

SOCIAL PET THERAPY

Program Overview for Location Staff

DCJ's Social Pet Therapy Volunteers provide support to staff and enhance wellness through dog visits at various DCJ office locations. The handlers and dogs must have a current therapy dog registration through [Pet Partners®](#), [Portland Area Canine Therapy Teams](#), or [Alliance for Therapy Dogs](#) to volunteer for DCJ.

If your location is interested in having a Social Pet Therapy Volunteer team visit, please reach out to the [Volunteer Program Manager](#) to learn more about having a one-time visit, or to schedule regular visits. The Volunteer Program will work to recruit teams on your behalf. Once the decision has been made for a visit, there are several steps to prepare.



Review the Volunteer Intake Process.

Before you meet with a potential volunteer, please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the [Volunteer Application and Screening Process](#). This will help to make sure that everyone is on the same page and will help you to support the volunteer in their placement.

Schedule a time to meet the new therapy dog and its volunteer owner.

Once a volunteer has been referred to you from the Volunteer Manager, schedule a meeting to discuss the program and determine if your location will move forward with the volunteer placement. Review and complete [Volunteer Interview Form](#), give the volunteer a tour and introduce them to your team. Once you have mutually decided to move forward with the volunteer, please let the Volunteer Program Manager know so that they can run a criminal record check and complete required training with the volunteer before they get started. Please note, volunteers have already completed a criminal record check with their registering agency, however for privacy and security reasons DCJ has to conduct our own criminal record check. The Volunteer Program Manager will notify you once they have passed their records check and will send an email with instructions for next steps.

How will you notify staff of the pet visit?

If you are planning on having regular visits to your site, determine a schedule with the volunteer in advance. A flyer that advertises the specific dog that will be visiting with the location in the building and the time of the visit(s) will be provided to you by the Volunteer Manager. You can also send out emails and/or calendar invites to your team.

Where will the visit occur?

In general, it works best for the visiting location to be one that is out of public viewing. Once an animal is seen, interruptions usually follow so a nice out of the way spot helps everyone to succeed. Some locations prefer to have the visiting location in an area more visible to the public. Consult with your volunteer to figure out what will work best for them and their dog. If a staff or public visitor inquires about [animals on county premises](#), please refer to the linked policy.

What happens during the visit?

Depending on the location, the volunteer will make their animal available to interact individually, or in group settings, with anyone who is interested. Some animals prefer more individual interactions, and others like to play and interact with lots of people. Be sure to speak with the volunteer first to determine what your site prefers, and if the dog would be amenable.

How long do the visits last?

The therapy animal and volunteer may visit for a maximum of two hours per day. The usual time is approximately one hour broken into segments anywhere from 15 to 20 minutes long per visitor for individual meetings with the animal.

What do I do if the volunteer has to cancel?

Start by notifying staff of the cancellation and attempt to reschedule with the volunteer. It is important to let volunteers know that it can be very disappointing when the volunteer cancels, so encourage them to make all attempts to create a schedule they can follow barring illness or emergencies. Let the Volunteer Program Manager know about continued cancellations or tardiness.

Questions about Social Pet Therapy Volunteer Teams?

Contact DCJ Volunteer Services,
stephanie.bolson@multco.us or 503.988.5634



Department of
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