scheduled volunteer assignment, I will make a reasonable effort to report as scheduled and be prepared to perform my assigned duties.

If I cannot attend a scheduled shift or activity, I will notify the designated BAS contact as soon as reasonably possible.

Repeated unexcused absences, failure to communicate, or extended inactivity may result in reassignment or inactive status within the volunteer program.

15. Photographs, Video, and Publicity

I authorize Benton Animal Services and the City of Benton to photograph, record, or otherwise capture my image or voice while participating in volunteer activities and to use those materials for legitimate City purposes, including public information, educational materials, community outreach, social media, and promotion of BAS programs, unless I notify BAS in writing of any applicable limitation accepted by the City.

I understand that photographs, recordings, or other materials I create using BAS equipment or as part of an assigned BAS communications activity may constitute City records or City work product as permitted by applicable law.

I will follow BAS requirements concerning photography and recording of animals, employees, volunteers, members of the public, records, and restricted areas.

16. Personal Property and Expenses

I understand that BAS and the City of Benton are not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to my personal property except as otherwise provided by law.

I will not incur expenses on behalf of BAS or represent that BAS or the City will pay an expense without prior authorization.

17. Assumption of Risk and Release

I understand that volunteering in an animal shelter or animal-services environment involves risks that cannot be completely eliminated even when reasonable safety precautions are followed.

I knowingly and voluntarily assume the ordinary and inherent risks associated with the volunteer activities I choose to perform.

To the fullest extent permitted by Arkansas law, I agree to release and hold harmless the City of Benton, Benton Animal Services, and their officials, employees, agents, and authorized representatives from claims arising from the ordinary and inherent risks of my voluntary participation, except to the extent such release is prohibited by law.

18. Coaching, Corrective Action, Suspension, and Removal

BAS's goal is to maintain a successful volunteer program and, when appropriate, help volunteers correct performance or conduct concerns. Depending upon the circumstances, BAS may use:

1. Informal coaching or retraining;
2. Verbal counseling;
3. Written expectations or corrective action;
4. Reassignment or restriction from particular activities;
5. Temporary suspension; or
6. Removal from the volunteer program.

BAS is not required to use these measures in sequence. Conduct that may result in immediate suspension or removal includes, but is not limited to:

- Animal abuse or intentional neglect;
- Serious safety violations;
- Violence or credible threats;
- Theft;
- Harassment or discriminatory conduct;
- Serious or intentional breaches of confidentiality;
- Falsification of records;
- Unauthorized removal or release of an animal;
- Deliberate interference with shelter operations;
- Performing restricted activities without authorization;
- Reporting for volunteer service while impaired;
- Serious insubordination while performing volunteer duties; or
- Other conduct that BAS management reasonably determines presents a significant risk to animals, employees, volunteers, members of the public, City property, or shelter operations.

BAS reserves the right to suspend or discontinue a volunteer's participation when management determines that continued participation is inconsistent with the needs, safety, effectiveness, or integrity of the volunteer program, subject to applicable law and City policy.

19. Program Changes

I understand that BAS may modify volunteer assignments, schedules, procedures, training requirements, eligibility standards, and program rules as operational needs change.

Volunteers will be informed of material changes as appropriate and may be required to complete additional training or acknowledge revised policies before continuing certain activities.

Nothing in this agreement creates a contractual right to any particular volunteer assignment, schedule, activity, level of access, or continued participation in the BAS Volunteer Program.

20. Acknowledgment

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understand this Volunteer Agreement, Code of Conduct, and Waiver;
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the volunteer program;
- I agree to follow BAS policies, procedures, safety requirements, and lawful staff instructions;
- I understand that additional policies, position descriptions, SOPs, and training materials may apply to my assigned volunteer activities;
- I understand that volunteering does not create an employment relationship with Benton Animal Services or the City of Benton; and
- I understand that failure to comply with applicable volunteer requirements may result in restriction, suspension, reassignment, or removal from the volunteer program.

Volunteer Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Name (if applicable) _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

BAS Representative _____

Date _____