



PawsCo Volunteer Handbook

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I. Welcome!

Welcome to PawsCo! PawsCo is 100% foster-based and runs on the passion of volunteers. Thus, thank you, thank you, *thank you* for embarking on this amazing journey with us. Together, we will save lives!

A. Our Story

PawsCo is a Colorado-based 501(c)(3) animal welfare organization that provides a variety of services, including rescue/adoptions, spay-and-neuter, and community outreach to keep animals in their homes. The organization annually saves hundreds of dogs, cats and other furry friends, holds events to raise awareness for animal issues and showcase how awesome our volunteers are, and spays/neuters like it's going out of style.

PawsCo was founded in 2004 by its Chief Executive Officer, Kristin Des Marias. Originally called Four Paws Pet Center of Colorado, Inc. ("Four Paws"), Kristin used her strong connections in the animal welfare community to raise fundraise and spay and neuter. Over the course of nine years, Four Paws became an important player in the Colorado animal welfare world and spread awareness about spay and neuter services.

In 2010, the Pet Food Drive (then known as the Furry Friends Food Drive) was started during the economic recession as a program to help people keep their pets in their homes.

Through the Furry Friends Food Drive, Kristin met a new volunteer and another ambitious animal lover, Tiana Kennedy. As their relationship progressed, Tiana proposed a radical new idea for Colorado animal advocacy. Her idea, presented and circulated in the form of a business plan, involved helping Colorado's numerous underfunded and underserved animal shelters throughout Colorado connect with the Denver animal market.

Kristin and Tiana's efforts are paying off. PawsCo's 100+ life-saving fosters and 250+ devoted volunteers are a testament to what a group of people with caring hearts can do. Animal welfare in Colorado is forever changed, and the next phase of PawsCo's history involves you . . . let's do this!

B. Our Mission

PawsCo strives to provide a comprehensive approach to animal welfare by preventing new animal populations through spay and neuter, keeping pets in their homes through community outreach, and by helping animals already in the shelter system. We strive to do this as efficiently and compassionately as possible for all of the animals and people that we come into contact with.

What Makes PawsCo Unique?

PawsCo is a volunteer-run, foster-based animal welfare organization. The organization is run by volunteers with a business-like structure, so each volunteer has a different area of focus, thus allowing the rescue to be efficient, effective and create positive change for the most animals possible.

In 2019, PawsCo made a big step by hiring two part-time employees to help the organization grow and to provide accountable guidance for its volunteers.

The PawsCo team takes a comprehensive approach to our services of fostering, adoptions, and community support by working to provide education, support and excellent customer service.

Key Contacts

PawsCo has a paid VP of Operations and VP of Development but also an entire team of volunteer directors. Contact the Volunteer Director or the VP of Operations with your questions and they can direct you to the best person at the rescue to meet your needs.

Volunteer Director

volunteer@pawscoadoptions.org

VP of Operations

director@pawscoadoptions.org

C. Organization Structure

PawsCo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with two paid part-time employees. Volunteering, fostering, and adoptions are led by a leadership team of volunteers which is overseen by the VP of Operations.

PawsCo works to be a resource to Colorado shelters, and pulls animals out of shelters and places them in foster homes, provides all needed medical care, and finds quality adoptive homes for the animals.

D. The Rescue/Adoption Process

PawsCo works with partner shelters across Colorado transfer animals in need out of shelters and into the PawsCo family. We occasionally pull animals from shelter partners outside of Colorado. Each week PawsCo foster parents can choose from a list of animals at partner shelters that are looking for rescue. Once dogs or cats are identified for rescue, the PawsCo transport team coordinates travel to the shelter or a common meeting place for the foster to collect the animals and their documentation. The foster then brings them to Denver so they can start their new life!

While in foster care, the foster and vet teams verify and take the animal through a series of welfare steps. Included in the steps are that every animal is examined by a veterinarian, receives all necessary vaccinations, is spayed or neutered, and receives a microchip for identification purposes.

