



Best Friends Network Advisory Council Bylaws

I. About Best Friends Animal Society

Best Friends Animal Society is one of this nation's premier animal welfare organizations. We are a private nonprofit organization based out of a no-kill sanctuary in Kanab, Utah. We are funded solely by private donations.

Purpose: A better world through kindness to animals.

Mission: To lead a kindness revolution that transforms the way people relate to animals, nature and each other.

Guiding Principles

The Golden Rule: We treat all living creatures as we ourselves would wish to be treated.

Kindness: We show compassion and respect for all living creatures.

Good effects: We 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: We lead by example – developing, promoting and sharing great new ideas and programs to help animals.

Authenticity: We do what we say we do.

Transparency: We are open and honest in our relationships.

Goals

1. Expand our ability to reach people everywhere with the Best Friends message.
2. Develop and implement world-class standards for animal care.
3. Create a positive, inclusive working environment.
4. Build a great organization and infrastructure to support our mission.
5. Accelerate our efforts to achieve No More Homeless Pets.
6. Inspire positive action on behalf of animals.

II. About the Best Friends Network

The Best Friends Network is an outreach of Best Friends Animal Society. We've all seen the amazing power of grassroots efforts to benefit animals. And there are probably millions of us out there – in this country and beyond – who believe that kindness to animals builds a better world for all of us. The Best Friends Network is a place for people of like mind and heart to share ideas and work together.

The goals of Network members are as follows:

Think globally: Help build a global online community of people who care about the animals, nature and each other.

Act locally: Work with people in your own neighborhood to help animals in need.

Stay in touch: Create news, report the news, check out the news.

Discuss: Connect with others who share your special interests. Start or join discussion groups and blogs.

Purposes of the Network

- To be a place of stability and conscience in a changing world of ethics regarding animals, nature, etc.
- Recognizing that Best Friends cannot have the capacity to respond to all requests and needs (we can't do it all), the Network is designed to bring together and mobilize the people who care.
- The Network is a place to communicate, work together and provide support throughout the animal welfare movement.
- The Network can be an agent of change.
- The Network is designed to not only report the news, but to create news (to tell our own stories).
- The Network is designed to increase Best Friends Animal Society's capacity to respond to requests by increasing membership and donations.

III. The Volunteer Advisory Council

Purpose

The purpose of the Best Friends Network Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC) shall be to provide advisory and consultative services to the staff of the Best Friends Network. The members of the VAC act as liaisons of the Best Friends Network within their communities and beyond.

Membership

The Network VAC consists of at least nine members. At least three members are Network volunteers between the ages of 12 and 21, and at least six members are over age 21 when their term begins. All members have a variety of skills and experiences, and must be active members of the Best Friends Network.

Two paid Best Friends staff members, the humane education director and the volunteer resources manager, act as staff liaisons with the VAC.

Network members interested in becoming VAC members should file an application with the Network Volunteer Advisory Council. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee.

Members are selected after a thorough selection process. For all selections, diversity in culture, background, age, gender, and animal welfare experience will be taken into consideration. A VAC with the greatest possible diversity will be the ongoing goal.

Member Term

There will be a one-year term served by all Network VAC members, excluding the staff liaisons. Members may extend their term at the discretion of the council. However, no member will serve for longer than three years in a row.

Structure and Responsibilities

Executive Committee

There will be four elected Executive Committee members: the chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, and secretary. These positions, along with the two staff liaisons, make up the Executive Committee. Terms are for one year. No Executive Committee member will serve more than two consecutive terms. Candidates for elected office must be members of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council and are elected by majority vote of the membership. Members may only hold one elected office at a time. All Executive Committee members must also serve as meeting coordinators. Elections shall be held at the Network Volunteer Advisory Council meeting in September of each year.

Duties of Elected Executive Committee Members

Chairperson: The chairperson will be responsible for facilitating meetings and ensuring that the council is working toward its goals, mission, and vision. He/she is responsible for creating agendas based on current issues of the council and topics from previous meetings.

Vice chairperson: The vice chairperson will assume the duties of the chairperson, secretary, or treasurer in his/her absence. He/she is responsible for ensuring that Network Volunteer Advisory Council projects and programs are assigned to the appropriate committee.

Secretary: The secretary will take notes during the meetings and assist the chairperson in setting the agenda. He/she is also responsible for distributing meeting agendas to members. He/she must have good note-taking and organizational skills.

