



Volunteer Engagement Process

At Best Friends, we appreciate, respect and value each volunteer. We wouldn't be able to care for so many homeless animals at the Sanctuary (about 1,700 at any given time) without the strong support of dedicated volunteers. In addition, our volunteer leadership teams and outreach volunteers make it possible to save tens of thousands of animals in communities across the country. Together, we can Save Them All™.

Our volunteer engagement process has five key components: trust, train, engage, recognize and reward. We hope the brief guidelines below will help shelters and rescue groups find and keep volunteers.

1. Conduct a needs assessment. What needs to be done? Think outside of the box. People have lots of skills they would love to share if you just ask.

2. Create position descriptions. What are the essential duties for each volunteer position? Include skills and experience needed and any physical requirements.

3. Create an application form. What do you want to know about potential volunteers? You'll need to ask for contact information, of course, but also consider asking about their skills, work and/or volunteer experience and education. Search online for sample application forms to get ideas.



4. Recruit volunteers. Where can you find volunteers in your community? Here are a few ways:

- Ask employees and current volunteers to refer their friends, family members and co-workers.
- Recruit online through Facebook and volunteermatch.org.
- Advertise at businesses or post notices at libraries, schools and other places with community bulletin boards.

5. Interview potential volunteers. Who are they? What do they want to do? What skills and experience do they have? When and where can they volunteer? How can they help you to achieve your mission? Ask questions and let them do most of the talking.

- 6. Create a volunteer handbook.** Putting your expectations, policies and procedures in writing helps clarify the role of volunteers. Search online for samples to get ideas about what to include.
- 7. Provide orientation.** It's a good idea to conduct volunteer orientation meetings to answer questions and make new volunteers feel welcome. Don't forget to have volunteers sign a liability waiver form.
- 8. Provide training.** Make sure your volunteers know what to do and how to do it.
- 9. Recognize and reward volunteers.** Once you have volunteers on board, say thank-you often — and mean it. Recognize volunteers' contributions and reward extra effort.

