



# OCHS VOLUNTEER GUIDE

## WHO WE ARE:

The Oktibbeha County Humane Society (OCHS) is a nonprofit organization. We receive funding from the City of Starkville, Oktibbeha County, and donations from the public. We are dedicated to serving the animals and people in our community. The Society promotes awareness of the need to spay/neuter animals to eliminate animal over-population and works to place animals into humane environments.

We offer educational programs and other services to promote respect and the healthy treatment of animals. OCHS manages the City of Starkville Animal Shelter which is city property with some restrictions on animal surrenders mandated by the City. We are an open shelter that services more than 2,000 animals (cats, dogs, guinea pigs, gerbils, rabbits, goats and pigs) each year. **We have approximately 96% adoption rate.**

## SHELTER HOURS:





Tuesday – Saturday 11:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Volunteers may arrive at 10:00 a.m.)  
The shelter is closed on Sundays and Mondays and all City of Starkville holidays.

## PROGRAMS WE OFFER:

- 🐾 **OCHS Express** – Our shelter is very fortunate to participate in a transport program. We have partnered with several local rescues and area shelters to transport dogs and cats to the Northeastern United States where there is a shortage of adoptable animals. On average we have two weekly transports and send animals (dogs and cats) to destination shelters.
- 🐾 **Second Chance Fund** – Most animals coming into the shelter are fairly healthy. However, some animals come in with extensive injuries. We have a Second Chance Fund to help cover additional medical/veterinary costs for these animals. Many shelter supporters donate directly to this special fund. The program has helped treat dogs with heartworms, amputate legs and tails, and treat severe skin conditions.
- 🐾 **Community Programs**
  - Low Cost Spay/Neuter income based programs through PetPALS and OCHS Snip & Spay for pets of members of the community and surrounding areas.
  - Trap, Neuter/Spay and Release (TNR) – At times we are able to facilitate TNR for stray/feral cats to trap, vaccinate against rabies, neuter/spay, ear tipping and release to their original environment.
  - Book Buddies – School children can come read to our shelter animals, primarily the cats. This program helps children improve on their reading skill and provides great socialization for our shelter animals.
  - Annual Low Cost Rabies Shot Clinic – We partner with local veterinarians to provide low cost rabies vaccinations and microchipping.



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-  **Barn Buddy Adoptions** – Some cats don't do well in a household, yet make excellent barn cats and thrive in that environment. Adopters with a barn or shed that could benefit from having a good mouser around and are willing to provide daily food and water can adopt a barn buddy. All Barn Buddies are spayed or neutered and have a tipped ear. Cats adopted through the Barn Buddies program are \$10 and include spay/neuter, rabies vaccination and ear tipping.
-  **Slumber Party** – In some situations, potential adopters may take an adult shelter animal for two or three days to determine if the animal is a good fit. All slumber parties must be approved by the Shelter Manager and an application must be completed by the potential adopters.
-  **Humane Education** – Provide instruction for children and adults on proper pet care, the importance of spaying and neutering animals and the necessity of treating animals with kindness and respect.
-  **Offsite Adoptions and Special Events** – On occasion, we participate in community events to publicize OCHS and our adoptable animals.

## ADOPTION INFORMATION AND FEES:

All potential adopters are screened and a home visit may be required. A maximum of three animals may be adopted in a calendar year. Adoption fees include Starkville dog license, spay/neuter, microchipping, 30 day pet insurance, and age appropriate vaccinations: rabies (age 3 months and up), deworming, heartworm testing (if applicable), FIV/FELV testing for Cats 6 months old and up, and other treatments as needed.

AGE	DOGS	CATS
Up to 6 months old	\$170	\$90*
6 months old and above	\$120**	\$75

\* FIV/FELV testing is available for \$20 for kittens

\*\*\$60 adoption fee for heartworm positive dogs, if adopter pays for heartworm treatment.

**NOTE:** Cats adopted through the Barn Buddies program are \$10 and include spay/neuter, rabies vaccination and ear tipping.

## VOLUNTEER CONDUCT GUIDELINES:

Volunteer’s conduct must be consistent with the Volunteer Agreement. Actions should positively promote OCHS and the animals in our care, and enhance the services we offer the community. OCHS reserves the right to reassign or terminate volunteers for failure to abide by the Volunteer Agreement.



