Job Title: Senior Director, Animal Behavior  
Location: Columbus, Ohio

Job Summary:
Are you dedicated to companion animal behavior and passionate about delivering high-quality care and optimizing welfare for animals in need? Are you passionate about bringing multiple areas of animal sheltering expertise together and working with a team to optimize the overall well-being of animals? Do you thrive in a dynamic and complex environment, where colleagues work together to continually advance our field? If so, the role of Senior Director of Animal Behavior at the ASPCA’s Cruelty Recovery Center (CRC) might be right for you! At the CRC, a dedicated team of sheltering, veterinary and animal behavior staff work together to serve animals rescued in ASPCA national cruelty cases and disaster responses.

The Senior Director will be based at the CRC, in Columbus, OH, and will travel to support emergency sheltering operations for victims of cruelty and neglect or natural disasters. The Senior Director will partner with a team of sheltering, medical, forensics, legal, and behavior personnel to ensure high quality care and optimal outcomes for all animals, including assessment, enrichment, rehabilitation, placement, and euthanasia recommendations. He or she will lead the behavior team at the CRC to provide top quality care and safeguard the behavioral health of animals housed at the CRC and at field and emergency shelters. While behavior programs across the ASPCA are aligned to ensure best practices, the Senior Director will work closely with the Behavioral Sciences Team (BST) to develop processes or protocols that are unique to the specific situation or animal population. Success in this role will hinge on the ability to collaborate with these teams, especially the operations and medical teams at the CRC, to ensure that animals’ physical and behavioral needs are met on both individual patient and population levels, and to collaborate with subject matter experts across the organization to ensure alignment with and integration of best practices across ASPCA programs.

This position also requires a leader who embraces the power of teamwork and collaboration to achieve shared goals. To succeed in this role, the Senior Director must have a comprehensive understanding of shelter animal behavior, excellent animal handling skills, and sound judgement in order to provide high-quality care for populations of animals with significant behavioral and/or medical needs. He or she will also provide mentorship, training, and support for other team members involved in the behavioral health management of all animals cared for at the CRC and emergency sheltering facilities. Ideal candidates will have shelter behavior expertise, experience working in temporary shelter settings, and superior interpersonal skills, including experience leading teams of behavior professionals.

Job Responsibilities:  
Responsibilities include but are not limited to:
Leadership of Behavior Operations (60%)

- Oversee behavioral health and welfare of animals housed in the CRC, emergency sheltering operations, and/or foster care, utilizing shelter behavior guidelines, principles and best practices
- Contribute to the organization’s Behavior Strategy Plan to drive the direction of the ASPCA’s research in animal shelter behavior and forensic behavior
- Direct behavioral management and treatment provided by behavior staff and responders
- Teach and mentor behavior and animal care personnel on relevant SOPs and practices
- Ensure consistency and continuity of care provided by behavior staff, behavior responders and support team members
- Ensure all CRC staff members are proficient in low stress handling; promote education and training in behavior
- Collaborate with CRC veterinarians to create psychotropic medication plans for animals as needed
- Oversee planning of nonpharmaceutical interventions, according to organizational policy and standard treatment protocols
- Coordinate with other teams, including but not limited to Behavioral Sciences, Shelter Medicine Services, Legal Advocacy and Investigations, and Forensics, to ensure that the overall well-being of each animal is prioritized, that information is shared in a timely fashion with relevant stakeholders, and that decision-making regarding animal care and treatment is informed by all relevant considerations (i.e., medical, behavioral, and legal status)
- Participate in pathway planning to ensure appropriate and timely disposition decisions, taking into consideration animals’ physical and behavioral health, using organizationally approved tools developed to assess quality of life and readiness for placement
- Ensure the maintenance of thorough, high quality behavioral records, documenting all findings and treatments in organizational databases
- Produce administrative reports and communicate progress updates and animal status as needed
- Assist with planning for and provide a consultative voice to assist the VP in contributing to selection of case responses
- Other duties as assigned by the VP or SVP

Direct Behavioral Support (20%)

- Provide timely, high quality behavioral support for dogs, cats, and other species as needed in accordance with ASPCA behavior protocols and shelter behavior principles and best practices
- Provide skilled and efficient behavioral assessment and devise appropriate treatment plans
- Oversee and conduct behavior evaluations and customized assessments for special populations, including, but not limited to, fighting dogs, puppy mill dogs and animals from hoarding situations and disaster relief
- Ensure the timely and thorough completion of daily behavior rounds of all animals in the shelter; review current treatment schedules, behavior concern boards, and rechecks to ensure timely delivery of care and open communication
- Be a consistent presence “on the floor” to lend a hand, answer questions, and ensure deep understanding of and compliance with CRC operations
- Assist with humane euthanasia following disposition decisions and/or in event of urgent medical need
- Assist with on-scene psychological trauma documentation and humane handling during animal confiscation/removal, intake and medical exams for NFR Team cruelty cases as needed, and testify as a subject matter expert witness, as needed.
• Stay abreast of shelter behavior practices and trends, in order to employ these at the CRC and/or emergency sheltering locations when applicable
• Work with the animal care and medical managers to implement appropriate protocols on topics that relate to animal health and welfare.

