



## **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK AND TRAINING GUIDE**

February 2019

Permission to copy this document is required from the Board of Directors of Eva's Kitties, Inc.

# Table of Contents

	Page
• <b>Introductions and Welcome</b>	2
• <b>Our Mission, Vision, History &amp; Snapshot of our Current Operations</b>	2
• <b>Organizational Chart</b>	2
○ <b>Board Related</b>	3
▪ <b>Responsibilities and Authority</b>	
▪ <b>Committees</b>	
○ <b>Volunteer Related</b>	3
▪ <b>Responsibilities and Authority</b>	
▪ <b>Committees</b>	
• <b>Brief Description of Our Current Programs and Targeted Outcomes</b>	4
• <b>Overview of the Procedures for Matching/Selecting Volunteers for Assignments</b>	5
○ <b>Completion of the Volunteer Application</b>	
○ <b>General Categories Supported by Volunteers</b>	
▪ <b>Caring for Cats in larger Foster Settings</b>	
▪ <b>Assisting with Public Relations/Social Media Platforms</b>	
▪ <b>Supporting Fund Raising Events</b>	
▪ <b>Helping Maintain Office Files on Our Cats</b>	
○ <b>Disclaimer that Eva’s Kitties, Inc. has the right to reassign or terminate Volunteers from their service at the nonprofit’s discretion</b>	
• <b>Expectations Regarding Conduct and Behavior</b>	7
• <b>Examples of Prohibited Conduct: Harassment, Violence, Intoxication, etc.</b>	7
• <b>Conflict of Interest Policy</b>	7
• <b>Responsibilities Regarding Being Present in Someone’s Home (Foster Care Site)</b>	8
• <b>Procedures and Responsibilities Regarding Lateness or Anticipated Absences</b>	8
• <b>Information on “Open Door Policy,” including Guidance on How To Report Any Concerns</b>	8
• <b>Opportunities for Suggestions and Input from Volunteers</b>	8
• <b>Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Volunteer Handbook</b>	9
• <b>Suggestion Form</b>	9
• <b>APPENDICES: Volunteer Job Descriptions</b>	10



## INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

- Introductions of Volunteer Trainer and Participants
- Extend warm welcome and appreciation to the new volunteers

### OUR MISSION, VISION, HISTORY, & SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT OPERATIONS

- Review MISSION of Eva's Kitties:

*The Mission of Eva's Kitties is to facilitate the rescue of abandoned, lost, injured, neglected cats and kittens and welcome them into foster care homes while we search to match them with a forever home. While they are in our care, we provide them with food, medical attention and the loving attention that lets them know they are safe and cared for.*

- Review VISION of Eva's Kitties:

As we increase our human (volunteers) and financial resources, we hope to:

- Increase the number of Foster Homes in the organization
- Rescue additional cats and provide them with shelter and care until we can find them forever homes
- Recruit more volunteers
- Support feral colonies in our region with food and medical care
- Secure the resources, visibility, and permanent shelter necessary to support our Mission and Vision

- HISTORY

- Founding Date: October 2018
- Officially Incorporated in Massachusetts as a Registered Non-Profit on October 22, 2018
- Tax-Exempt Status Awarded by the IRS on October 24, 2018 (This enables donors to deduct their charitable contributions to us when they file their taxes)
- Eva's Kitties was founded in response to learning that another cat rescue organization in the area had notified its two largest foster care providers that were housing and caring for nearly 60 cats that they were no longer going to provide financial resources for food and medical care for those cats. A number of volunteers that had been caring for these cats housed under the umbrella of that organization concluded that the best way forward was to form a new organization and rescue these cats a second time. Hence, the birth of Eva's Kitties, Inc., named in honor of Eva Miller and her long standing record of providing housing and loving care for lost, abandoned, and injured cats.

- Current SNAPSHOT of the Organization:

- Caring for approximately 55 cats currently, located in two larger foster care homes
- Provide food, supplies, and medical care for all the cats in our care
- Operate totally through volunteer support; there are no paid staff

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

- **BOARD RELATED**

- Responsibilities and Authority

According to the existing Bylaws of the organization, the Board of Directors has the entire charge, control and management of the Corporation and its property and may exercise all or any of its powers subject to any limitations set forth in the Corporation's Articles of Organization, Bylaws or applicable law.

