



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Volunteering at the La Crescent Animal Rescue (LAR) is a rewarding and meaningful way to contribute to the care of homeless animals. There are a number of ways to be involved that require different time commitments and focus. We look forward to working with you to find a volunteer role or opportunity that matches your skills, interests, and schedule. This handbook is to familiarize you with our policies and guidelines.

Welcome to the LAR team!

Mission

It is the mission of the LAR to:

- Provide a safe shelter for stray/abandoned/surrendered/abused cats and dogs.
- Promote the placement of animals through adoption and foster-care homes.
- Reunite lost animals with their owners.

History

Established in 2005, La Crescent Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to the protection and welfare of animals in La Crescent, Minnesota. Our shelter depends solely on the support and generosity of our volunteers and community to help give animals the best care and love they so richly deserve.

Volunteer Protocols/Procedures

The La Crescent Animal Rescue relies on its volunteers to be dependable and effective during their volunteer hours by following established protocols and procedures. This allows our shelter program to operate smoothly and with the maximum benefit to the dogs, cats and volunteers. All shelter volunteers are required to abide by the policies detailed in our Volunteer Handbook.

Written protocols and procedures for role specific duties can be found in the Protocol/Procedures binder behind the front desk.

Age to Volunteer and Training

We require volunteers to complete and sign a volunteer application. Each volunteer will be required to participate in a minimum of three (3) role-specific training sessions. Volunteers 12-16 years of age must be accompanied by their parent/guardian who has an approved volunteer application and has completed required training. Volunteers 17 years of age must have a parent guardian signature on their application and must be accompanied by another trained LAR volunteer 18 years old or over.



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Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours are entered on a sign-in sheet at the front desk. There are several reasons that we need to record volunteer hours:

- It allows us to apply for certain local and national grants
- It allows us to recognize volunteer services
- It allows us to provide documentation to the City of La Crescent

Personal Hygiene

Many diseases are transmitted from human to human or animal to animal. In addition, some diseases are transmitted from animal to human. Therefore, good personal hygiene is necessary. The following recommendations are for your protection:

- Wear old, clean clothes and closed-toe shoes when performing chores at the shelter.
- Wear protective clothing and gloves when handling sick animals or possible contaminated material, such as when working in the ISO room.
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose, eyes, genitalia, and wounds after handling animals, their urine, or feces.
- Always wash your hands with soap and hot water after handling animals, after using the restroom, and before handling food.

Dress Code at the Shelter

We ask that you wear clean, old comfortable shirts and jeans (or casual pants) and non-skid, rubber-soled shoes with a back or heel strap.

For reasons of safety, we strongly recommend the following items NOT be worn while volunteering:

- Shorts and/or Tank tops when working with the cats
- Slip-on shoes (flip flops, clogs, etc.) or open toed shoes
- Hoop earrings and long necklaces

Complaints and Grievances

If you have any problems with another volunteer, or the LAR protocols and procedures, please speak to either a volunteer coordinator or the chairperson of said committee in which you are experiencing a problem. Please be prepared to give written documentation of your complaint or grievance.



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Discipline

All volunteers are to meet the shelter standards for work performance and personal conduct set forth in the volunteer code of conduct as well as in the written protocols and procedures. Written protocols and procedures are located in cabinets behind the front desk. When a volunteer fails to conform to proper standards, that person should receive notification and have the opportunity to correct the problem. Consistent standards must apply to all volunteers. Appropriate corrective action will be taken in accordance with the steps listed below:

- Verbal Warning – The volunteer committee Chairperson will discuss the problem and steps needed for improvement.
- Written Warning - A director or board representative will complete a written report and meet with the volunteer and volunteer committee chairperson to describe the problem and the action needed to correct the problem. If the problem continues, further written warnings may be issued.
- Suspension or Termination - After a serious infraction, or if a problem has not been corrected after both oral and written warnings, the volunteer may be suspended or terminated from any further volunteer duties. If a violation of the code of conduct, as well as in the written protocols and procedures, is considered egregious, the Board of Directors has the right to immediately terminate the volunteer status.

