



# THE ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY

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A Commitment to Caring *Since 1899*

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**PETOGRAPHY VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

## WELCOME

By joining the Petographer program you will be directly assisting animals who are in the adoption rooms find new homes! The work and effort volunteers put into taking photos and video and creating profiles is seen and read by thousands of people. Using your talents to chronicle the story of each pet using the Anti-Cruelty Petango website, you can help us find forever homes faster for shelter pets.

Please remember that it is important that you follow all procedures and policies while volunteering. The procedures have been created and implemented to protect the animals, volunteers, staff and general public. These are a result and compilation of the knowledge and experiences of Anti-Cruelty Society volunteers and staff. Adhering to these procedures will assist you with your Petography volunteer responsibilities.

If you have any questions, issues or concerns, please bring it to the attention of the Volunteer Services Department.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

As a Petographer your mission is to accurately and positively portray the personalities of pets who are in the adoption room using tools such as biographies, photographs and videos. Using these tools you can help adopters learn more about the available cats and dogs at the Society – and thus – will expedite their adoption!

### **Petographer Volunteer Responsibilities**

1. Take flattering photos of available animals.
2. Create accurate profiles depicting the animal's personality.
3. Shoot videos of dogs and cats in action.
4. Update profile information on animals who have been at the shelter for a long time.

### **Program Notes**

- When first starting limit the number of animals to profile between 5 and 10 until you become comfortable with the steps and workload.
- We highly recommend starting out your first few Petography hours taking photos of puppies and kittens for practice
- After a month of volunteering in the program the Volunteer Services Department will contact you to do a portfolio review. You will submit samples of your work via e-mail to receive constructive feedback on the quality of your photos.
- Volunteers must upload the same day the information was captured – this will prevent others from overlapping with your work.

- Since the turn over is high with regards to the length of stay for animals, it is important to publicize and promote the animals who have been at the shelter a little longer and those that may need extra attention given to them.

This includes:

- Age: Older Dogs/Cats (over 3 years)
- Size: Bigger animals
- Length of stay: Longer than 1 month
- Type: More dogs than cats

The characteristics listed above can be determined by viewing the kennel card or each of the animals.

### **Your Efforts Make a Difference**

Animals are continuously surrendered and transferred to The Anti-Cruelty Society and placed up for adoption. The majority of dogs available in the adoption room remain at the shelter for only a week. A cats average length of stay is a month and a half. Some animals do remain in residence at the Society for longer for a variety of reasons, including health or temperament. Your volunteer efforts significantly help a family or individual searching for their “ideal” companion animal, and shorten the time a dog or cat remains in our care.

- If you know of someone who is in search of a companion animal, encourage them to visit the [www.anticruelty.org](http://www.anticruelty.org), [www.petango.com](http://www.petango.com), or [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) web sites.
- If they have visited the web sites and have any questions, they can call the customer service desk at (312) 644-8338.

## **GETTING STARTED**

Please follow these procedures when volunteering:

1. For this program, we will require you to pre-schedule your shifts using the Volunteer Scheduler, located on the main ACS website. The password to access this application is “ilovepets” To ensure that volunteers are not overlapping it will be vital to sign-up for a slot in advance.
2. Once in the shelter, take your ACS volunteer ID badge from the holder and a volunteer apron and begin your program.
3. After completing your volunteer shift, enter the hours in your account online at [www.myvolunteerpage.com](http://www.myvolunteerpage.com), in the “My Hours Log” section and make a record who you photographed in the Petography notebook located in the black filing cabinet under the badges.

## Shelter Hours

The Anti-Cruelty Society is open to the public 7 days a week.

- Monday-Friday: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm & Saturday & Sunday: 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm.
- Petography volunteers may be in the shelter to assist 7 days a week.  
8:00am-7:45pm.