The Board's responsibilities, in general, include serving as stewards to ensure that the organization is well-positioned and equipped to carry out its Mission while maintaining or surpassing high levels of quality. Responsible stewardship encompasses multiple dimensions, including:

- Staying abreast of market demands and "best practices"
- Conduct "outreach" activities to increase the organization's visibility, resources, and responsiveness to the communities it serves
- Securing and preserving the financial resources necessary to carry out the Mission
- Set policies that enable the organization to function at the highest level given its resources
- Recruiting and supporting the personnel (Board Members, Volunteers, and perhaps in the near future, paid Staff) to carry out the work of the organization
- Assess the organization's effectiveness and performance on an annual basis and provide guidance and oversight with respect to enhancing performance

- Committees

The Board of Directors anticipates creating two Committees within this Fiscal Year that ends on June 30, 2019:

- Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will have the authority to make decisions between Board Meetings as outlined in the motion to establish such Committee.
- Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee will be responsible for:
  - Reviewing and updating job descriptions for Board Members
  - Identifying specific skill sets needed on the Board
  - Cultivating new Board Members
  - Interviewing and recommending finalists to the full Board for Approval
  - Preparing a Slate of Officers to be voted on at the Annual Meeting
  - Identifying topics for Board Development
  - Facilitating an assessment of the Board's effectiveness on an annual basis.

- **VOLUNTEER RELATED**

- Responsibilities and Authority

Our Volunteers are vital resources in carrying out our Mission. Our goal is to maintain open and respectful communications between Members of the Board and the Volunteers. We have created initial Job Descriptions for the different Volunteer opportunities within the organization. We anticipate reviewing and updating these descriptions every six months in order to keep them current. Hopefully, these descriptions will help clarify the responsibilities and authority of Volunteers.

We plan to seek feedback from our existing Volunteers - both newer Volunteers and experienced Volunteers - on the helpfulness of creating Levels of Volunteers. For example, if we are successful in recruiting a sizable number of new Volunteers, it might be helpful to designate our more seasoned Volunteers with a label of some kind that identifies them as a resource for newer Volunteers.

Trying to define the concept of “authority” associated with a Volunteer is somewhat tricky. Basically, keep in mind that any and all policy decisions can only be made by the Board of Directors. Any decision that has the potential of having a long-term impact on the organization, whether it is a fiscal impact, a Mission-related impact, a public image impact, etc. has to be reviewed and approved by the Board.

Since the Board of any organization is ultimately responsible for the success of that organization, the authority to make decisions that impact the overall health of the organization must rest solely with Members of the Board. The Board understands the need to address questions about its decisions; however, there are times when the Board must use discretion in how much information it shares publicly. It is quite common for Members of a Board to have access to confidential information or information that might harm the organization or someone within it if shared publicly.

The Board is committed to providing opportunities for Volunteers to meet with the Board periodically. The goals of such meetings include but are not limited to:

- Reporting on the progress of ongoing initiatives
- Sharing a Vision of the next steps
- Inviting suggestions on a range of topics; e.g., Communication; Fund-Raising ideas; Feedback on what is working well & what needs more attention, etc.

In order to better understand the boundaries surrounding issues of who has the authority to make a decision, it is always best to follow the directive, “When in doubt, ask before you implement or act.”

○ Committees

Presently there is only one existing Volunteer Committee, and that is the Operations Committee that makes recommendations and suggestions for the care of cats at the larger of our two existing Foster Care sites. Keep in mind that any recommendations that have to do with long-term impacts, current or future financial obligations, our public image, and/or have some impact on our Mission must be reviewed and approved by the full Board of Directors before such recommendations can be implemented. When in doubt, ASK!

• **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS AND TARGETED OUTCOMES**

○ **Current Program: Providing Foster Care for Homeless Cats**

At the present time, we only have enough resources (both human and financial) to provide housing and care for the cats in two Foster Homes. We definitely have plans to expand, and are in the process of identifying some benchmarks that will help us assess our ability to expand our impact. For example, we currently have some reliable estimates of the average cost to care for cats within different age groups on an annual basis. This information gives us some idea of how we have to budget for increasing our current cat population by “x” number of cats per year. We also need to cultivate more Foster Homes to take in more cats, and we have to determine if it is better to relocate some of the many cats we’re caring for in the larger homes to the new Foster Homes or to reserve spaces in the newly acquired Foster Homes to shelter recently rescued cats.

