

# Critter Socializer

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## Objective:

- Meet the basic needs & enhance quality of life for all critters in Capital Humane Society's care by providing consistent human handling & opportunities for exercise.
- Learn more about individual critter preferences in order to make better adoption matches.
- Take pictures/videos that represent individual critter personalities to market effectively

## Locations/Hours of Operation:

- *Pieloch Pet Adoption Center* | 6500 S 70th |  
Shift times for this role are  
Mon-Fri 11am-1pm, 6pm-7pm & Sat/Sun 11am-1pm, 3-5pm

## Qualifications:

- *Age:* Must be at least 13 years old with a parent/guardian at all times
- *Experience:* No prior experience with critters required
- *Knowledge:* Must demonstrate understanding of the importance of respecting animals boundaries & responsibility of being an animal caretaker. No prior knowledge of critters specifically required
- *Physical:* Must be able to squat, bend, safely maneuver tight & crowded spaces.
- *Characteristics:* Must consistently follow verbal/written instructions, possess excellent awareness of surroundings, willingness & desire to learn, communicate effectively with others
- *Minimum Time Commitment:* 1hr shift, every other week, for a minimum of 4 months

## Conditions:

- *Noise:* barking/whining can be very loud at times, especially in the dog kennel area
- *Temperatures:* Varied, though usually moderate
- *Hazardous chemicals:* potential exposure (used to sanitize animal living spaces)
- *Pet hair/dander:* those with extreme allergies should be aware
- *Biological materials:* some exposure to critter feces, urine, etc.

## Role specific duties:

- Check in with front desk staff to work out availability of adoption interaction rooms for critter socializing AND find out who still needs photos for the website
- Orient yourself to the critter room & read all cage cards to learn details about any critters you haven't worked with before.
- Check critter markerboard to learn which animals have already been socialized that day, who is still waiting to get out, & any new behavior/preference/concern notes left by other volunteers.
- Briefly "introduce" yourself to critters that you haven't previously worked with to assess their level of comfortability being handled/removed from living space.
- Using all info gathered, make a game plan for the rest of your shift: who to handle, how/how long, what order, where, etc.

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- ***“Interaction room exercise session”***: Minimum 20 minutes long, max 1 hr/critter
  - **Transport**: Safely remove critter from their living space & place in transport carrier. Take critter clipboard and critter to designated interaction room, making sure to close all doors securely. Document difficulty/ease.
  - **Carrier observation**: Open transport carrier doors & allow critter 1-5 minutes to come out of the carrier on their own.
    - After 1-5 minutes, gently remove critter/s from the transport carrier if they haven’t exited already. Document if they need to be removed.
  - **Exploration/curiosity**: Once the critter is out of the transport carrier, the session officially begins. During the first 10 minutes, allow the critter to investigate the room without interruption. Make simple notes regarding behavior during exploration phase i.e. confident, curious, wary, fearful, vocal, etc. If they stay in one place, allow them to do so.
  - **Handling/socializing**: Once 10 minutes has elapsed feel free to try to interact, pet, pick up, play with critter. Pay attention to the critters comfortability and respect their space if you observe fearful behavior. Introduce toys, treats, short periods of interaction followed by longer periods of allowing them space. Make notes of anything you learn.
    - If critter appears fearful or very uncomfortable opt for hands off, auditory or olfactory enrichment. Listen to music, watch a show, spray linens with different essential oils & allow critter to engage, etc.
  - If desired/able, take pictures/videos of critters the show personality during session. Email to front desk.
  - Return critter to transport carrier in least invasive way possible, utilize x-pen & other tools to corral critter when possible. Record anything notable.
  - Transport critter back to critter room & secure in living space cage.
  - Check that critter has water, refill if needed.
  - Pick up any critter poop in interaction room. If minimal, spot clean with wet wipes. If urine is present, please mop room. Sweep shredded paper, fur, hay up when present.
  - Add any final notes from session to critter clipboard.
- ***“5 minute critter room snuggle session”*** minimum 2 minutes, max 10 minutes/critter
  - For critters you do not plan to take into interaction room for full exercise session
    - Open living space cage & interact with critter for brief period by petting, holding, offering treats, etc. depending on comfortability of individual critter.
    - Do not allow critter to run loose in the critter room.
    - Make notes, if any, in regards to behavior/preferences on critter clipboard.

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## CHS volunteer expectations:

- *“Help where help is needed”* -The shelter is a hectic & unpredictable environment with limited resources. We ask that our volunteers are flexible & willing to occasionally pitch in with core shelter functions, even if those are outside their specific job description (laundry, dishes, etc.)
- *“Be an advocate in all things”*- Our volunteers are highly trained, respected, & trusted pieces to the CHS puzzle. We empower our volunteers to use their unique voice to communicate concerns, share observations, ask questions, suggest ideas, etc.! As a non-profit, it is especially important that our volunteers understand that being a successful (& satisfied) shelter advocate...aka “volunteer”...requires patience, curiosity, & creativity. In Animal Welfare, there are significant limitations to navigate, some of which are very obvious & others which are more abstract (& often harder to change). Put simply...we depend on volunteers to help us innovate & progress as a field/organization & we trust them to do so without taking personal offense or getting discouraged when/if that process is littered with roadblocks.
- *“Speak & act with compassion & respect, always”*- Our work is centered around the fundamental belief that pets AND people deserve to experience love & companionship. This belief directly influences the way we treat the people/animals we encounter during our work but also the way we speak about them AND the way we think about them. CHS volunteers share this important belief & allow it to be their “North Star”.

## Training: 3-3.5 total hours to complete onboarding |in person, hands on, groups of 2-3| (Red= mandatory, green= optional)

- *“Welcome to CHS” Group Orientation*-1.5 hr|occurs 2x month| provides info on CHS programs, culture, history, operations, intro to Animal Welfare, socially conscious sheltering, tour of ppac, meet vols, meet staff|
- *“Critter Socializer Training”*-1.5-2 hrs|1st official shift |Tour of facility, daily responsibilities, CHS critter operations/protocols, behavior, health, & safety info, meet staff, meet vols, equip demo, handling basics