

We all deserve



a place to call home

**MY PIT BULL IS FAMILY  
VOLUNTEER  
HANDBOOK**

## About My Pit Bull is Family

My Pit Bull is Family was created in 2011 by a landlord in Minneapolis, MN who realized that her properties were among the few that accepted Pit Bull Type Dogs. Through her passion to promote inclusive pet policies – a campaign to end housing and insurance discrimination was started. Through a team of volunteers in Minneapolis and around the country, bumper stickers were shared and displayed by supporters. This campaign led the volunteers to create a housing database of rentals that accept Pit Bull Type Dogs.

In 2014, Shannon Glenn joined the campaign and moved forward with creating a non-profit organization, My Pit Bull is Family. Since 2014, the organization has grown through increasing volunteers in Minneapolis and around the country, has attended events both locally and nationally, managing the Nation's largest database of rentals that accept all dogs, and is now viewed as a leader in animal welfare.

My Pit Bull is Family is focused on ending housing and insurance discrimination for ALL dogs regardless of what they look like or their perceived breed. We know that all dogs are individuals and that the families that love them deserve a place to call home, together. Each month our volunteer team contacts dog friendly apartments in various cities across the US to gather data on pet policies. We know that lack of pet friendly housing is a top reason why families surrender their dogs to shelters and rescues. We believe that through providing resources to families searching for housing, through partnering with local organizations to provide wrap-around services – we will be able to reduce the number of dogs that enter our shelters and rescues each year.

My Pit Bull is Family  
PO Box 26262  
Minneapolis, MN 55426  
[MyPitBullisFamily.org](http://MyPitBullisFamily.org)

## **The My Pit Bull is Family Volunteer Experience**

When you volunteer with My Pit Bull is Family, you're giving families who want to stay together one of the greatest gifts of all — your time. Whether you're conducting rental research calls, helping out at events or assisting in some other way, you're helping families stay together. For that, everyone at My Pit Bull is Family is incredibly grateful. We wish you an enjoyable, safe, fulfilling and rewarding volunteer experience!

To learn more about volunteering with My Pit Bull is Family and to ensure an even better volunteer experience, please take a few minutes to read this guide.

## **About the handbook**

This handbook summarizes many of My Pit Bull is Family's volunteer policies and procedures. All My Pit Bull is Family Leadership Team members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook and would be happy to provide you with further information or clarification if you need it.

My Pit Bull is Family's Leadership Team members may modify, rescind, delete or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If changes are made, we will be sure to notify you as soon as possible.

Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual relationship or employee relationship between you (the volunteer) and My Pit Bull is Family.

## **My Pit Bull is Family guiding principles**

My Pit Bull is Family is guided by the following values or principles:

- The Golden Rule: To treat all living things as we ourselves would wish to be treated.
- Kindness: To demonstrate compassion and respect for all living creatures.
- Positive Influence: To judge our effectiveness by the extent to which animal lives are saved and improved, and by the positive experience of the people we touch.
- Leadership: To lead by example — developing, promoting and sharing great new ideas and programs.
- Authenticity: To do what we say we do.
- Transparency: To be open and honest in our relationships.

Everyone representing My Pit Bull is Family is expected to follow these principles.

## **Our commitment to you**

The Leadership Team at My Pit Bull is Family truly appreciates your service and your dedication to help families stay together, and we want to make sure you have a wonderful and enjoyable experience. So, we strive to:

1. Provide you with adequate information, training and assistance so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
2. Provide you with guidance, goals and feedback.
3. Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
4. Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
5. Treat you as a valued team member.

## **Leadership Team responsibilities**

The My Pit Bull is Family Leadership Team is led by the Executive Director. These key team members are responsible for the general administration of all volunteer programs and general organizational programming. The Leadership Team also works as the working Board of Directors.

