

ASPCA Shelter Medicine Practitioner Pathway Mentorship for ABVP Board Certification

The ASPCA believes that shelter medicine veterinarians are essential to improving animal health and welfare in animal shelters and communities. Access to veterinary care is a serious issue for shelters, as well as communities and community members. Shelter medicine specialists have expertise in population health, animal welfare, infectious diseases, behavioral health, facility design, outbreak management, high quality/high volume spay neuter, disaster response, and animal cruelty -- as well as general veterinary practice and surgery. The demand for shelter medicine specialists is particularly urgent; shelter practitioners provide preventive and interventional healthcare to populations of shelter-housed and community animals, many of them the most vulnerable of patients.

To accelerate the growth of shelter medicine expertise in the field, the ASPCA is thrilled to launch a mentorship program to support veterinarians working toward ABVP Shelter Medicine Practice (SMP) certification via the Practitioner Pathway.

What does the opportunity include?

Each participant will be assigned an ABVP Shelter Medicine Practice board-certified mentor and provided access to the ASPCA Shelter Medicine Services Department. The program will be tailored to meet the needs of participants, but offers the following general components:

- Cohort and individual meetings with mentors and colleagues
- In-person and virtual shelter consultation opportunities
- Direct access to the required experiences that practitioners may otherwise have trouble accessing (e.g., forensics cases, disaster response experiences, etc.)
- Support and coaching through case report and/or publication writing
- Financial support for travel, fees, continuing education, and other costs incurred in the certification process during the mentorship period. Maximum amount is \$4,000 per participant, administered by expense reimbursement.

Who is eligible?

- Veterinarians who are committed to submitting credentials for board certification in shelter medicine practice to ABVP in January of 2026 or January of 2027 and will have at least 5 years of shelter medicine focused clinical practice experience at the time of submission.
- Applicants must be living and working in and licensed to practice veterinary medicine in at least one US state.
- Applicants should be well familiar with the [ABVP Applicant Handbook](#), including the additional requirements needed for board certification in shelter medicine practice.
- Preference will be given to applicants who have already started on their ABVP materials at the time of application to the mentorship program, although this is not required.



How do I apply?

An [online application](#) is required, due January 15, 2025, by 5pm.

Prior to starting this application, it is strongly recommended that applicants:

1. Review the ABVP SMP credential [requirements](#) in detail.
2. Review the ABVP application [deadlines](#).
3. Prepare at least 3-5 specific goals for what you are looking to accomplish with the assistance of the mentorship program. In writing these goals, look at the [SMART goals format](#).
4. Prepare a short (less than 500 words) personal statement about a time you set a long-term and difficult goal for yourself and how you took steps to achieve it. You will be uploading this as a document.
5. Prepare a current copy of your CV or resume for uploading.
6. Collect the names, titles, and contact information (email and phone number) for two professional references.
7. Clarify with your employer the requirements of the ABVP credentialing process and your goals during the mentorship and ensure that your employer will provide time and support for your participation in both the ASPCA PPM program and the ABVP SMP credentialing process.

How will participants be chosen?

Applications will be reviewed by an ASPCA selection committee. A select number of applicants will be asked to interview in February and March 2025. Participants can expect to be notified if they are selected for this mentorship program by March 30, 2025.

Note: Participants accepted into the program will be required to sign an MOU with the ASPCA regarding their commitment to apply for ABVP board certification, as well as ensuring a willingness on the part of their employer to allow participation in the program. This mentorship opportunity should not be construed as employment with the ASPCA; participants will not be eligible for benefits or other aspects of employment with the ASPCA. Participants attending any in-person events with ASPCA personnel will be required to follow ASPCA protocols and policies in place at the time and location.

Questions?

Please email sheltermedicine@aspca.org