

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