Responsibilities might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recruit people into appropriate volunteer positions
- Provide new volunteers with orientation and training to be successful
- Assist with scheduling or schedule volunteers for volunteer opportunities
- Maintain the confidentiality of volunteers' records and personal information
- Provide regular and appropriate recognition for active volunteers
- Provide written references pertaining to the volunteer's experience (hours contributed, length of commitment, position description) if requested

## **Overview of current volunteer positions**

### **Rental Research Volunteers**

Each month volunteers from across the country conduct rental research calls where we are able to track pet policies. Depending on where a majority of families contact us searching for housing – we will conduct a housing project in that area. Through conducting these research projects we are able to provide insight on where families can find housing that will accept their dog and also collect data for local changemakers in communities across the country. Rental Research Volunteers will complete between 20-50 rental property research projects each month.

## **Minneapolis Area Event Volunteers**

My Pit Bull is Family participates in over 100 events a year. The main focus of each event is community outreach and fundraising. At each event you can expect to encounter families who have used our housing database to find housing, have conversations with individuals who want to learn more about discrimination dog owners face, and provide additional resources outside of our organizational scope. We ask that event volunteers participate in a minimum of 1 event per month to remain active depending on the event schedule. The majority of our events each year are in Minneapolis, MN and the surrounding areas.

## **North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center Advocates**

Our North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center Advocates are experts in pet retention resources and have the ability of meeting community members where they're at. This team of volunteers manages our Pet Resource Center in North Minneapolis along with relationships in the community. The focus of this program is to keep families together by providing resources in underserved communities such as food, kennels, leashes, and providing referrals to partner service providers. Volunteers for the Pet Resource Center are required to volunteer 1 shift per month.

**Volunteers may participate in one or or of the volunteer positions. There will be times where My Pit Bull is Family will participate in events throughout the county and will request that local volunteers (if available) participate in the event.**

## **Youth volunteers and interns**

My Pit Bull is Family welcomes the involvement of younger volunteers and interns at events. The goal is the same as it is for our older volunteers: to have a fun and rewarding experience. Below are the policies to ensure that our young volunteers have a safe experience.

## **At Events & North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center**

For the protection of children, children five years and younger may not volunteer. Children ages 6 to 15 must be accompanied by an adult volunteer. Volunteers 16 and older may volunteer without a parent or guardian present. Parents or guardians of minor children (under age 18) must sign a Minor Permission Form, which gives permission for minor children to volunteer.

## **Your volunteer commitment**

When you serve as a My Pit Bull is Family volunteer, we ask the following of you:

### **Computer-related Requirements**

- Have regular access to the Internet, email address and Facebook account. Email is our main form of monthly communication to share information, such as volunteer instructions, assignments, opportunities and confirmations.
- Respond to emails and Facebook messages from the My Pit Bull is Family Leadership Team in a timely manner. Leadership Team members are committed to answering emails within 48 hours (during regular business hours).

### **Your volunteer profile and history**

- Please apply to volunteer at [Mypitbullisfamily.org](http://Mypitbullisfamily.org) once approved you will gain access to our My Pit Bull is Family Volunteer Facebook Group.
- Complete all required paperwork for acceptance into our volunteer program.
- Supply references as requested.
- Keep your volunteer record updated with your current email address, phone number and USPS mailing address. (Your name and addresses will not be sold, traded or given to any other organization.)
- By the last day of each month, input your volunteer hours worked for that month. Instructions will be provided. This record of your hours is used to recognize your contribution, to show potential donors and funders that we are supported by community members, and in grant reports.
- Complete any assignments for which you volunteer. If you cannot complete the assignment, please notify your Volunteer Mentor or assigned Volunteer Coordinator.
- Stay within the parameters of your volunteer position(s) and assignment(s).
- Understand that all content developed by any volunteer as a My Pit Bull is Family volunteer is the property of My Pit Bull is Family. This includes, but is not limited to, all graphics, web pages, narratives, research, compilations, instructional texts, text, photos, videos, writings, computer programs, spreadsheets, summaries and recordings. It also includes any royalties, proceeds or other benefits derived from these materials. Of course, volunteers will receive appropriate credit for their submissions.
- Grant My Pit Bull is Family rights in all photographic images, video and audio recordings of you made during the course of your assignment.
- Follow the dress code outlined in this handbook when representing My Pit Bull is Family at functions, meetings and events.
- Return all My Pit Bull is Family property when requested or when your volunteer service ends.

