



CHARLOTTESVILLE-ALBEMARLE SPCA JOB DESCRIPTION

Position: Animal Care Lead
Job Status: Non-Exempt
Reports to: Animal Care Manager
Revision Date: Feb 13, 2026

Position Summary

The Animal Care Team Lead provides operational and behavioral leadership within the Animal Care department. This role ensures the humane daily care of all animals in shelter custody while advancing strategies that reduce length of stay, decrease stress, and increase successful adoptions and pet retention. The Team Lead oversees daily workflow, supports and trains Animal Care staff, coordinates animal movement throughout the facility, and leads canine enrichment and behavior initiatives. This position serves as a working leader, modeling best practices in animal handling, communication, and cross-department collaboration.

Leadership & Operational Oversight

- Provide daily oversight of Animal Care staff to ensure proper care, sanitation, safety, and humane treatment standards.
- Assist the Animal Care Manager with scheduling, coaching, and staff development.
- Serve as acting Animal Care Manager when needed.
- Ensure compliance with VDACS animal facility regulations.
- Model safe work practices and professional conduct.

Animal Care & Shelter Operations

- Oversee housing, movement, and population flow to reduce stress and shorten length of stay.
- Conduct weekly well-being rounds with clinic staff.
- Ensure accurate and timely data entry in the shelter database.
- Confirm updated photos, bios, and adoption summaries for all animals.
- Monitor and order food, enrichment, and operational supplies.
- Ensure transport vehicles are clean and ready for use.
- Perform as an Animal Care Associate as needed.

Canine Behavior, Enrichment & Placement Strategy

- Develop and implement canine enrichment and cognitive health initiatives.
- Lead and document canine playgroups.
- Train staff and volunteers in handling, playgroup participation, and behavior assessment support.
- Provide pet retention counseling and adoption follow-up support.
- Create individualized placement plans for long-stay or behaviorally complex dogs.

- Collaborate with Adoption and Foster teams to coordinate meet-and-greets and field trips.

Collaboration & Communication

- Work cooperatively with customers, staff, volunteers, and vendors.
- Maintain professional and educational interactions that promote the organization's mission.
- Remain calm, mission-focused, and solution-oriented under stress.

Physical Requirements & Work Environment

- Ability to lift and transport materials up to 60 pounds.
- Ability to bend, squat, kneel, and stand for extended periods.
- Exposure to disinfectants, animal allergens, and animal-related hazards.
- Rabies pre-exposure vaccination required (or waiver).
- Availability to work weekends and holidays as scheduled.

Qualifications

- High school diploma or GED required; Bachelor's degree preferred.
- Minimum two years of animal care experience required.
- Supervisory or leadership experience preferred.
- Experience conducting canine playgroups preferred.
- Strong knowledge of animal behavior and humane handling practices.
- Proficiency in MS Office and shelter database systems.
- Valid Virginia Driver's License required.