Treasurer: The treasurer will keep track of the council's monetary assets. He/she reports on the council's finances at each meeting and is in charge of fundraising.

Midterm Resignations

In the event of the resignation of the chairperson during his/her term, the vice chairperson will assume the office of chairperson. A special election will be held at the next regular VAC meeting to elect a new vice chairperson. In the event of the resignation of any other elected Executive Committee members, a special election will be held at the next regular meeting of the VAC following the effective date of the resignation. In the event of a resignation of any

regular VAC member who is not an Executive Committee member or committee chair, the Network Volunteer Advisory Council will wait until the next annual recruitment of members to fill the vacancy.

IV. Advisory Council Meetings

Business meetings will be held monthly. These meetings will be held on a rotating basis – every other month alternating between mornings (Saturday) and evenings (Tuesdays). The meeting schedule will be posted on the Best Friends Network volunteers' calendar.

Each meeting will be one hour in length. Meetings will not be held in December to accommodate people's busy schedules during that month.

Meetings will be held via conference call or webinar. Detailed instructions for how to participate will be given in advance.

Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the chairperson or at the request of five members as the situation demands.

A majority of VAC members shall constitute a quorum for the VAC meetings.

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (www.rulesonline.com), in all cases in which the rules are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws.

These bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that a 30-day notice has been given.

Attendance

Members are expected to attend all meetings of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council and the meetings of any committees of which they are members. If a member needs to miss a meeting because of illness or another important event, the member is responsible for notifying the chairperson or committee chair in advance whenever possible. Prior notice of an illness, important event, or emergency shall constitute an excused absence. Members are responsible for obtaining notes and/or assignments from any general or committee meetings they miss.

Members will be excused from VAC membership when they have missed two consecutive business meetings or three business meetings during a calendar year.

Confidentiality Statement

To maintain appropriate and confidential handling of information, Network Volunteer Advisory Council members are reminded that, out of respect to individuals and Best Friends Animal Society policy, discussing any information deemed personal or confidential should not be done outside the Network volunteer advisory role.

Agenda

The agenda will be established by the chairperson and the staff liaisons and distributed to the membership prior to each business meeting. Agenda items may be added by any member or by any outside party with prior notification of the chairperson or the staff liaisons. Agenda items will be evaluated and prioritized by the chairperson and the staff liaisons.

If needed, a meeting to discuss the potential agenda item's merit and/or to clarify the subject matter will be held prior to the establishment of the monthly agenda.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes will be kept by the secretary (or designee) of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council and will be distributed, in a timely matter, to all members and the staff liaisons. These minutes will be distributed via e-mail and posted on the VAC's private forum on the Best Friends Network. A hard copy of these minutes and all other council materials will be kept in a notebook by the secretary as records of the council's activities.

V. Standing Committees

The Network Volunteer Advisory Council will appoint and/or participate in select standing committees when needs warrant. At least one member of the council will be a member of each standing committee and will make a regular report at each Network Volunteer Advisory Council business meeting. In addition, that member will remain in regular communication with the staff liaisons of the VAC.

Any member in good standing of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council may attend standing committee meetings at any time.

Selection of Committee Members

When applying for membership to the Network VAC, applicants must select at least one committee to serve on. Committee members are selected by the Executive Committee, which will review the applicants and select members based on interests and talents.

Committee chairs. Committee chairs are responsible for the organization of their respective committees. They report to the VAC about their committee's efforts. They also serve as meeting coordinators.

Meeting coordinators. The committee chairs and Executive Committee members form the Meeting Coordinators Committee. The role of the meeting coordinators is to ensure that meeting agendas accommodate the needs of each committee for speaking and presentation time. The meeting coordinators are responsible for ensuring that committees coordinate their activities when projects and programs overlap. The meeting coordinators are responsible for setting annual goals for the Network Volunteer Advisory Council and developing and maintaining a strategic plan based on input from the general VAC membership and outreach to the members of the Best Friends Network.

Outreach Committee. The Outreach Committee is responsible for suggesting and assisting with the coordination of Best Friends Network events and meet-ups. This committee is

also responsible for maintaining the Best Friends Network VAC Community, posting news stories about the council's work, maintaining an outreach/events calendar, and creating and participating in appropriate forums. In addition, this committee is responsible for getting information about the events the Best Friends Network is hosting out to the community.

