

MONROE COUNTY HUMANE ASSOCIATION

Therapy Animal Program

How To Become a Therapy Animal Team

Step #1: Determine if your pet meets the behavior requirements

Dogs and cats must be 1+ years old, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and free of infection. Dogs and cats must meet a variety of behavior requirements. A full list of requirements can be found on the back of this document or at www.monroehumane.org/therapy-animal-program.

Step #2: Take a questionnaire to see if your pet is a good fit

Complete the questionnaire at www.monroehumane.org/therapy-animal-program.

Step #3: Complete Handler Training (\$30)

To sign up for Handler Training, email Animal Program Coordinator, Chika Akiyama, at cakiyama@monroehumane.org. This training is for handlers only and is intended to prepare handlers for the program.

Potential teams who complete Handler Training can sign up for optional prep classes to practice and master the behavior requirements for the Team Evaluation. Prep classes are available weekly. (\$10 each).

Step #4: Complete Team Evaluation (\$30*)

Within 3-6 months of completing Handler Training, potential teams must be evaluated on all of the behavior requirements without the use of training tools or treats.

**Dogs who have a Canine Good Citizen Certificate or are an active therapy animal through a different program are exempt from the evaluation fee and are accepted into the program. Proof of status is required, and all previous steps must be completed.*

Step #5: Complete Team Registration (\$100)

After passing the Team Evaluation, potential teams need to pass a background check and complete paperwork before serving as an active team and providing visits in the community. Teams remain active in the Therapy Animal Program for two years.

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Behavior Requirements

Handlers

- 18+ years old
- Possess a valid driver's license
- Demonstrate proof of responsible pet ownership through providing proper veterinary care, grooming, and handling
- Have a professional appearance
- Have excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Remain friendly, social, reliable, and trustworthy
- Remain knowledgeable of team expectations

Canines & Felines

- 1+ years old
- Spayed/neutered
- Vaccinated
- Free of infection
- Attentive & responsive to handler
- Enter buildings calmly
- Walk through a crowd calmly
- Wait on a leash or in a carrier calmly
- Accept handling such as a pet, touch, hold or hug from owner, stranger or crowd of people
- Tolerate collar, harness, vest, bandana & leash
- Have no reaction to nearby animals or children
- Have no reaction to medical equipment such as wheelchairs, canes, walkers, elevators or slick surfaces
- Have no reaction to being bumped or surprised
- Have no reaction to visual or auditory distractions

Canines Only

- Obey the following commands: sit, down, come and leave-it
- Stay in place for 30+ seconds
- Walk on a loose leash with tight turns and accurate pace
- Sit to be greeted and pet
- Does not jump
- Does not excessively lick
- Remains calm while leash is held by a stranger and owner is out of sight