By moving some of our current cats into smaller settings where there are not so many cats under one roof, the cats may become more at ease being around people, and perhaps increasing their chances of being adopted.

- **OVERVIEW OF THE PROCEDURES FOR MATCHING/SELECTING VOLUNTEERS FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

First, if you are attending this Orientation Session, then most likely you have probably completed some of the steps outlined in this Section. We're hoping that by reviewing this information, you will gain a broader understanding of the volunteer activities within the organization as well as what is expected of you. We want you to feel good and proud of the service you are providing, and we think clarity of expectations can better enable you to enjoy your commitment of time and service.

- Completion of the Volunteer Application

The Volunteer Application consists of three parts:

- Part I: Provides basic information about you
- Part II: Allows you to identify the specialty area in which you would feel the most comfortable
- Part III: Signed acknowledgement that you grant permission for us to check your references

- General Categories Supported by Volunteers

- Caring for Cats in larger Foster Settings
- Assisting with Public Relations/Social Media Platforms
- Supporting Fund Raising Events
- Helping Maintain Office Files on Our Cats

The Appendix contains brief Job Descriptions for each of these Categories. (Based on the interests of the Volunteers attending each Orientation, more detail will be provided at this point on the specific responsibilities associated with each Category.)

*Specific Tasks: Caring for Cats in larger Foster Settings*

Cats are very special creatures, and each one is definitely unique. The following list of talents and skills will enable volunteers to enjoy caring for the cats:

- Recognize that cats have personalities AND they expect humans to work with who they are at any given moment
- Cats vary in their comfort level around humans
- Some cats DO NOT LIKE BEING TOUCHED and other cats warm up to the idea
- Take your signal from the cats; when in doubt, DON'T TOUCH OR PICK UP A CAT unless a seasoned volunteer who knows a particular cat well signals that it is okay to do so
- We recommend talking to the cats as you work around them: Tell them about your day; ask them about their days. Speak in gentle, loving tones to them...they may not acknowledge that they hear you, BUT you can bet that they are listening! They will get to know your voice that will allow them to grow more at ease with your presence.

**Specific Tasks: Assisting with Public Relations/Social Media Platforms**

We aim to set a high professional standard in all that we do, and to that end, the following skills and talent will be very beneficial to us:

- Ability to write in a professional manor, using clear language & appropriate vocabulary
- Understand the restrictions and benefits associated with different media platforms
- Comprehend the importance of all communications be in sync with the Board's Strategic Initiatives
- Ability to entertain different points of view, know when to compromise, and how to keep the larger Vision in sight while working through important details

**Specific Tasks: Supporting Fundraising Events**

Currently the organization relies on multiple activities to raise money. Some of these activities include:

- Grant writing
- Yard Sales
- Calendar Raffles
- Annual Appeal Letters
- Sponsorship Programs
- Signature Event (Still looking to define what this might be for us)
- Looking for additional ideas

Planning for and carrying out these events can be pretty intensive, especially as the event nears. We like to call upon the Adage "Many Hands Make Light Work." Given how busy everyone is, we like to make use of efficient planning and execution of tasks as they are assigned. Usually there is an opportunity to find one's comfort level in choosing tasks that need to be done. We'll do our best to make sure that we make the best use of your time.

**Specific Tasks: Helping Maintain Office Files on Our Cats**

Without a doubt, those working in this area need to be able to attend to detailed information with a high degree of accuracy. The following list of talents and skills will enable volunteers to complete the tasks in this area:

- Tech savvy skills, especially in Excel, are also a huge asset
- Generating reports for fundraising purposes, for required reports, etc.
- Print and file monthly Vet Bills
- File prescriptions in cats' folders
- Print and file forms as needed
- Excellent organization and communication skills
- Assist with Power Point presentations

Currently our records are paper-based, and we would like to digitize our records and begin storing them electronically. So there is much work to be done! We could use multiple PAWS to help in this work!

