



Animal Behaviorist

SUMMARY

Under general supervision, observes the behaviors of animals admitted to the Apple Valley Animal Shelter facility; reports animal behavior to assist in the placement of homeless pets; engage in animal socialization, coaching and exercise programs; selects and prepares animals for events and outreach functions; monitors animal disposition and well-being; performs a variety of animal shelter support duties involved in the care of impounded animals and the maintenance of animal care facilities; performs other duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from the Director of Animal Services. No direct supervision of staff is exercised. May provide training to less experienced staff.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a journey-level class in the Animal Services Department and performs a range of routine and complex animal services duties, including documenting and monitoring animal behavior, acts as lead in foster coordination by answering questions regarding animal behavior and care, provides recommendations on adoptability, and assists health team when needed. The Animal Behaviorist is not expected to handle enforcement calls but will provide assistance at the public counter and with animal care for community education and outreach functions. This class is distinguished from the Animal Health Supervisor in that the latter has full supervisory responsibilities for the animal shelter function, including training, scheduling, performance evaluations, and discipline. This position is part of the Animal Outreach Coordination Team and provides backup assistance to the Rescue Coordinator when needed.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS -- *Essential functions, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, may include any of the following representative duties, knowledge, and skills. This list is ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY and is not a comprehensive listing of all functions and duties performed by incumbents of this class. Employees are required to be in attendance and prepared to begin work at their assigned work location on the specified days and hours. Factors such as regular attendance at the job are not routinely listed in job descriptions but are an essential function. Management reserves the right to add, modify, change or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job. Essential duties and responsibilities **may** include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- Observe, collect, and record data about animal behavior including diet, social interactions, and communication methods to identify patterns.
- Develop and implement behavior enrichment plans for the general population as well as animals impacted by kennel stress.
- Engage animals in exercise and play, including large and small dog playgroups and pack walks, in a safe and structured manner.
- Assist in selecting and preparing animals for community education and outreach based on behavior and adaptability.

- Aid members of the public with questions about animal adoption, basic animal care and housing, behavior counseling, and general department processes.
- Provide care to impounded animals by providing food, water, and comfort; observes animal behavior and health; isolates sick, quarantined, or injured animals; notifies supervisor or other staff members if an animal needs immediate veterinary care.
- Assist staff with medical exams, drug administration, and microchip implants.
- Provide appropriate housing placement of animals brought into the shelter; updates and modifies impound records; enters information into database; prints applicable forms and obtains appropriate signatures; issues kennel cards.
- Perform a variety of rescue networking responsibilities.
- Maintain social media websites; create and publish posts and responds to public inquiries; uploads photos and videos of animals in need of foster and permanent homes; provides information and counsel regarding animal behavior and temperament.
- Assist in evacuation of animals during local emergencies or disasters.
- Act as backup to Rescue Coordinator when applicable.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education, Training, and Experience Guidelines

An equivalent combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities may be considered. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to the completion of the twelfth (12th) grade and two (2) years experience caring for or training animals in an animal related care facility, animal shelter, veterinary hospital setting or approved equivalent. Major coursework in animal behavior, animal science or animal education is highly desired.

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Valid California class C driver's license with satisfactory driving record and automobile insurance.
- Certification in Animal Behavior or Professional Canine Training is required within the first twelve (12) months of employment.

Knowledge of:

- Applicable local, State, and Federal laws, codes, regulations, and ordinances.
- Animal care, temperament, and behaviors.
- Socialization and behavioral modification techniques.
- Principals of obedience training and exercise techniques.
- Methods and techniques of handling, collection, impoundment, and registration of a variety of wild and domestic animals in various conditions.
- Identification of various breeds of dogs, cats, and other domestic and wild animals.
- Records maintenance policies and procedures.
- Professional networking methods and practices.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment.
- Computer applications related to work.
- Social Media Management
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.

- Techniques for dealing with and solving the problems presented by a variety of individuals from various socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, in person and over the telephone.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service to public and Town staff, in person and over the telephone.

Ability to:

- Handle animals in a humane and compassionate manner.
- Learn, interpret, and apply administrative and departmental policies and procedures.
- Learn, understand, and interpret rules and regulations governing the impounding and release of animals.
- Recognize normal and abnormal animal behavior.
- Respond to phone calls, walk-up traffic, and other requests for information.
- Operate a computer to include standard software and some specialized software.
- Identify and caring for a variety of domestic and wild animal breeds.
- Interact tactfully with the public and other organizations.
- Prepare clear and concise reports.
- Maintain accurate records, filing systems, and technical documents.
- Type and enter data with speed and accuracy.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships.
- Communicate clearly both verbally and in writing.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines in politically sensitive situations.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle; and to walk on uneven terrain; strength, stamina, and mobility to perform medium physical work; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. Frequent standing in work areas and walking between work areas required. Wrist flexion and lateral rotation are necessary in combination with grasping to handle a snare and leash. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information and evaluate and/or restrain animals. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects necessary to perform job functions.

Employees primarily work inside an animal care facility with exposure to loud noise levels and may be exposed to inclement weather conditions, animal hair, dust, and potentially hazardous physical substances. May involve exposure to wild, dangerous, and/or diseased animals, and animals known to cause allergies. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

**FLSA designations cannot be assigned to a class. An employer must show that each employee meets every requirement of the claimed exemption. The FLSA designation listed above is for general administrative guidelines.*