Once an animal is fully vetted and doing well in their foster home, the animal is put up for adoption. Foster families fill out an information sheet about their foster dog and then the PawsCo bio writers get to work in creating a personalized biography for each dog. The bio is posted on the PawsCo website, www.pawsc.org, and circulated through social media and petfinder.com for visibility to potential adopters. Since PawsCo maintains no physical facilities, marketing the animal's adoption availability is done online and through adoption events.

When someone is interested in adopting an animal, they complete an Adoption Application, and the adoption team will call the potential adopter and discuss the animal and the process with them. Once an application is preliminarily approved, the interested party schedules a "meet-and-greet" with the animal that they are interested in adopting, the foster family and a member of the adoption team.

If the prospective adopter and the adoption coordinator determine it is a good fit, the adopter pays an adoption fee, completes the PawsCo Adoption Agreement, and takes their new family member home.

E. About this Handbook

THE LANGUAGE OF THIS HANDBOOK AND THE RULES AND POLICIES STATED WITHIN ARE NOT INTENDED TO CREATE, NOR DO THEY CONSTITUTE, A CONTRACT IMPLIED OR EXPRESS BETWEEN PAWSCO AND ANY OF ITS VOLUNTEERS. THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE NOT UNCHANGEABLE. IF CIRCUMSTANCES ARISE THAT WARRANT CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE IN POLICIES OR PROCEDURES, VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BRING SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES TO THE ATTENTION OF MANAGEMENT. THIS HANDBOOK AND THE RULES AND POLICIES CONTAINED IN IT ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME WITHIN THE SOLE DISCRETION OF MANAGEMENT.

VOLUNTEERING AT PAWSCO IS ON AN "AT WILL" BASIS AND MAY BE TERMINATED BY PAWSCO OR THE VOLUNTEER AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON. ANY CHANGE TO THIS AT WILL VOLUNTEER STATUS, INCLUDING VOLUNTEER FOR A PARTICULAR REASON, MAY BE GRANTED ONLY WITH THE SPECIFIC PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF PAWSCO.

All volunteers are expected to abide by and follow these policies. In the event you have any questions concerning the application of any procedure or policy, you should ask the VP of Operations or the Volunteer Director. Any volunteer who feels that a policy has not been administered in accordance with this handbook should inform the VP of Operations and the Volunteer Director. No volunteer shall be penalized or discriminated against in any way for having requested consideration of the application of these policies or questioning the application of a policy in any situation.

PawsCo intend that justice and fair dealing be the practice and policies. Every volunteer should feel free to discuss his or her problems and any policies contained in this handbook with the VP of Operations and the Volunteer Director. We welcome suggestions from you that will aid in maintaining constructive and harmonious relationships throughout PawsCo.

Please read this handbook carefully and review it with whomever you like – your family, your fellow volunteers, or the Volunteer Director. If you have any questions, please bring them to the Volunteer Director. When you have completed your review, please sign the form at the end of the handbook stating that you have reviewed the handbook, understand its contents, and agree to abide by it. Please return the form to the Volunteer Director.

II. Volunteer Policies

The following volunteer policies govern your conduct while engaging in any form of volunteerism for PawsCo or acting on behalf of, or as a, member of PawsCo. Please read this handbook carefully and bring any questions, comments or grievances of the policy to the attention of the VP of Operations or the Volunteer Director before commencing your volunteerism with PawsCo.

A. Volunteer Standards of Conduct

PawsCo operations are largely decentralized – with different positions and groups of volunteers tasked with performing their assignments with overall direction, but much independence. The decentralized

structure is deliberate; it allows PawsCo passionate volunteers to carry out their duties in the time and manner of their convenience, while encouraging them to explore unique and effective ways to accomplish tasks.

Nonetheless, there are certain understandings and standards of conduct volunteers must comply with during their volunteerism with PawsCo, and volunteers are expected to complete tasks within 24 hours of requests unless otherwise communicated, and to communicate and represent the rescue in a professional, kind and effective manner.

Volunteer At-Will

PawsCo has two paid employees, however, you are a volunteer, not an employee or independent contractor.