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## Signups and Arrival

1. Use the [online sign up](#) to schedule volunteer time in advance. Volunteers may sign up for one or two hour shifts.
2. Parking - Leave parking spaces open in front of the shelter for potential adopters and visitors.
3. Upon arrival at OCHS, present your Volunteer ID card, sign in on the Volunteer sheet at the window and disinfect your hands. Remember to also sign out as you leave.
4. Leave personal belongings in your car. OCHS is not responsible for loss, theft or damage of personal items. Car keys and other small items can be placed in the Volunteer's Personal Items box in the hallway during your shift.
5. Wear a volunteer vest during your shift and place the vest in the laundry room at the end of your shift; do not rehang your vest.
6. Review the Volunteer board in the hallway for recommended tasks.

## Working with Animals

1. It is imperative that you disinfect your hands before and after handling each animal to reduce the spread of potential disease.
2. Do not enter restricted areas without permission from a staff member.
3. Review the whiteboards which list adoptable animals to determine which dogs may be taken to a play yard and which animals are leash walk only.
4. Do not interfere in the event of a dog fight. Use an air horn or alert a staff member.
5. Prior to walking a dog, read the basic facts on the Shelter ID Card to determine the animal's age, breed and name. Being familiar with our animals further their chances of being adopted.
7. Puppies and kittens under 6 months old cannot be taken to the play yard, walked or placed on the floor. The dangers of spreading disease is drastically reduced by following this protocol and by using hand sanitizer before and after handling each animal.
8. Only dogs from the same kennel may be walked together or put in a play yard together. Avoid contact with another dog in the hall or outside unless you know they get along.
9. After walking a dog, update the white boards "I have been walked" magnets. Note: If you are the first volunteers to arrive, ensure the board has been cleared of "I have been walked" magnets from the previous day.
10. Do not give treats to dogs in their kennels if more than one dog is in the kennel.
11. The door to Cat Land must remain closed as cats are frequently loose in this area.
12. When taking a cat to and from the outdoor play area, always use a pet carrier to safely transport the cat.
13. Animals can easily overheat in the summer. Ensure animals have access to fresh water and are not left unattended for more than 15 minutes in a play yard.
14. If you are uncomfortable with an animal or have questions, ask a staff member.



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## Working with Visitors

1. Ask all visitors to sign the visitor log. We track the total number of visitors so each visitor must be logged.
2. Instruct all visitors to disinfect their hands before handling each animal to reduce the spread of disease.
3. Visitors interested in adopting a puppy should hold the puppy in a clean towel and wearing gloves is recommended.
4. All questions regarding an animal's history should be directed to a staff member. We welcome you to share basic facts provided on the Shelter ID cards (animal's name, age, breed, heartworm negative/positive) and adoption fee.
5. Ask visitors to refrain from taking photos of animals through the kennel. All visitors should follow the photo guidelines posted throughout the Shelter. Remind visitors that photos of all animals are available on our website.
6. Ask a staff member to facilitate all meet and greet situations when a potential adopter brings their dog to the shelter. Introductions should take place in the meet and greet fenced area in front of the shelter.

## Additional Information

1. Conduct yourself in a way that promotes safety of yourself, staff members, visitors and animals.
2. Maintain confidentiality of visitors, volunteers and employees including names, addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information.
3. Immediately report any concerns or potential safety problems to the Shelter Manager.
4. Due to space limitations, refrain from bringing or receiving personal visitors during your shift.
5. OCHS does not discriminate and will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.
6. The shelter is a non-smoking facility. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on OCHS property.
7. All dealings with the media (print, broadcast or television) must go through the Shelter Manager, Director of Development & Community Relations or the OCHS President in order to prevent misinformation or duplication of efforts.
8. Volunteer Attire – We recommend wearing closed toe shoes and comfortable clothing to work in that you don't mind getting dirty.
9. Conflict of interest – Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in religious or partisan activity while acting on behalf of or as a representative of OCHS. This activity will jeopardize our ability to continue to obtain donations and could impact our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.