



**Pet Partners**  
Touching Lives, Improving Health

## How to become a Pet Partners Volunteer Therapy Animal Team



Thank you for your interest in volunteering with your pet as a registered Pet Partners therapy animal team. Your involvement will allow you and your pet to provide comfort and joy to people in need. This document outlines the steps necessary to become registered with Pet Partners. For more information, visit <http://www.petpartners.org>

### Step 1: Complete the Handler Course

Once you've established that your animal is a good candidate for the Therapy Animal Program, it's time for you to start your training as the human end of the leash.

You may take an in-person workshop, or if there are no instructors in your area, you may take the Handler course online.

- For in-person workshops, go to [www.petpartners.org/courses](http://www.petpartners.org/courses) and search by state for currently scheduled classes, or search [www.petpartners.org/directory](http://www.petpartners.org/directory) to contact a local instructor to inquire about future courses.
- To take the course online, go to [www.petpartners.org/Online Courses Home](http://www.petpartners.org/Online Courses Home)

### Step 2: Animal Health Screening

Upon completion of the Handler course, you can begin your registration paperwork. This includes an Animal Health Screening Form to be completed by your veterinarian. Written proof of rabies vaccination is required.

### Step 3: Team Evaluation

A critical step in the registration process is the team evaluation. During this approximately 45 minute event, you and your animal will meet with a Pet Partners licensed evaluator and complete a role play of a therapeutic visit in the community. Because teams evaluate individually, you should schedule your session early.

- Go to [www.petpartners.org/courses](http://www.petpartners.org/courses) and search by state to see current evaluation dates, or search [www.petpartners.org/directory](http://www.petpartners.org/directory) to contact a local evaluator to inquire about future evaluation dates.

### Step 4: Submit Your Paperwork

Once you successfully pass the team evaluation, send all completed paperwork along with the registration fee to Pet Partners. When you receive your acceptance letter you can begin making visits.

Time commitment for visits can range monthly to weekly. This is directly dependent on your schedule, the population that you are visiting, and the needs of the facility.

| Registration Type  | 2 Year<br>Registration Fee<br>(subject to change) |
|--|---|
| New Therapy Animal team w/ one animal  | \$95  |
| Renewing Therapy Animal Team w/ one animal   | \$70  |
| Community Partner Member w/ one animal, new or renewing                                      | \$50  |
| Senior aged 55 and over; minor; military or military dependent; individual with a disability | \$50  |
| Therapy Animal Program Volunteer only (without an animal)                                    | \$50  |
| Therapy Animal Team Additional Handler   | \$30 per handler                                  |
| Therapy Animal Team Additional Animal  | \$30 per animal                                   |

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What types of animals can qualify?

A. Pet Partners registers a variety of animals including dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, guinea pigs, rats, miniature pigs, llamas, alpacas, horses, donkeys and mini-horses or donkeys.

Q. I just got a new puppy! Can we register?

A. Animals must be at least one year old and have lived in the owner's home for at least six months before evaluating and registering with Pet Partners. Pocket pets such as rabbits, guinea pigs and rats only need to be six months old.

Q. How do I know if my animal is a good candidate for this work?

A. In addition to having good basic obedience skills, animals should be calm and reliable in unfamiliar settings with unfamiliar people. They should not demonstrate avoidance, aggression, or fear. All species should be housebroken. Dogs which have been trained to aggressively protect and/or been encouraged to bite, even if it is a component of a dog sport (e.g., Schutzhund), are not eligible.

Q. My animal is intact (not spayed or neutered) – can they be registered as a Pet Partner?

A. Yes, however some facilities may not allow intact animals to participate in their programs.

Q. My animal has some health problems. Can we still register?

A. Pet Partners does register animals with conditions requiring prescription medication. However, animals receiving antibiotics, antifungals or immunosuppressive medications (such as steroids or chemotherapy) may not register with Pet Partners until that course of treatment has been completed.

Q. I heard that my animal cannot be fed a raw protein diet and participate in this program. Is this true? A. Yes. Your animal must be off of a raw protein diet for at least four weeks before registering. For more information on Pet Partners' raw protein diet policy, please go to [www.petpartners.org/rawdiet](http://www.petpartners.org/rawdiet)

Q. What training courses do you provide for the animal?

A. Pet Partners does not provide any training courses for animals. Your animal should have basic obedience skills and the temperament to succeed when visiting in therapeutic environments. We train the human handler and evaluate the handler and animal together.

Q. Can my children volunteer with me or do this on their own?

A. Children as young as 10 years old can become a registered as a handler for a therapy animal team. All handlers, regardless of age, will need to complete the same steps as noted on the previous page. Children younger than 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian on all visits. Please be aware, some facilities may have age limits.

Q. What is the required volunteer commitment to Pet Partners?

A. We do not require volunteers to commit to any number of hours or visits per year. We recognize that every person's availability is different. As a volunteer, you determine where you would like to visit and with what frequency. It is your responsibility to maintain a schedule that works for you and the facility where you volunteer.

Q. How do I find a place to visit once I'm registered?

A. Once you are registered with Pet Partners, you may log in to our website and find facilities looking for teams on the team resources page. You can also network with other local teams or contact places of interest to you and inquire directly with them.

Q. I have two animals, can I register with both?

A. Yes, but you need to have a separate evaluation and complete a separate Registration Packet for each animal. A registered team consists of one human and one animal. Even if you are registered to handle multiple animals, you may only visit with one animal at a time.

Q. How much does it cost to do this?

A. There are fees for the handler course, evaluation and registration. Additionally you will need your vet to complete a health screening, which may have an associated charge.

Q. I have more questions, who can I contact at Pet Partners?

A. Most questions can be answered by reviewing our website [www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org). If you still have questions, you can email [volunteering@petpartners.org](mailto:volunteering@petpartners.org) or call 425.679.5530