## Supplies

Prior to leaving the volunteer office to photograph the animals, make sure you have everything you will need to complete the necessary tasks, including:

- Pen
- List of animals needing update
- Petographer Notes Sheet which will help keep track all the information needed for new profiles to be posted.
- The camera which is stored in the Petographer locker in the volunteer office.
  - A sign on the locker identifies which is the Petographer Volunteer Program locker.  
The combination to the lock is: **11 – 20 – 37.**
- Toys and treats that may aid in getting an animal's attention

## Using the Computer

First, check to see if the computer is turned on. Make sure the PC is not in “sleep mode” – move the mouse to see if an image appears on the monitor. If nothing appears, follow the instructions below:

- To start the computer press the ‘on’ button located in the middle of the CPU (located on the desk top, next to the monitor).
- If you need assistance with using the computer, please contact staff from the Volunteer Services Department.

## Logging in to Petpoint

- Open the Internet Explorer browser on the computer and open the bookmarks – click on the PetPoint page.
- The shelter ID is: USIL56
- Enter your unique username and password. Please note that fields are case sensitive.
- Enter the animal's numbers from your Notes Sheet and record their current cage number.
- Next, look to see who is missing a bio. To do this look at the main ‘available animals’ screen and record on your Notes Sheet which animals have ‘no’ written under the ‘Memo’ heading. These are animals who need bios written. Also note that some pets may have a generic bio written – in these cases please update with a personality specific memo.
- Be sure to record the animal's location and cage # in your Notes.

## GUIDELINES

### Preventing Overlap

One of the biggest avoidable frustrations for Petography volunteers is when efforts to profile a pet accidentally overlap. To help avoid these occurrences we ask volunteers to utilize the following guidelines:

- Volunteers should use the Volunteer Schedule to pre-schedule their upcoming shifts to avoid potential overlap.
- All content should be posted to each animal's profile within 24 hours of its creation. This will help keep your efforts efficient but will also help other volunteers focus their production time.
- Use a "photo coming soon!" template holder if you are not updating the photos from the shelter. This will serve a marker to other volunteers that someone has taken the photo and is currently working on it. Note that if the template is up for longer than 24 hours it may be deleted to allow another volunteer to create the pictures.



**Photo coming soon!**

- Use a "coming soon" template holder for videos. As video content can take more time to produce it is extremely important that volunteers utilize this tool so that another volunteer does not come in and also shoot content for the same pet.
  - The link for the "coming soon" template can be found here:
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5Dx9cjU3fY>

### Photographing Pets

To help take the best picture of each animal use the following tips:

- Ask a volunteer or staff member to assist you.
- Turn the camera so that you take the photo vertically, or as a portrait, rather than a landscape.
- Try to avoid taking photos of pets with humans in the frame – this can be distracting to the adopters.
- Turn the flash off for better picture quality

- Use the Macro (or flower) setting on the camera to take higher quality close-up images which will also blur out the background. Note that this setting only works well in good lighting situations.
- Review the photos before returning the animal to their kennel – check for sharpness, light, and overall quality.

### Photographing Dogs

- If you are not trained in handling dogs ask for a staff or volunteer’s assistance.
- Take dogs out of their kennel before taking their photograph. This will help to eliminate the impression of the animal being “behind bars” and will provide a better view of the animal.
- The courtyard is a great location to take good pictures of dogs.
- Volunteers are also welcome to use the Volunteer Office to photograph dogs. Be sure to place a “loose dog” card on the office window to ensure other people who are entering are aware of the dog’s presence. These cards are affixed to the volunteer bulletin board.
- Try your best to get down to the dog’s level when taking the photo. This is a simply technique that will result in much better images.
- Remember to wash your hands between dogs and to disinfect any toys you may have used.



*Before*



*After*

### Photographing Cats

- If you are not trained in handling cats ask for a staff or volunteer’s assistance.
- Some cats photograph very well in their kennels. If this is the method you choose make sure that there is ample lighting and that the cage is tidy.
- For cats whose kennels are dim or who don’t ‘show’ well in-cage you will need to remove them and place them on a windowsill or ‘cuddle cubicle.’ Make sure you have someone watching that the cat does not jump off and run away.
- Another option for photographing cats is to transport them to the Multi-purpose room in the volunteer office for a photo session. If this is the case ask a staff member for assistance in moving the cat. Bring their colorful blanket with so that you can pose them on a bright surface.
- Remember to always wash your hands between cats and to always disinfect any surface you or the cat may have come in contact with.



*The good...*

*the bad...*

*and the ugly.*

### Writing Bios

When creating bios for pets it is important to describe as much about each animal's personality as possible. This will help promote each animal and identify their unique traits that make him/her a good companion animal for someone.

