Visit the Shelter

Thank you for your interest in visiting the Vola Lawson Shelter, operated by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

The AWLA welcomes small groups interested in taking a shelter tour and learning more about animal care and animal welfare issues. Shelter tours include an overview of the shelter and the companion animals in our care as well as a tour of all adoption areas. Most tours include a visit with one or more shelter Animal Ambassadors and a discussion of how to help our furred, finned and feathered residents. School groups, scout troops, after-school clubs, and more are all welcome and encouraged to pay us a scheduled visit!

Shelter tours last between 30 and 45 minutes, depending on the age of the participants. Tours are most appropriate for children aged six and older. Due to the size of our facility, tours groups can be no larger than 15 people, including chaperones.

While there is no fee associated with shelter tours, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria touches the lives of more than 6,000 animals each year, and as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we are always in need of financial support. These tours
require time and resources, so if your group would like to make a monetary
donation to help covers the costs incurred, you can do so via our website or in
person when you arrive for your tour. The suggested donation is $5 per tour
participant, but we are grateful for any gift that you may provide. Thank you for
your generosity!

How to Schedule Your Tour

Group tours are offered based on availability; please note that unscheduled
groups cannot be accommodated!

To book a tour, please contact visit@alexandriaanimals.org and we will do our
best to accommodate your preferred time, based on staffing. Please note that we
clean our animal enclosures in the morning, so 11:30 a.m. is the earliest that any
tour can begin.

Scout Programs

Now offered virtually, our Scout Program is 1 hour long and intended for scouts
ages 6 and up. Pet Badge programs are offered on Saturday mornings from 11:00
a.m. to 12:00 p.m. These programs are for groups of eight to 15 scouts, including
siblings; groups of 16 scouts or more should split up and schedule for two
separate trainings, as we cannot accommodate larger groups in our facility. There
is a $10 fee for each badge-seeking scout to cover the cost of supplies and the
badge/certificate.

This program satisfies the Brownie Pet Badge requirements, including finding out
what care different pets need; keeping a pet comfy; helping a pet stay healthy and
safe; making a pet feel loved; and feeding a pet. After the presentation, the troop
will also be given a shelter tour. Badge requirements will be satisfied with short
activities and lessons for each requirement. This program can also be adapted for
older Scouts. If your troop has a request for a specific type of presentation, please
let us know. At the conclusion of the program, each scout will receive a certificate
and a badge, at the request of the troop leader.

To book a Scout Program, please sign up for an open time slot HERE. If you
cannot visit during one of our pre-scheduled time slots and would like to hear
about additional scheduling options, please contact
youthprograms@alexandriaanimals.org and we will do our best to accommodate your group based on staffing availability.

**Other Ways to Help Shelter Animals**

Visitors often ask if they can bring donations for the animals. If your group would like to bring in-kind donations for the shelter animals, please click here to find instructions on how to make toys and treats at home. If you’d prefer to purchase items, please check out our Amazon wishlist.