○ **Disclaimer that Eva's Kitties, Inc. Has the Right to Remove or Reassign Volunteers**

Since the primary Mission of Eva's Kitties is to care for the cats we have rescued, we are obligated to hold everyone associated with the organization to high standards of behavior. On rare occasions, it may be necessary for the organization to remove or reassign a Volunteer. The next Section outlines a

list of expectations regarding conduct and behavior, and serious violations of some of these behaviors and repeated violations of others will lead to actions of reassignment or termination.

### EXPECTATIONS REGARDING CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

All of our Conduct and Behavior expectations arise directly from our guiding principle that all animals and humans be treated with respect and loving care. To that end, we expect the following from our Volunteers:

- Show up on time for your designated shift (unless you've made arrangements in advance with another Volunteer to cover for you)
- Work collaboratively with other Volunteers on site
- Refrain from making comments or engaging in discussions that could be viewed as harassing, discriminating, or harmful to others associated with the organization
- Fulfill your responsibilities as described in your training and/or as appropriately modified for the needs of the day
- Treat our cats with loving care, including following the guidelines outlined for how to approach cats in general and in specific instances
- Never put our cats in danger by any of your actions.

### EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT, HARASSMENT, VIOLENCE, INTOXICATION, ETC.

This section of the document is included as a precautionary measure to make sure that the guidelines are clear to everyone involved, and not because we expect that our Volunteers will engage in any of the following activities. The following items are included as examples but are not intended to represent a complete list of the types of behaviors that are prohibited.

- Showing up under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the degree that one's judgment and behaviors are compromised
- Engaging in any activities that could be viewed as violent or harassing
- Making derogatory comments and/or engaging in gossip about others involved in the organization
- Smoking and/or using alcohol or unauthorized drugs while on duty
- Failing to follow directions outlined for optimal care of our cats

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

While Eva's Kittie, Inc. is a non-profit organization, we still have to compete for resources in order to sustain our Mission. Our goal is to be a high performing organization that is successful in achieving its Mission while simultaneously providing a rewarding experience of service for the Volunteers supporting our efforts.

To this end, we ask and expect that Volunteers respect and honor any and all information that they may have access to in their roles. None of the organizations' records, internal documents, or projects-in-planning should be shared with anyone outside the organization.

We also consider gossiping about others within the organization and holding a grudge and acting it out on others within the organization as a violation of our codes of conduct. Different points of view and disagreements are to be expected within any group of people. That said, we expect that all concerned put their differences behind them once decisions are made about how the organization moves forward.

**ANYONE who engages in derogatory comments about others within the organization is ultimately participating in actions that are likely to eventually harm our cats. We rely on donors for financial support, and as they hear of potential dysfunction within an organization, they may choose to not support us.**

#### **RESPONSIVILITIES REGARDING BEING IN SOMEONE’S HOME**

**Remain mindful that you are actually in someone’s home as you help carry out various Volunteer roles within the organization. Follow any specific guidelines that are included as part of your work, and use common sense about how you conduct yourself while on site. It’s impossible to list every “To Do” and every “Not to Do,” so the burden rests with the individual to use excellent judgment.**

#### **PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING ABSENCES AND/OR LATENESS**

**It is understandable that there will be times when life interferes with one’s ability to honor his or her commitments. When that happens, we expect that you will arrange via our electronic network for someone to cover your shift. Please don’t assume that because your role is voluntary that it is okay if you just don’t show up. Our cats need to eat and they need to be cared for, so unanticipated absences put the cats at risk AND they double the workload of your colleagues who happen to share the same shift as you.**

#### **INFORMATION ON “OPEN DOOR” POLICY**

**An “Open Door” Policy within an organization provides all participants to notify those in charge about practices or incidences that they feel merit attention. For example, if one were to witness someone drinking alcohol on his/her shift, or someone making harassing comments to another Volunteer, these behaviors should be brought to the attention of someone within the organization who has the authority to take action. When in doubt, such incidents can be brought to the attention of the President of the Board via this email: [president@evaskitties.org](mailto:president@evaskitties.org).**

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEER INPUT**

**As noted in an earlier section, the Board will look for opportunities to seek Volunteer input. These opportunities can be informal and ongoing as some Board Members are currently on site at one of the foster homes. In other instances, the Board plans to post a suggestion box at various locations for Volunteers to submit suggestions. And if scheduling permits, the Board hopes to invite Volunteers to attend a portion of its Annual Meeting in June 2019.**

**VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**



Volunteer Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

My Volunteer efforts include the following: \_\_\_\_\_

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**VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received a Copy of this Volunteer Handbook on \_\_\_\_\_ (date). I have read the Handbook and understand the content. I have and/or am aware that I have the opportunity to ask questions and review what is expected of me in my role as a Volunteer. I am aware that I am able to offer suggestions to help the organization improve its performance.