### **Expenses and insurance**

- Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for My Pit Bull is Family. In certain instances some expenses will be reimbursed, but you must receive approval in writing (i.e., email) from the Executive Director before My Pit Bull is Family will reimburse you for any expenses.
- Carry your own insurance coverage. My Pit Bull is Family does not carry health, medical, liability, automobile, worker's compensation or disability insurance coverage for any volunteer.

## **Volunteer benefits**

We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to keeping families together. So, depending on where you decide to volunteer your time and talents, you may:

- Participate in the private My Pit Bull is Family Volunteer Facebook group.
- Receive formal and informal recognition
- Be provided with opportunities to move into leadership volunteer roles as appropriate
- Receive special invitations to events, conferences and activities sponsored by My Pit Bull is Family.

Your mileage costs and other expenses relating to your volunteer work may also be tax-deductible. Please consult with your tax professional for more information.

## **Representing My Pit Bull is Family**

When you're serving as a volunteer for My Pit Bull is Family, what you say and do reflects on My Pit Bull is Family as a whole. We know volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, and we sincerely accept this diversity of thought. But if there is an issue on which My Pit Bull is Family has not taken a position, you should remain neutral on the matter while representing My Pit Bull is Family. Any personal comments you make should be clearly identified as personal comments.

As a volunteer, you are permitted to act as a representative of My Pit Bull is Family, but please do so only to the extent described in your position description.

## **Social media**

Online communication tools such as blogs and social media networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) are becoming the go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with My Pit Bull is Family. For that reason, and because your behavior as a volunteer reflects on My Pit Bull is Family, please use good judgment whenever you contribute to My Pit Bull is Family social media pages. We encourage volunteers to join online conversations and spread the word about My Pit Bull is Family and our life

saving work, but you should never speak as an official representative of My Pit Bull is Family.

When you are engaging with others via social media on behalf of My Pit Bull is Family, please keep in mind the following:

- **Be transparent:** Identify yourself as a volunteer of My Pit Bull is Family.
- **Be accurate:** Make sure you check your facts with the Executive Director or member of the Leadership Team before posting. Take every precaution to gather the most current information available. Be the first to acknowledge and correct your own mistakes.
- **Provide resources:** Link back to our website whenever you can so that people can see where your information is coming from.
- **Be considerate:** Please do not use profanity, derogatory language or personal attacks, or engage in any other inappropriate conduct.
- **Be real:** Do not just copy and paste press releases or website content. Take talking points and put them in your own words. (The one exception is when you are quoting someone or using an official statement.)
- **Be professional:** Do not allow legitimate online explanation of a position or debate to devolve into personal attacks, fights or flame wars that would reflect poorly on you or My Pit Bull is Family. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of your involvement in an online discussion, please disengage or do not get involved in the first place. Pass along the link to the Executive Director.
- **Protect sensitive information:** Protect My Pit Bull is Family's confidential and proprietary information as well as the personal information of others. Get permission to use copyrighted content such as photos or videos, or to cite or reference our supporters, partners or suppliers. Do not disclose or use any confidential or business information about My Pit Bull is Family, such as member or donor information. Do not disclose personal information about current or former volunteers.

You are encouraged and welcome to use your own social media platforms to help promote our mission, events, volunteer opportunities, advocacy, outreach and more. However, My Pit Bull is Family volunteers are prohibited from starting any new social media properties that represent the organization. If you have any questions about this, please contact the Executive Director.

## **Media contact**

Media relations can be complex. For that reason, we ask that, as a My Pit Bull is Family volunteer, you don't speak for My Pit Bull is Family with the media without prior permission from the Executive Director. Please send all media inquiries directly to the

Executive Director. Please note that media inquiries are extremely time-sensitive and should be forwarded as soon as they are received.

