



Humane Society of Sonoma County Job Description

Job Title:	Shelter Behavior Specialist	Location:	Santa Rosa/Healdsburg
Department:	Behavior and Training (BnT)	Hours:	32-40 hrs./wk.
FLSA Classification:	Non-exempt	Reports To:	Director Behavior and Training
Salary Range:	\$22-\$25		

SUMMARY

The Shelter Behavior Specialist is responsible for providing hands-on behavioral support to the shelter population. This role focuses on conducting behavior assessments, reassessments, and creating and implementing behavioral interventions to ensure the well-being and adoptability of shelter animals. While the primary focus is on animal behavior, the specialist also provides guidance and training to staff and volunteers as needed to support proper handling and enrichment efforts. Additionally, this position plays a key role in supporting adoption and foster efforts by providing consultations and writing behavior recommendations.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Shelter Animal Behavior & Assessment

- Conducts initial behavior assessments and regular reassessments for shelter animals.
- Writes detailed adoption recommendations for animals to support appropriate placement.
- Implements behavior modification plans for animals with behavioral challenges.
- Works directly with animals to provide enrichment, training, and socialization.
- Monitors and documents animal behavior to track progress and identify trends; maintains and updates records in Shelter Buddy, our shelter software program.
- Assists in making recommendations for adoption, foster, and transfer placements.
- Fits animals for appropriate equipment to ensure comfort and safety.

Behavioral Intervention & Support

- Implements behavior modification techniques to address fear, anxiety, aggression, and other behavioral concerns.
- Provides hands-on training sessions for animals in need of additional behavioral support.
- Works closely with the Adoptions team to ensure appropriate placement matches based on behavioral needs.
- Conducts dog introductions to ensure appropriate placement with potential adopters' resident dogs.
- Provides behavior consultations for potential adopters to set them up for success.
- Offers post-adoption behavior consultations and ongoing support to adopters.
- Promptly responds to behavior-related animal returns information to inform pathway decisions.
- Participates in animal outcome decisions, including potential humane euthanasia outcomes when necessary.
- May be required to offer public behavior consultations or teach group training classes as needed to support departmental revenue goals.

Foster & Staff/Volunteer Support

- Provides guidance to staff and volunteers on proper handling and behavior management techniques.
- Assists in training efforts to ensure best practices in animal handling and enrichment.
- Supports staff in executing handling plans and behavior protocols for shelter animals.
- Promptly responds to animal-related incidents – e.g. bites, fights, loose animals, etc.
- Provides behavioral support and guidance to foster volunteers to help animals transition successfully.
- Writes foster requests outlining specific behavioral needs and support strategies for animals in foster care.

Supervision: This position reports directly to Director of Behavior and Training dept.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Minimum one year of experience working with shelter animals, preferably in a behavior and training capacity.
- Professional certification preferred (e.g., CPDT-KA, CDBC, or equivalent).

QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong knowledge of animal behavior, training techniques, and humane handling methods.
- Strong animal handling skills and ability to read animal body language.
- Comfortable/competent handling animals with a wide range of behaviors, including fractious or fearful animals.
- Experience conducting behavior assessments and implementing modification plans.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a fast-paced environment.
- Strong observational and documentation skills.
- Valid CA driver's license and reliable transportation.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

While performing the duties of this job the employee is required to stand, walk, bend, reach, stoop, kneel, squat, and crawl; use finger, handle, or feel objects; reach with hands; talk and hear; climb or balance. The employee must be able to lift, move and carry objects up to 50 pounds. Use of arms above the shoulder is sometimes required. Specific vision abilities required by the job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

Work environment:

The employee is generally working in a shelter environment and will be exposed to animals. Duties involve the use of cleaning agents and are performed in the animal adoption, hospital, and administrative office areas at the Sonoma Humane Society. Allergic condition which would be aggravated from exposure to animals or cleansing agents is a disqualification.

NOTES

Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time and the employee is expected to adhere to all company policies. The above information is representative of the work performed in this position, however it is not all-inclusive. The omission of a specific duty or responsibility does not exclude it from the position if the work is similar or related to the essential duties and responsibilities.

I have read and understand this explanation and job description and am able to perform all duties contained herein.

Employee Name

Manager Name

Signature

Signature

Date

Date