People Management (20%)
• Model a standard of continual commitment to improvement in all aspects of animal care and handling
• Maintain proactive communication with the CRC Vice President, the Vice President of Rehabilitation Services, and Behavioral Sciences Team on critical situations or issues
• Serve as a champion in times of change management and proactively assist in identifying ways to improve people, policies, and behavior protocols
• Supervise behavior managers, holding regular one-on-one and team meetings to gather ideas and information, provide coaching, and share updates
• Consistently utilize ASPCA developmental tools and conduct yearly performance reviews of direct reports to measure progress
• Supervise and support staff, including but not limited to behavior managers, behavior specialists, behavior coordinators, behavior responders and Care and Enrichment Technicians; define expectations and manage staff to achieve these expectations
• Lead the recruitment, selection, hiring and onboarding process for new CRC behavior staff and help develop high potential employees
• Recommend internal and external training and professional development opportunities as needed for direct and indirect reports in identified area(s)
• Espouse positive, people-centric management approaches that are in line with team and organizational core values
• Handle employee-relations issues with confidentiality and care; use active listening to understand employee concerns, encouraging and supporting employees to problem solve and create viable solutions
• Respond to concerns from direct reports and selected administrative staff, addressing them promptly and accordingly
• Work with Manager, Administration to oversee purchasing decisions on behalf of the CRC behavior team
• Adhere to all protocols put forth by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Exemplifies the ASPCA's Core Values:

• Has Commitment and dedication to improving the lives of animals
• Demonstrates Ownership and feels responsible for outcomes
• Believes in Team – that we are stronger together
• Seeks to Elevate others and reimagine what is possible
• Focuses on Impact, specifically making change for animals

Education and Experience:
• B.A. or B.S. required, with specialized education in animal behavior field (animal behavior/cognition, experimental psychology, zoology, animal science, etc.) strongly preferred. M.Sc. or M.A. or PhD strongly preferred.
• Animal Behavior Society CAAB or ACAAB preferred, or eligibility to earn such certification within 2 years of hire
• Disaster Sheltering and FEMA Incident Command System courses (100, 200, 700, 800) within 90 days of hire
• Fear Free or Low Stress handling ™ certification within 60 days of hire; Sophia Yin's Low Stress Handling ™ certification is strongly preferred
• Minimum of 5 years’ experience working as a professional animal trainer/behaviorist, handling and evaluating animals with behavior issues; experience working with dogs exhibiting extreme aggression, fear and excessive arousal is strongly preferred
• Minimum of 5 years’ experience working in animal shelters
• Minimum of 5 years’ experience managing personnel, preferably in an animal-related industry; experience managing a behavior team in a shelter strongly preferred

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:
• Deep animal behavior and animal welfare knowledge, including a strong foundation in learning theory, ethology and shelter behavior best practices
• Proven excellent low-stress animal handling and restraint skills
• Proven defensive handling skills
• Sound clinical judgement and resiliency to make end-of-life decisions for animals and to coach and support staff and volunteers regarding those decisions; readily able to work closely with animals who are medically and/or behaviorally compromised
• Proven history of building and maintaining positive and productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders
• Displays care and concern for the safety and well-being of self, animals and others, especially during stressful situations
• Possess critical thinking and the ability to swiftly and competently switch between multiple tasks; able to quickly and calmly adjust focus and shift priorities based on animal and department needs
• Strong organizational skills and a high level of attention to detail; organized and willing to take ownership of project-critical tasks in a fast-paced, dynamic work environment
• Excellent time management skills with the ability to prioritize multiple projects and be responsive to shifting priorities
• Excellent ability to teach and coach; able to introduce and implement new procedures and protocols effectively
• Excellent written and oral communication skills; ability to communicate effectively, with sensitivity and professionalism, with all levels of staff
• Basic computer skills required, including Excel, Microsoft Office, and email; familiarity with Shelter Manager or other shelter software systems and Filemaker a plus
• Able to lift and carry up to 50 pounds
• Able to work standing for 8 or more hours and bend, crouch, kneel and move freely to perform responsibilities that include handling potentially dangerous animals in stressful conditions
• Able to occasionally work in physically challenging conditions and able to wear appropriate protective gear, including a protective mask; job responsibilities may entail exposure to chemical and biological hazards, such as feces and blood, exposure to sharp objects, working in noisy environments and working in areas with uneven, wet and slippery surfaces
• Able and willing to work flexible hours, long days, and weekends, as required; available to be on-call for last minute deployments
• Regular travel up to 35%

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability or protected veteran status.