In addition, you are a volunteer at-will. Moreover, PawsCo may terminate your volunteerism at any time, without cause or notice.

Reimbursement of Expenses

PawsCo will not reimburse you or any other volunteer for any expenses you incur while volunteering unless PawsCo policy to do so at the time such expense is incurred or there is a prior agreement in writing, signed by the VP of Operations, agreeing to the reimbursement of such expenses. Accordingly, you should verify with the Volunteer Director or the VP of Operations whether an expense will be reimbursed before incurring such expense. Some expenses are tax-deductible and you should consult with your tax advisor.

Only expenses that are pre-approved in writing as reimbursable to the individual, accompanied with a receipt from a reputable person or vendor will be refunded.

B. Standards of Conduct

Although you are a volunteer, you must still conduct yourself as professional member of the organization. Volunteers must report to activities punctually as scheduled, perform their assignments in a timely and professional manner, and follow all PawsCo procedures and practices. Failure to do any of these standards will result in a warning. Failure to do any of these tasks again may result in termination of your volunteerism. These standards are intended to be illustrative but not all-inclusive. ANY conduct that interferes with operations violates the standards of conduct and will not be tolerated. Accordingly, an offense which, in the judgment of the VP of Operations and the volunteer Senior Directors, undermines the effectiveness of the PawsCo activities or your performance is to be treated as a violation of the Standards of Conduct Policy.

The VP of Operations and the volunteer Senior Directors are the only individuals with authority to provide warnings or terminate your volunteerism with PawsCo.

The standards were developed to protect the well-being and rights of all volunteers.

Dress & Appearance

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for all meetings, events, or times they are representing the rescue. Appropriate dress and appearance, at all times, shows discretion, good taste, and does not present a hazard in the performance of your responsibility or a distraction to other volunteers, vendors, adopters, fosterers, or the public.

Creation and Distribution of PawsCo Materials

No volunteer may create or distribute any electronic or written product without authorization and approval from the VP of Operations, and must be created in accordance with the brand standards.

C. Equal Volunteer Policy

PawsCo is an equal opportunity organization. The organization grant equal volunteering opportunities to qualified persons without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, veterans' or military status or non-job physical or mental handicap or disability or other classification protected by applicable federal, state or local laws, except where there is a bona fide reason. PawsCo will provide equal opportunities in volunteering, promotion, and all privileges, to the extent such privileges exists, pursuant to these terms and conditions of volunteering. All recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting for positions is done without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age or national origin except when a bona fide reason exist. All decisions on volunteering are made to further the principle of equal volunteering.

D. Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

PawsCo is committed to providing an environment for our members, directors, officers, volunteers, and persons served by the PawsCo that is comfortable, safe and free from harassment of any kind. Any type of harassment is a violation of this policy and may be illegal.

Anti-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment Statement

PawsCo will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any volunteer, vendor, adopter, fosterer, or any other person. Accordingly, PawsCo volunteers may not discriminate against any person because of membership or non-membership in any organization, whether it is religious, fraternal, professional or social. Moreover, PawsCo volunteers may not harass any person, whether by: (1) words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact, or violence; (2) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when such conduct creates an intimidating environment or prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of his or her position, or when such conduct is made a condition of volunteering or compensation, either implicitly or explicitly.

Each volunteer has the right and duty to bring any problems to the attention of the Volunteer Director or the VP of Operations. Discrimination in any form is grounds for termination of your volunteerism with PawsCo.

Responsibility

All volunteers are responsible for helping prevent and stop discrimination and harassment, including the work and volunteer environment of PawsCo vendors, adopters, foster families, and another other person who you have contact with through your volunteerism with PawsCo. If you become aware of an incident of discrimination or harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, you

must report it to either the Volunteer Director or the VP of Operations - whomever you feel comfortable. When PawsCo becomes aware of discrimination or harassment, it is obligated by law to take prompt and appropriate action, regardless of whether the victim wants PawsCo to do so.