Volunteer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDICES: Volunteer Job Descriptions**



Job Overview	
<b>JOB TITLE</b>	<b>CAT CARETAKER</b>
<b>LOCATION(S)</b>	At one of our Foster Homes (Waltham and Newton Locations)
<b>REPORTS TO</b>	Assigned to one of our Wisdom Cats (volunteers who have been supporting the care of our cats for a year or longer)
<b>DUTIES</b>	<b>General Job Description</b>
	<p>Works a morning or evening shift at foster home site. Fulfills specific responsibilities assigned – Note, these responsibilities may vary but typically consist of one or more of the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washing the food bowls from previous feeding</li> <li>• Dispensing food</li> <li>• Cleaning and/or changing the litter pans</li> <li>• Sweeping and/or mopping the floors</li> <li>• Wiping down the counters</li> <li>• Taking towels/linen home to launder</li> <li>• Providing human interaction with the cats....subject to each cat's comfort level with people</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Generally there are at least two volunteers covering each shift, so at times those on site will need to discuss and divvy up tasks</p>
<b>TALENTS/SKILLS</b>	<b>Working with Cats</b>
	<p>Cats are very special creatures, and each one is definitely unique. The following list of talents and skills will enable volunteers to enjoy caring for the cats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize that cats have personalities AND they expect humans to work with who they are at any given moment</li> <li>• Cats vary in their comfort level around humans</li> <li>• Some cats DO NOT LIKE BEING TOUCHED and other cats warm up to the idea</li> <li>• Take your signal from the cats; when in doubt, DON'T TOUCH OR PICK UP A CAT unless a seasoned volunteer who knows a particular cat well signals that it is okay to do so</li> <li>• Talk to the cats as you work around them: tell them about your day; ask them about their days. Speak in gentle, loving tones to them...they may not acknowledge that they hear you, BUT you can bet that they are listening!</li> </ul>
<b>MUSTS</b>	<b>What We Ask of You</b>
	<p>Our cats depend on us, their human friends to provide them with responsible &amp; loving care. We ask that you commit to a minimum of 6 months of consecutive service, that you show up to work your designated time slot &amp;/or you find another Volunteer to cover for you, and that you treat our cats and other Volunteers with the respect outlined in our Code of Conduct.</p>



<b>Job Overview</b>	
<b>JOB TITLE</b>	<b><i>ASSISTING WITH PUBLIC RELATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIAL PLATFORMS</i></b>
<b>LOCATION(S)</b>	Much of this work can take place either virtually with occasional meetings to discuss strategy and answer questions
<b>REPORTS TO</b>	Currently work in this area is being overseen by the President of the Board
<b>DUTIES</b>	<b>General Job Description</b>
	<p>Provide assistance and input on the following aspects of our public/relations and communication strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially, provide support in formatting our Newsletters sent electronically</li> <li>• Assist in creating promotional materials as needed</li> <li>• Create, maintain, and update our FACEBOOK presence – possibly in unison with others</li> <li>• Interview individuals associated with the organization and compose material for use in our electronic communications</li> <li>• Potentially edit materials submitted by other volunteers for our Newsletters</li> </ul>
<b>TALENTS/SKILLS</b>	<b><i>ASSISTING WITH PUBLIC RELATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIAL PLATFORMS</i></b>
	<p>We aim to set a high professional standard in all that we do, and to that end, the following skills and talent will be very beneficial to us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to write in a professional manor, using clear language &amp; appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• Understand the restrictions and benefits associated with different media platforms</li> <li>• Comprehend the importance of all communications be in sync with the Board’s Strategic Initiatives</li> <li>• Ability to entertain different points of view, know when to compromise, and how to keep the larger Vision in sight while working through important details</li> </ul>
<b>MUSTS</b>	<b>What We Ask of You</b>
	<p>We ask that once you make a commitment, you honor that and plan time to be available to assist on ongoing projects. We anticipate publishing a schedule for releasing our Newsletters, and the pre-publishing deadlines that will enable us to stay on schedule. We welcome your insights and ideas as you come to know more about our organization.</p>