### **Standards of conduct and customer service**

My Pit Bull is Family upholds the highest standards of conduct and service for the sake of keeping families together. When you are serving as a My Pit Bull is Family volunteer, we ask that you please do the same. Here are a few service guidelines that we kindly request you follow.

**Be professional.** As a My Pit Bull is Family volunteer, please present an image that is both professional and appropriate to your working conditions. Remember, you represent My Pit Bull is Family and the first impression you create may be a lasting one. Keep the following in mind:

- You should have a well-groomed appearance.
- My Pit Bull is Family Volunteer T-shirts and name tags (if issued) or aprons (if applicable) should be worn and be visible at all times when representing My Pit Bull is Family in public. Other attire should be clean and appropriate for the setting.
- Eating, drinking and gum-chewing are not recommended at event booths when visitors are present. No volunteer should ever smoke or use drugs when representing My Pit Bull is Family in public.
- Booth and exhibit areas should be kept neat and free of debris. Literature should be displayed neatly and be easily accessible.

**Be responsible.** Service begins and ends with individuals. While you cannot control what others do, you can guarantee the quality of your own individual contacts. Each individual can potentially make or break the chain of great service. Responsibility is the key to this process, so you should strive to provide accurate and timely information. And don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

**Be positive.** A positive attitude is contagious. Approaching your assignment with enthusiasm and dedication will positively impact volunteers and the community.

Some other tips:

- Raise concerns and share ideas in a positive fashion; focus on solutions, not problems.
- Respond positively to complaints; never argue with anyone or dismiss someone's point of view.
- Offer additional services and information; add value to each interaction.

**Be friendly, courteous and helpful.** Common courtesy goes a long way toward making a favorable impression on our current and potential partners, volunteers, donors, corporate partners, and the general public. Remember the following:

- A smile goes a long way. Smile when someone approaches you at an event or function.
- Use the person's name whenever possible, and don't forget good manners.
- Practice active listening: Give your undivided attention to the person with whom you are speaking
- Treat each person with kindness, and as an individual.
- Please don't use slang and technical jargon or terms that the other person may not understand.

**Be knowledgeable.** To help My Pit Bull is Family grow, it is crucial that you keep up-to-date with what's happening at My Pit Bull is Family. The public sees you as someone who represents My Pit Bull is Family, and they expect prompt, courteous and accurate responses to their questions and concerns, regardless of your individual specialty or field of knowledge. So, please stay up-to-date on My Pit Bull is Family programs and services by participating at events, in the Volunteer Facebook Group and through reading monthly email updates. Know and understand My Pit Bull is Family's mission and guiding principles. If you don't know the answer to a question, please ask!

The above are only guidelines to providing great service. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgment. When in doubt, remember that one of our guiding principles is the Golden Rule: "We treat all living creatures as we ourselves would wish to be treated."

### **Attendance policies and procedures**

When you commit to a volunteer position, you become a valuable member of our team and play an important role in the success of My Pit Bull is Family's mission. For that reason, we ask that you please do not make a commitment that you may be unable to fulfill, or take on responsibilities for which you feel unqualified.

### **Cancellations and 'no-shows'**

We understand that life happens and you may not always be able to make it to your volunteer shift. If you are not available to complete the volunteer shift(s) or tasks for which you have registered, please contact the appropriate Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. By doing so, this will make the shift or task available to other volunteers.

If you can't perform the duties of your volunteer position or meet required deadlines, and you don't notify the volunteer department or your staff contact in advance, your participation in the volunteer program may be discontinued. We encourage you to try

to avoid this situation; by not fulfilling your commitment, you will miss out on some wonderful opportunities to help us keep families together.

### **Personal leave of absence**

If you are unable to volunteer due to unforeseen circumstances, you may take a leave of absence for any period of time. Please discuss your needs with the Executive Director or appropriate Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Confidentiality and nondisclosure policy**

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information of My Pit Bull is Family to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of your relationship with My Pit Bull is Family.