All steps in the disciplinary process are to be documented in an objective, specific, detailed, and chronological manner. Documentation is maintained in the volunteer's personnel file.

The following will be cause for immediate termination:

- Drug or alcohol use on the premises
- Abusive, destructive, or violent behavior on the premises
- Physical abuse to animals
- Causing physical harm to others
- Unauthorized use of shelter property
- Theft
- Falsifying records

Harassment

LAR strives to maintain a workplace that fosters mutual respect and promotes harmonious, productive working relationships. Our organization believes that discrimination or harassment in any form constitutes misconduct that seriously undermines the integrity of the volunteer relationship.

LAR prohibits discrimination or harassment that is sexual, racial, or religious in nature or is related to gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. The policy applies to all volunteers throughout the organization.



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Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a harassing nature. There are other forms of harassment such as race, age, ancestry, religion, national origin, and disabilities. Harassment also includes threats of violence or physical harm, real or implied, which may lead to an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. If a volunteer feels that he/she has been subjected to any form of harassment or discrimination, that person should firmly and clearly tell the person engaging in the harassing or discriminatory conduct that it is unwelcome, offensive and should stop at once. The volunteer should report the incident to a volunteer committee member or a member of the board of directors.

LAR will investigate the matter in a confidential manner; however, complete confidentiality may not be possible. If the allegation is substantiated the offender will be disciplined. This may include termination. Retaliation against any volunteer for filing a harassment complaint or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Emergency Protocols

In case of fire:

- Call 911 immediately
- Use a fire extinguisher if the size of the fire warrants it
- If it is safe to do so, remove the animals to a safe place outside the building per the fire policy procedures
- Exit through the nearest available exit, closing doors and windows behind you
- When emergency personnel have arrived, notify them of the location of animals inside the building
- The full Fire Policy is provided in your volunteer orientation packet

In case of tornado:

- Move immediately to an interior room or bathroom until the danger has passed. Leave all animals in their cages. NO animals are to be removed from the building except by emergency personnel.
- When emergency personnel have arrived, notify them of the location of animals inside the building

In case of suspicious activity:

- Do not enter (or leave) the building until emergency personnel have arrived
- Call 911 immediately



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Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Dated March 13, 2021

The La Crescent Animal Rescue (LAR) exists to provide a clean and safe environment for stray and surrendered animals, and to place animals in well-matched permanent and/or foster homes. LAR relies on volunteers to make these goals happen. Every volunteer is a representative of LAR. We need to be conscious of how our conduct influences animal well-being, and the community's perception of LAR.

The following Code of Conduct is to be followed by all who volunteer at LAR, in any and every capacity, both inside and outside the facility.

1. **Everyone is entitled to respect**

Our volunteers have many different personalities and ideas. LAR volunteers should respect shelter operations and policies, as well as other volunteers. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Examples of conduct to be avoided include (but are not limited to):

- Criticisms of LAR, its policies and volunteers, veterinary clinics or medical professionals in public settings or social media such as LAR's Facebook (FB) page.
- Inappropriate language (e.g., profanity) or LAR FB or other public-facing venue reflecting LAR's community identity.
- Postings of personal opinions that do not reflect LAR policy in public-facing venues such as LAR FB; such comments could be construed as LAR policy or as critique of LAR policy.
- Widely distributed emails that are hostile, disrespectful, or critical of another volunteer
- Forwarding an email critical of another volunteer to that volunteer

2. **Confidentiality is crucial**

Work seen and heard at the shelter does not need to be shared outside LAR. This includes talking about illnesses, plans, or ideas being considered. We are not trying to hide anything; we are simply operating professionally.

3. **Professionalism matters**

Those who come to LAR looking for a new pet companion should be treated as customers. Keep in mind how you would like to be treated when you are the customer.