<b>Job Overview</b>	
<b>JOB TITLE</b>	<b>SUPPORTING FUND-RAISING EVENTS</b>
<b>LOCATION(S)</b>	Much of this work can take place either virtually with occasional meetings to discuss strategy and answer questions. On days of scheduled events, presence at that event will be most helpful and important to the success of the event.
<b>REPORTS TO</b>	Currently work in this area is being overseen by our Coordinator of Fundraising &/or her designee
<b>DUTIES</b>	<b>General Job Description</b>
	<p>Currently the organization relies on multiple activities to raise money. Some of these activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant writing</li> <li>• Yard Sales</li> <li>• Calendar Raffles</li> <li>• Annual Appeal Letters</li> <li>• Sponsorship Programs</li> <li>• Signature Event (Still looking to define what this might be for us)</li> <li>• Looking for additional ideas</li> </ul> <p>Planning for and carrying out these events can be pretty intensive, especially as the event nears. We like to call upon the Adage “Many Hands Make Light Work.” Given how busy everyone is, we like to make use of efficient planning and execution of tasks as they are assigned. Usually there is an opportunity to find one’s comfort level in choosing tasks that need to be done. We’ll do our best to make sure that we make the best use of your time.</p>
<b>TALENTS/SKILLS</b>	<b>SUPPORTING FUND-RAISING EVENTS</b>
	<p>The following talents and skills are particularly important for those working in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good organizing skills</li> <li>• Ability to make decisions</li> <li>• Comfortable with taking initiative</li> <li>• Prioritizing what needs to get done</li> <li>• Good attention to detail, especially as it applies to handling money</li> </ul>
<b>MUSTS</b>	<b>What We Ask of You</b>
	We rely on our volunteers to have a good sense of how much time that they can commit to any given task. This self-awareness prevents people from overcommitting and then not being able to deliver.



<b>Job Overview</b>	
<b>JOB TITLE</b>	<b>PROVIDING OFFICE SUPPORT</b>
<b>LOCATION(S)</b>	At our Foster Home in Waltham
<b>REPORTS TO</b>	Works with the lead Volunteer overseeing the cats' medical records and others who maintain and contribute to other important files
<b>DUTIES</b>	<b>General Job Description</b>
	<p>There are many records that need to be kept in running an organization like Eva's Kitties. First, the State Department of Agriculture requires that we keep updated records for each cat in our care and that data has to be reported out at the end of each year. Some of our funders associated with charitable organizations or foundations require similar records. And we like to provide information to our adopters regarding our cats' medical conditions and health records once the cats enter our care.</p> <p>Generally, those working in this area do a lot of data entry, and depending on their skill level with different programs, they are also asked to generate reports that are helpful in both reporting and planning.</p>
<b>TALENTS/SKILLS</b>	<b>PROVIDING OFFICE SUPPORT</b>
	<p>Without a doubt, those working in this area need to be able to attend to detailed information with a high degree of accuracy. The following list of talents and skills will enable volunteers to complete the tasks in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tech savvy skills, especially in Excel, are also a huge asset</li> <li>• Generating reports for fundraising purposes, for required reports, etc.</li> <li>• Print and file monthly Vet Bills</li> <li>• File prescriptions in cats' folders</li> <li>• Print and file forms as needed</li> <li>• Excellent organization and communication skills</li> <li>• Assist with Power Point presentations</li> <li>• Currently our records are paper-based, and we would like to digitize our records and begin storing them electronically. So there is much work to be done! We could use multiple PAWS to help in this work!</li> </ul>
<b>MUSTS</b>	<b>What We Ask of You</b>
	<p>We ask that once you commit to the number of hours that you can provide assistance that you honor those commitments. We ask that when in doubt about how to proceed, you seek assistance and/or clarification when working in programs or on projects that are supported by multiple users. Accuracy is a must, so we ask that you are able to attend to the work that you are doing.</p>