

Volunteer Dog Walking Program Overview

Our dogs are categorized by collar color depending on the in-kennel and in-shelter behaviors they display. Our behavior program offers in depth dog handling training classes for volunteers and staff so they can confidently and safely handle a variety of dogs, demonstrating different shelter and on-leash behaviors, both in and out of the shelter environment. Training all volunteers also allows for consistency and generalization in training for all of our dogs.

From a safety perspective, we use Martingale style collars on all our dogs at the shelter to prevent dogs from backing out of their collar or getting loose from their handler. Every dog wears a collar of a specific color to indicate which types of behaviors they display as well as what level of training is required of volunteers to handle them.

Pink: Pulls slightly on leash.

Orange: Shy or scared dogs.

Blue: Jumpy and mouthy behavior.

Silver: On-leash reactive (barks/pulls towards other dogs)

- **Yellow:** Fearfully defensive dogs/Severe fear (Also covered and certified in Level 2 Class)

Red: Dogs who have a specific training plan in place (approved handlers only).

Dog Walking Information Session

This 60 minute training class informs new volunteers about what dog walking at TLAC is like, expectations, and how to gain more training.

Training Prerequisites: General Volunteer Orientation

Required Training: One 60 minute training class

New Volunteer Mentor Session

This 90 minute training class teaches volunteers how to safely enter and exit the dog kennels, how to use training equipment properly, how to use the whiteboard, how to safely maneuver TLAC with a dog, and all the rules needed to keep both pets and people safe. Upon completion of a Mentor Session volunteers are eligible to begin walking any Pink collared dogs.

Training Prerequisites: Dog Walking Information Session

Required Training: One 90 minute training class

Commitment: Walk at least 1 hour per week

BOO (Basic Orange Orientation) Training

This is a 90 minute training class that involves working with the scared and shy orange collared dogs. After completion of this course, volunteers will know more about dog body language, how to approach a scared or shy dog and how to reinforce appropriate behaviors in a scared or shy dog.

Training Prerequisites: 2 Mentoring Sessions

Required Training: Taught at the end of the 2nd Mentor Session

Level 1 Training

Teaches the basics of working with dogs in the shelter environment. Volunteers learn loose leash walk, working walk, sit and kennel routine. After completion of this training, you will be able to walk pink and orange collared dogs within TLAC and around the extended campus near TLAC. This course is taught by the Canine Coaches and/or Behavior Staff.

Training Prerequisites: 2 Mentoring Sessions, BOO

Training Required: 3 weeks of ~1 hour dog behavior and handling classes

JAM (Jumpy and Mouthy) Class

An extension of Level 1, this 2 hour class teaches volunteers how to get the jumpy and mouthy dogs out of the kennel safely. After successfully completing JAM, volunteers will be able to walk blue collared dogs in TLAC and around the baseball fields near TLAC. Taught by experienced volunteers.

Training Prerequisites: 2 Mentoring Sessions, BOO, Level 1 Training (JAM Class is taught the next week after Level 1 Class)

Training Required: One 2 hour training class

Level 2 Training

Level 2 builds on the skills learned in level 1 and teaches volunteers how to successfully handle dogs that are on-leash reactive. Extensive kennel routines are reviewed to prepare you for taking out dogs that are leash reactive. The course also covers how to successfully and safely handle Yellow-collar dogs who are highly fearful and/or defensive. After successfully completing level 2, you will be able to walk silver and yellow collared dogs in TLAC and around the baseball fields near TLAC.

Training Prerequisites: 2 Mentoring Sessions, BOO, Level 1 Training, JAM Blue Training

Training Required: 5 weeks of 1 hour dog behavior classes

CGC / Top Dog - Weekly classes with an assigned dog where you teach the 10 steps needed to become a CGC dog. TOP Dog is the same as CGC, but for dogs who don't qualify to become a CGC certified dog due to specific behaviors. Top Dog graduates may have modified tests, like friendly stranger. New Silver Handlers will be invited to participate or they can contact carrie.morris@ to get involved.

Canine Coach - Weekly behavior classes for CC volunteers. Canine Coach volunteers are our most advanced behavioral volunteers, and assist with the training and behavior modification of the more challenging dogs in our care, with the goal of certifying them as TOP Dogs. They meet every week, alternating between a classroom setting and a hands on training class to further broaden and educate the skill set of these crucial volunteers.

***Rufftail Runners** provide Mentor Sessions 1 and 2. Upon completion of Session 2 and 10 hours of dog walking they are able to sign up for BOO training on MVP. They are then filtered into normal APA! Trainings.

*There are no hour requirements between trainings, but volunteers do need to be capable of and able to demonstrate all training principles to move to the next level and for Level 2 commit to specific number of dog walking hours.