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4. Be reliable

If you volunteer for a specific day, please honor your commitment. If unable to perform your duties as planned, please find someone to take your place, as far in advance as possible. If you are unable to find a substitute, please call the shelter and email the volunteers who coordinate or also perform this task. Animals need to be fed, watered, dosed with medications, and/or walked more than once a day. Desk hours are when we commit to be open to the public and are also vital. If LAR is closed during open hours because the desk volunteer did not show up, disappointed visitors may never return, and will speak poorly of LAR. Failure to appear when scheduled for any duty harms LAR: the animals and the organization.

5. Leave medical decisions to veterinary professionals

Designated Medication Volunteers, from here forth referred to as DMV, must follow veterinary recommendations and prescriptions made for LAR animals. DMV may not dose animals with prescription medications not prescribed for the animal or make their own judgements about what prescription medication an animal should receive. DMV should not skip a dose of prescribed medication unless the animal appears to be doing worse on the medication. In this situation, the prescribing vet should be contacted promptly to discuss the problem. DMV who dose animals must note every dose on the medical chart for that animal, with the DMV initials and date. This requirement applies for both prescription and non-prescription medications.

6. Medical records stay at LAR

Every animal's full medical history must be documented in that animal's record. Original charts of medications with dates and volunteer initials, rabies tags, and all records of medical care by vets or at LAR must be retained in the animal's record. Animal records must be retained in the LAR building; copies should be made if records must be sent to a vet.

7. Financial Records.

No individual volunteer or individual board member is authorized to make arrangements with donors or provide raw financial data to anyone without full board knowledge and approval.

8. Follow LAR policies at all times

New volunteers need to learn and follow LAR's standard practices in a variety of areas. Failure to do so may violate the law, put animals and/or people at risk, or violate the contract LAR has with the City of La Crescent. Any of these violations could negatively affect LAR's ability to continue to operate. Examples of our policies include (but are not limited to) requiring an owner to present a current rabies tag when claiming a stray animal, not permitting adoption or fostering of an animal known or suspected to have a transmissible disease, unless the receiving family has been fully informed of the disease and its risks for transmission to other animals and/or humans, not permitting animals to leave with potential foster or adoptive parents before the foster or adoption application has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate volunteers, not permitting young children to be in animal areas without an adult present



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9. Confine activities to your areas of responsibility

Each volunteer will be trained for specific tasks. Volunteers must refrain from activities that are outside their individual area of training and qualification. *Failure to follow this precaution puts animals and potentially volunteers at risk.* Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Entering the Isolation Room (ISO) when not trained in LAR's ISO practices
- Entering the Dog Room when not approved and/or not trained on dog room practices

10. Limit broad communications to need-to-know information

Many of us have full and complex lives outside of LAR. Please limit your broad email distributions to medical or other need-to-know information or inquiries. For example, strictly humorous commentary or a personal response to another volunteer's email should have limited distribution. Think Before You Click "Reply-To-All".

11. Keep the shelter secure

Volunteers should keep doors locked when they are in the building outside of open hours. *You are not required to open the door for a visitor outside of open hours.* Volunteers MUST re-lock ALL doors when leaving the building. Windows may be left open only during daylight hours, AND if the next volunteer scheduled to be in the building is notified and told to close the window.

In case of problems: Any volunteer who feels that a serious violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred should contact the chair of the committee that coordinates your volunteer activity or any Board of Directors member. These groups will be the decision-makers about the degree of seriousness of any violation and will determine any "next steps" in response to serious or repeated violations. If you are believed to have violated the Code of Conduct, someone will contact you, so you understand why your actions were in question. A record of the exchange will be kept for future reference. Repeated violations may result in a volunteer being removed from the shelter's volunteer list.

In All You Do, Please Remember: We are all here for the animals. They are the reason LAR exists. Keep their needs at the top of your mind in every decision you make, every email you send, and every action you take. Calibrate every choice by whether it truly provides *care for the animals*.

We are glad you have chosen to volunteer with LAR and hope that the relationship proves to be mutually rewarding!



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I, _____, acknowledge I have received the La Crescent Animal Rescue volunteer handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Signature

Date