Complaint Procedure

Any volunteer who believes that he or she has suffered discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, should take the following action:

- If you are able to do so without conflict or danger, tell the discriminator or harasser as clearly as possible that the behavior is unwelcome; and
- If the behavior continues, advise the Volunteer Director or VP of Operations of your complaint. Clearly identify the behavior surrounding the complaint.

Confidentiality

PawsCo, including all persons to whom a violation of this policy has been reported and persons who have become aware of a complaint, must maintain confidentiality, to the extent possible given the need to investigate. All complaints shall be considered confidential to the maximum extent possible.

Retaliation

PawsCo, or any director, officer, or volunteer may not retaliate against any victim, or witness, who reports a violation of this Harassment Policy.

E. Volunteer Background Check

PawsCo reserves the right to perform a background investigation to evaluate a volunteer's qualifications, character, and to identify potential risks for safety and security reasons. A background investigation will include criminal history check. You will be asked to consent in writing to a background check if PawsCo elects to conduct one.

III. Email & Electronics Policy

Most of PawsCo volunteer communication occurs via email. PawsCo provides some volunteers an email account. In addition, PawsCo gives some volunteers access to its electronic shared drive, based on need for the information. The Email & Electronics Policy is designed to maintain the professionalism, consistency, and integrity of PawsCo email communications and electronics databases.

A. Applicability

This policy applies to the use of the PawsCo email services, as well as to use of any electronic communication any volunteer engages in while carrying out PawsCo tasks, purporting to act on behalf of PawsCo, or while holding oneself out as a volunteer, representative, agent, member, or affiliate of PawsCo. Hence, any email you send from an email account provided by PawsCo or any other email account while purporting to be on behalf of PawsCo or in conducting business on behalf of PawsCo must comply with this policy.

Any volunteer who witnesses a violation of the terms of this policy must report such violation immediately to the Volunteer Director or VP of Operations.

B. Email Accounts are the Property of PawsCo

All email accounts maintained on PawsCo email systems are property of PawsCo. PawsCo has the right to read and keep a record of any emails that users transmit via the PawsCo email system.

PawsCo reserves the right to terminate your email account or access to the shared database for violation of this policy at any time and for any reason it deems acceptable.

Volunteers may not provide passwords or log-in information to any person not authorized to use PawsCo email accounts or electronic databases.

PawsCo may remove any electronic material on the shared drive deemed inappropriate, unprofessional, or wasteful by the VP of Operations.

C. Email Use

PawsCo allows its email access primarily for business purposes. You may use PawsCo's email system for personal use only in accordance with this policy. PawsCo permits personal emails only if such emails are sent and received in moderation and are otherwise "work appropriate." Excessive personal use can result in any of the Possible Sanctions.

Only send emails of which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If they cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider rephrasing the email, using other means of communication, or protecting information by using a password.

Professionalism

Despite the informal communication PawsCo volunteers may exhibit over email, PawsCo expects all communications you have with non-volunteers, including past, current or prospective adopters, foster families, trainers, vendors or the public, to be professional and to be written using good judgment.

Unacceptable use of email

The following acts shall constitute unacceptable use of the email system of PawsCo:

- Forwarding of the PawsCo confidential messages to external locations;
- Distributing, disseminating or storing images, text or materials that might be considered indecent, pornographic, obscene or illegal;
- Distributing, disseminating or storing images, text or materials that might be considered discriminatory, offensive or abusive, in that the context is a personal attack, sexist or racist, or might be considered as harassment;
- Accessing copyrighted information in a way that violates the copyright;
- Breaking into the PawsCo or another organizations system or unauthorized use of a password/mailbox;
- Broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters;
- Using email to operate another business, conduct an external job search, or solicit money for personal gain;
- Transmitting unsolicited commercial or advertising material; or

- Repeatedly sending emails that fail to conform to PawsCo established format requirements; or
- Undertaking any activities that waste networked resources.

Business Record Retention Policy

Email messages are written business records and are subject to the PawsCo rules and policies relating to retaining and deleting business records.