When you become a volunteer, you agree and understand that any breach of this confidentiality clause will cause My Pit Bull is Family immediate and irreparable harm. You agree that My Pit Bull is Family is entitled to injunctive relief or a preliminary injunction if this confidentiality clause is breached. You agree that My Pit Bull is Family does not need to post a bond if My Pit Bull is Family asks a court for a temporary injunction or interlocutory injunctive relief. Some volunteer positions may require you to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

### **Volunteer performance support**

Our goal is to make sure all our volunteers have wonderful, rewarding experiences with My Pit Bull is Family. Because of that, some volunteer programs positions offer volunteer training, support programs and performance feedback.

Performance feedback sessions give My Pit Bull is Family Leadership Team members a chance to meet with volunteers one-on-one to review the position description, discuss what's going well, and identify goals and areas for improvement. If, as a volunteer, you have not acted in My Pit Bull is Family's interests, it may be necessary to end the volunteer relationship. My Pit Bull is Family's Executive Director or Leadership Team members may end your volunteer relationship at will.

When the relationship between My Pit Bull is Family and a volunteer is terminated, all My Pit Bull is Family property, if any has been issued, must be returned to the Executive Director or Leadership Team members immediately. All volunteer benefits will terminate as of that date.

## **Causes for release from volunteer service**

Here are some potential causes for release from volunteer service:

- Breaking of confidentiality
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Failure to report volunteer hours
- Inactivity
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- Excessive “no-show” for volunteer shifts
- Not fulfilling the duties of the volunteer position
- Misrepresentation of My Pit Bull is Family
- Theft
- Violence or implication of violence

## **Grievance procedure**

If you have any questions or challenges regarding your volunteer assignment, please bring them to the attention of the Executive Director.

The Leadership Team makes every effort to provide you with an opportunity to raise your questions in confidence and without fear of reprisal or discrimination. Every effort will be made to investigate in a timely manner and settle the issue on a fair and equitable basis.

## **Requests for animal help**

As a My Pit Bull is Family Volunteer, you may be asked by people in your community for help with specific animal situations. Here are some ways to handle these requests:

- To help people find solutions to finding housing assistance, direct them to our housing database and tips: [Mypitbullisfamily.org/housing](http://Mypitbullisfamily.org/housing)
- If the person needs assistance with surrendering a pet, direct them to our community partners page: [Mypitbullisfamily.org/partners](http://Mypitbullisfamily.org/partners)
- If you anticipate that the situation will become very public or you are contacted by the media or a high-ranking official, please notify the Executive Director.

## **Conflicts of interest**

As a volunteer for My Pit Bull is Family you should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, or interfere with the timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, or that could discredit My Pit Bull is Family or conflict or appear to conflict with My Pit Bull is Family

best interests. The success of My Pit Bull is Family rests on its reputation and the goodwill of its many supporters.

Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of My Pit Bull is Family assets, funds, materials, facilities, time or the services of other My Pit Bull is Family volunteers. Violations of this policy may result in release from volunteer service with My Pit Bull is Family.

If you are asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of My Pit Bull is Family, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please contact the Executive Director.

### **Sexual harassment policy**

My Pit Bull is Family is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. In accordance with all federal, state and local laws, My Pit Bull is Family expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

My Pit Bull is Family expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of volunteering, either explicitly or implicitly
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, hostile or intimidating work environment

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from volunteer service. If you believe you are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the Executive Director.

My Pit Bull is Family will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment or intimidation of any volunteer who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment or intimidation may result in release from volunteer service.

**Thank You!**

Because of you we are able to keep thousands of families together every single day. We are thankful that you dedicate your time and talent to making sure that families never have to make a hard choice when it comes to their family dog. We hope that your volunteer experience with us is beneficial and long lasting.

Together, we will “Lick Discrimination”