



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 and search by state for currently scheduled classes, or search 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

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 and search by state to see current evaluation dates, or search 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. Once 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 Registration Fee (subject to change)
New Therapy Animal team w/ one animal: US, Canada and Puerto Rico Residents	\$95
Renewing Therapy Animal Team w/ one animal: US Canada, Puerto Rico Residents	\$70
Pet Partners 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 shyness, 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. 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

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

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 If you still have questions, you can email volunteering@petpartners.org or call 425.679.5530

Pet Partners[™] Program Team Evaluation

Part 1 - Skills Exercises (PPST)

◆ Indicates exercises used in evaluating complex area placement



Exercise 1
Review Handler
Questionnaire



Exercise 2 ◆
Accepting a Friendly Stranger
Animal may change position



Exercise 3
Accepting Petting
Animal may change position



Exercise 4 ◆
Appearance and Grooming
Animal may change position



Exercise 5 ◆
Out for a Walk
All dogs must walk on floor



Exercise 6 ◆
Walk Through a Crowd



Exercise 7
Reaction to Distractions
One visual and one auditory



Exercise 8
(med./large dogs)
Sit on Command



Exercise 9
(med./large dogs)
Down on Command



Exercise 8 and 9
(small dogs/cats)
Animal Passed to 3 Strangers



Exercise 10 ◆
(med./large dogs)
Stay in Place
10 ft line with a 2-3 second pause



Exercise 10 ◆
(small dogs/cats)
Placed on Lap or Table
Stay for 30 seconds



Exercise 11
Come When Called
All dogs must do



Exercise 12
Reaction to Neutral Dog



Pet Partners
Touching Lives, Improving Health

Chart by Shari Sternberger
Illustrations courtesy of Terry Ryan,
Legacy Canine Behavior
and Training, Inc.

Pet Partners® Program Team Evaluation

Part 2 - Aptitude Exercises (PPAT)

Volunteer Teams are permitted to have 2 "Not Ready(s)" (NR) marks in PPAT exercises D through J

◆ Indicates exercises used in evaluating complex area placement

Scenario 1



Exercise A ◆
Overall Examination



Exercise B ◆
Clumsy Petting



Exercise C ◆
Restraining Hug

Scenario 2



Exercise D
Staggering, Gesturing
Assistant staggers, then moves normally to pet animal



Exercise E
Angry Yelling
Assistant yells, then calms down and calls animal



Exercise F
Bumped from Behind

Scenario 3



Exercise G ◆
Crowded and Petted by Several People



Exercise H
Leave It



Exercise I
Offer Treat



Exercise J ◆
Overall Assessment

The team should:
› Be reliable
› Be predictable
› Be controllable



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