Confidential Information

Volunteers must observe strict confidentiality with regard to proprietary and other sensitive information they obtain in connection with their involvement with PawsCo including, but not limited to financial condition and operating results, and personal information of our volunteers, adopters and professional connections. Avoid sending confidential information by email. Unless authorized to do so, you are prohibited from using email to transmit confidential information to outside parties. You may not access, send, receive, solicit, print, copy, or reply to confidential or proprietary information about PawsCo, its volunteers, clients, and other business associates.

Legal Risks Involved

Email is a business communication tool and you are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective, and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, similar laws apply. Therefore, it is important that users are aware of the following legal risks of email. Both you and PawsCo could be held liable for:

- Sending emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks;
- Forwarding emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks;
- Unlawfully forwarding confidential information of others;
- Copyright infringement for unlawfully forwarding or copying messages without permission; or
- Sending an attachment that contains a virus.

The above list does not enumerate all the legal risks involved. However, by following the guidelines provided in this policy, you can minimize the legal risks involved in the use of email. If any user disregards the rules set out in this Email Policy, PawsCo can take corrective action up to, and including, termination of volunteering.

D. Email Format

This is for members of PawsCo leadership or other volunteers with a Pawsco email address. Signatures should include your name, position title and the PawsCo name. A disclaimer will be added underneath your signature (see Disclaimer).

Spell check all emails. Use font, format and email signature information in accordance with the brand standards.

If you forward emails, state clearly what action you would like the recipient to take.

Delete any email messages that you do not need to have a copy of, and set your email account to automatically empty your deleted items on closing.

Disclaimer

The following disclaimer shall be added to each outgoing email:

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately.

To UNSUBSCRIBE please click [HERE](#) and reply 'Unsubscribe.'

Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of PawsCo. Finally, the recipient should check this email and any attachments for the presence of viruses. PawsCo accepts no liability for any damage caused by any virus transmitted by this email.

E. Possible Sanctions

Failure to abide by this policy could result in removal or disablement of your PawsCo email account, restrictions on or removal of your ability to access the shared database, or termination of your volunteerism with PawsCo.

IV. Automobile Policy

All PawsCo volunteers must submit their proof of vehicle insurance before performing any driving on behalf of the organization. PawsCo is not responsible for the maintenance, condition, or the registration of the vehicle. Volunteers are also responsible for ensuring that their driver's license is in good standing when performing any task that involves driving for the organization. As a volunteer, you are never obligated to drive on behalf of the organization. While we appreciate our transport volunteers and other volunteers who drive their personal vehicles for PawsCo, no volunteer is ever required to do so. There is plenty of work that can be done that does not require driving for the organization. Volunteers who drive incur increased risk they will have a car accident. Driving involves increased risk of a car accident. It will add miles to your vehicle and you will incur associated driving expenses, such as gas expenses and wear-and-tear on your vehicle. You are not obligated to drive, ever.

V. Volunteer Assumption of Risks

As a volunteer, there is a chance you will interact with or handle dogs, cats or other pets. These animals can be dangerous. They can be aggressive, protective, fearful, excitable or unpredictable. Any interaction or handling of such animals entails many inherent risks, such as the risk an animal may bite or scratch you, the risk an animal spread a disease or ailment to you, or that you will receive physical injury in some other way by virtue of your interacting with or handling an animal.

You are NEVER obligated to interact with or handle an animal you are not comfortable with. If at any time an animal makes you uncomfortable, please refrain from engaging the animal and tell your volunteer supervisor. We will ask a trained volunteer to handle the animal. Your safety and well-being is important to us. No matter how much you want to help the organization, your safety comes first, and we are fully willing to make accommodations to keep you safe.

VI. Orientation Checklist

- A. Volunteer Application Complete
- B. Volunteer Agreement Signed & Dated
- C. Handbook Acknowledgment Received
- D. Attend Orientation
- E. Background Check
- F. New Volunteer Welcome Letter

Statement of Understanding

I have received, read, and agree to abide by the Company Volunteer Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures set forth in the handbook. I also understand that the handbook is not a contract of volunteering, does not in any way limit the right of PawsCo to terminate my volunteering and that my volunteering may be terminated at any time, with or without notice, within the sole discretion of the Company management.

Name

Date