Youth Committee. The Youth Committee is responsible for giving advice about creating a youth-friendly environment on the Network. This includes observations on ease of use of the Network by young people of all ages and discussions involving creating a safe environment for youth. This committee also identifies potential service projects to advertise to Best Friends Network youth members. Areas of service may include, but are not limited to, rescue groups, shelters and adoption events. Opportunities are posted on the Best Friends Network Volunteers Community and using the Network Volunteer Opportunities Module, when available. In addition, this committee identifies potential news stories relating to youth's impact on the welfare of animals.

Fundraising Committee. The Fundraising Committee oversees the development and implementation of a fundraising plan. The Fundraising Committee also identifies and solicits donations from external sources of support, such as businesses, working with the Network marketing/promotions manager, if available.

VI. Advisory Council Member Responsibilities

All Network volunteer members are responsible for:

- Attending monthly meetings
- Participating to the fullest extent during each meeting
- Participating, as time and proximity allows, in service projects and events
- Embracing the mission, vision and values of Best Friends Animal Society
- Advocating the concepts of the Kindness Revolution

All staff members are responsible for:

- Attending monthly meetings
- Participating to the fullest extent during each meeting
- Participating, as time and interest allow, in additional committees and tasks
- Embracing the mission, vision and values of Best Friends Animal Society
- Practicing as a role model for the values and concepts of the Kindness Revolution
- Educating and advocating the work of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council to fellow employees and staff
- Encouraging the use of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council by employees and staff
- Reporting professional activities to the Network Volunteer Advisory Council when asked or when appropriate

Rules of Conduct

The Network Volunteer Advisory Council belongs to you and its success rests largely on you. Each member of the council is expected to conduct himself or herself in accordance with the following ground rules:

- Enter into the discussion enthusiastically.
- Give freely of your experience.
- Confine your comments to the issue under discussion.
- Say what you think.
- Only one person should talk at a time. (Avoid private conversations while someone else is speaking.)
- Listen alertly to the discussion.
- Be patient with other members.
- Appreciate the other person's point of view.
- Be prompt and regular in attendance.
- Ask a question when you have one.
- Think of how you can apply and/or pass along the information.

Each member of the Network Volunteer Advisory Council must reaffirm the council's bylaws by signing a copy following the meeting in which election of Executive Committee members is held each year. New members whose membership begins mid-year must sign a copy of the bylaws following the meeting at which they become members.

Member Reimbursement

All Network volunteer members will receive reimbursement for expenses relating to volunteer service with the Best Friends Network that are pre-approved by one of the staff liaisons. Reimbursement Request Forms are available on the Best Friends Network VAC Community and can be submitted to a staff liaison at the end of the month in which the expense occurred. Designate on your form that you are a VAC volunteer, do not type in the shaded areas, and snail mail your expense form with your receipts to the volunteer resources manager. Small receipts should be taped to a piece of paper.

Donated phone cards will be given to council members as available for use for VAC business only. The Executive Committee and Meeting Coordinators Committee will receive priority during distribution.

VI. Youth on the Advisory Council

Young people can provide a vital contribution to resolving the homeless animal problem. They are the keys to the future. It is essential that they be allowed to participate (in a safe and appropriate way) in the Kindness Revolution on the Best Friends Network.

Youth should be allowed to participate as would any adult volunteer with the following stipulations.

For on-site volunteering:

- An adult must be present and be legally responsible to monitor the youth at all times. This can be a parent, guardian or Best Friends staff person (with parental permission). A trained Best Friends staff person can be responsible for more than one youth at a time.
- All necessary waivers and releases must be signed and turned in.
- The adult monitor and the youth will receive safety orientation as well as instructions for accomplishing assigned task(s).
- If the task involves direct animal contact, an approved Best Friends animal caregiver must also be present.
- Young people may not operate power tools or machinery, climb ladders or drive vehicles of any kind.

For online volunteering:

- Network safety protocols for minors must be in place.

Young people can be community editors or VAC members with two conditions:

- They must have a Best Friends staff mentor/monitor. Preferably, this person will be a humane educator. The mentor/monitor's role will be to approve content and postings prior to publication. He/she will also act as an advisor as needed.
- The Best Friends mentor/monitor must have direct contact with the young person's parent or guardian. The mentor/monitor will have obtained that adult's permission for the young person to participate as a volunteer and have monthly communications with the parent/guardian about the child's activities on behalf of the Network.