- Reading the kennel cards, Behavioral notes in PetPoint, Behavior Screening Report (BSR) and your personal interaction with the animals, will provide insight into the personalities and behaviors of each.
  - Omit any kind of language in the bio that may sound finite. For example – we should shy away from saying “Sam does well with other dogs” to “Sam does well with most dogs.” This way adopters understand that certain behaviors are not absolute.
  - Using other facts such as age and veterinarian comments can also help in creating the profile.
- Don't over-fluff! Be honest and help craft an image of the dog or cat that will lead to the animal being matched with the right person (and the right person being matched with the right animal).
- Don't fatigue the reader! Petpoint will automatically include basic stats for each pet, such as age, breed, size, etc.. You do not need to include this information in your bios.

### Templates:

In the event that you are unable to contribute a profile for lack of animal information use the following template:

*"Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I've recently become available for adoption. The staff is getting to know me and will soon be posting more information – so check back or better yet, visit me at The Anti-Cruelty Society"*

When writing a profile for a puppy or kitten who is under 6 months of age, please use one of the following templates:

*Puppy Description:*

Aren't I the cutest thing you have ever seen? Everyone loves a puppy, but before you bring me home there are a couple of things you need to consider. I am a blank slate- I'm not housetrained, (potty-trained), chew trained, and don't know anything yet. Like a new baby, I will need a lot of attention, a lot of love, and constant supervision. To become a well rounded dog- I would do best starting in a puppy training class where I can learn to be social with not only people, but other dogs as well. If you have the time, love, and patience to take care of me, I promise to be your best friend.

*Kitten Description:*

Hello, I'm a really cute kitten, and everyone who sees me can't help but to fall in love with me. Kittens need to be a part of the family, and do best with someone who can devote a lot of time to them, or have another kitten or cat to keep them company. I'm young, have no manners yet, and can be a bit mischievous, so I will need help learning how to be a good cat. Kittens love to play, but they will need to learn how to play appropriately with people and other pets. If you have the time, patience, and love for me, I can't wait to meet you.

**Producing Videos**

When taking videos try your best to:

- Take video in bright natural light. This will bring out the best quality of footage.
- Refrain from talking while shooting – because of your proximity to the mic your voice will be amplified.
- Find something on which to lean or stabilize your hand. This will limit shakiness.
- Show the pet lounging, playing, or being pet by a visitor, volunteer, or staff member
- It is helpful to have a helper when shooting video of dogs
- Volunteers are always welcome to use the multi-purpose room in the volunteer office to capture video of dogs off-leash
- Videos should be at least 10 seconds in length
- Do not use videos that show behaviors that may be viewed as undesirable by adopters – such as marking, play biting, swatting, or hissing.

**Respecting Colleagues**

As the Petography Program grows and more volunteers become involved it is more important than ever to practice basic etiquette when creating and uploading content. Please remember to follow these guidelines:

- If you happen to catch a fantastic photo of a pet and would like to upload it – only replace one of the three existing volunteer photos.
- Do not replace all of a pet's profile photos unless:
  - The photo is obviously a photo taken in the receiving department. This is usually apparent as there is a blue carrier in a cat photo or adog is tied out next to a wall.
  - An animal's photo makes it appear to be aggressive or ill

- An animal is being restrained in a way that may make them look like they are being strangled.
- If there is a photo you would like to replace because you find the quality to be sub par, please contact the Volunteer Services Department first.
- Do not replace a pet's video without contacting the Volunteer Services Department first.
- If you are asked to replace a quality photo or any video by a staff member, please have them put the request through the Volunteer Services Department.

## CREATING COMPLETE PROFILES

To help you properly and efficiently update animals' profiles on our various websites, follow these next few steps:

1. Check the Status of the Animals on the Society website
2. Select & Photograph Animals
3. Transfer Photos to Computer
4. Upload Photos & Profiles to Petpoint
5. Upload Videos to YouTube and link to Petango

### 1. Check the Status of Animals

To maintain the most current information you should check the status of animals currently profiled and listed on our sites. Pull up our adoptions page on [www.anticruelty.org](http://www.anticruelty.org) and compile a list of animals who need new photos, making sure to note their animal numbers on the Petographer Notes Sheet.

### 2. Record Animal Profile Information

Using the Petographer Notes Sheet, write down all the necessary and available information for each animal that you are profiling.

- The Behavior and Training team will be including behavioral note in each animal's Petango profile when available. These notes should be included in some form within your finished write-up.
- If behavioral notes are not available in PetPoint, but you see a BSR stamp on the kennel card, you can pull up the notes in the pet's profile at the customer service desk.
- Read the comments on the Adoption Match Card made by behaviorists and veterinarians.
- Make notations about the animal's personality through your observations on your Note Sheet.

### 3. Photograph Animals

Take a variety of photos of each pet you are profiling. The more you take the more you'll have to choose from. Remember that you'll need at least three for each pet's profile.

- Remember to record the order in which you take photos on your Notes Sheet.

- This will help prevent any confusion about which photo and information belong to which animal.

#### 4. Transfer Photos to Computer

Don't forget to upload photo and video holding templates for those pets you are working on so that other volunteers do not overlap.

Volunteers are welcome to update profiles from the comfort of their home. If you choose to create profiles from the Volunteer Office use the following instructions:

- Open the following folder on the computer desktop: Available Animals
- Using the provided USB cable, attach the camera to the computer. Turn on camera.
- In a separate window open My Computer/Camera and select all items. Drag into 'Available Animal's folder
- If you would like to edit photos before posting them to the websites, visit [www.picnik.com](http://www.picnik.com) and log-in using "ACSVolunteer" as the username and "ilovepets" as the password.
- Once you have uploaded all of your photos please delete them from the camera.

#### 5. Create Profiles

- Type in the animal's number and click 'submit'. Check that the animal's profile matches the specifics of your information sheet
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Browse.' On the left hand side of the open screen click Desktop and then open the Available Animals folder. Choose the photo that corresponds with your info sheet and click 'open.' Scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'submit.'
- To upload the next photo, scroll back to the bottom of the page and click to the left of the 'browse' button to select '2.' Click 'browse,' select the second photo, and open. Then scroll to the bottom of the page and click submit.
- Follow the previous instructions to upload a final photo.
- Write the pet's bio in the Memo box and click submit.

**Note: You must click submit after updating each step or Pet Point will not save your work.**

#### 6. Upload Videos

If time allows, also take video of available pets. This gives adopters an extra glimpse into their looks and personalities!

To upload your videos follow these instructions:

- Plug in the camera to the computer using the provided USB cord.
- Open the YouTube website: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- Log-In to our account:
  - You Tube Username: anticrueltysociety
  - You Tube Password: 157Grand (case sensitive)

- Click “Upload” on the top right hand corner. Choose “Browse.” Locate the camera under “My Computer” and choose the videos you would like to upload.
- While the videos are loading, rename them using the animal’s ID # and name.
  - In the description field copy and paste your pet bio and at the very end of it sign with your initials. This will help the Society keep track of who is uploading which video.
  - Do not attempt to save the video into the pet’s profile until the video has completely finished processing. Otherwise you will create an error.
- To link an animal’s video to their Petango profile, log in to PetPoint. Pull up the animal’s profile using their ID #. Copy the animal’s YouTube video url and paste into the appropriate “add video” field in PetPoint. Then click submit.

## CONCLUSION

Thank you again for choosing to help with the Petography volunteer program!

Your efforts in profiling and promoting animals on our websites can help speed up the adoption process for many animals and assists them in finding the best companion possible.

The Anti-Cruelty Society staff and animals thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.



## Appendix

Use this form when obtaining information for profiles (info can be found on kennel card). The order of information is the same as petfinder.com:

Type of Animal		Type of Animal	
Primary Breed		Primary Breed	
Secondary Breed		Secondary Breed	
Gender		Gender	
Size		Size	
Age		Age	
Name		Name	
Profile Information		Profile Information	
Special Needs		Special Needs	
Good with Animals		Good with Animals	
Good with children		Good with children	
Spay/Neutered		Spay/Neutered	
Up to date with shots*		Up to date with shots	
Declawed		Declawed	
Housebroken		Housebroken	
Additional comments		Additional comments	

