

PATH TO A DOGABILITY CERTIFICATION

We refer to all our canine team volunteers as certified **TEAMS**, rather than certified dogs, since your role as a handler matters just as much as your dog's behavior.

RESPONSE TO YOUR INQUIRY

Once you have contacted **DogAbility** to inquire about our program and how your dog may qualify, you will receive an email response requiring your contact info as well as general info about your dog. Once we receive those answers, one of our staff will call you and will spend time explaining how the DogAbility program is different from other therapy dog organizations as well as answer any questions you may have.

- You will then setup an evaluation combined with a trial session with a suitable participant.
- Paperwork that includes, registration, liability forms and proof of Rabies must be completed and brought to your evaluation.
- You can expect your evaluation/trial visit to last approx 1-2 hours and may be a single or multiple team evaluation.
- While visiting with you and your dog, we will also see what basic manners and behaviors your dog already demonstrates, including energy, impulse control as well any tricks or skills you'd like to show us.
- You also can also consider which programs within DogAbility are of most interest to you.

Providing we don't see any **RED FLAGS** that would result in immediate dismissal, your evaluation will include a **TRIAL SESSION** already scheduled with our participants during the same time period. This trial session, combined with our impressions of you during your evaluation, will allow you an opportunity to experience what we do during a session and we will also see how you work together as a "team".

NOTE: Excessive barking, trembling, growling or showing any signs of aggression towards people or other dogs is cause for dismissal **AT ANY TIME!**

YOUR TEAM FOLDER - We **MUST** have all your forms signed, proof of rabies, as well as a headshot of you and your dog together before you can move forward.

IS IT A MATCH?

After you have attended your trial session, we will touch base with you as well as your Team Leader to see whether everyone feels that your dog's temperament, your interest, commitment and availability is a match for our program. If our program is not for you, or if we have concerns about you as a team, then either party can decide not to move forward with the certification process.

Remember: It is important that your dog **ENJOYS** being at DogAbility!

MOVING FORWARD

Handlers Pay 2 Fees: \$150 for continuous training + \$30 insurance - both good for 1 year

Once you have paid your New Team fees, you will be invited to attend a detailed Zoom Meeting orientation covering all the technical parts of our session scheduling system, rules and procedures, as well as the importance of communicating by text or email within 24 hrs of a text or email we send that requires an immediate response (as with a cancellation of a session or if we need another team right away)

During the **zoom orientation**, you will learn how to enter our **Log In** area of our website (unavailable to the public) where you can view our live session calendar and choose the session dates/times that work best with your personal schedule. Sessions are usually held 6 days a week between 10am-6pm which makes it easy to choose a day and time. Every team is expected to attend 2 sessions per month. (some exceptions)

You will also understand the necessity for strict arrivals, last minute cancellation consequences as well as how our team training program works.

Once you receive your **Log-In ID & PW** you will have access to our session calendar as well as our handler support info and where you can also order your customized **DogAbility T-shirt**.

TRAINING BEGINS

Once you have attended the **Zoom Orientation** meeting, you are ready to attend Team Training classes. Team Training classes are held at DogAbility as well as in public locations where you can put your “manners and control” efforts to practical use while also attracting new handlers and dogs to our program.

TEAM TYPES

THERE ARE 3 TYPES OF DOGABILITY TEAMS

ACTIVITY TEAMS ~ COMFORT TEAMS ~ FEAR OF DOGS TEAMS

We do not subject everyone to a **PASS/FAIL OBEDIENCE TEST** in order to be one of our **CERTIFIED TEAMS**. Instead, we have you and your dog observed during training as well as during sessions with our participants. Providing your dog is under control at all times and that you as a team begin to demonstrate qualities we look for, we identify you as an **ACTIVITY, COMFORT or a FEAR OF DOGS TEAM**.

During team training sessions, you and your dog will be introduced to the many activities we offer during a session with our participants. These activities include obstacle play, tricks, games, wagon rides, canine care education, Scout merit badge requirements, working with Seniors, those with and without Special Needs as well as with those debilitated by their Fear of Dogs.

While moving through the training process, you will be **REQUIRED** to attend periodic Zoom Meetings on various topics and issues meant to educate and support you during sessions at DogAbility. It's a great way to welcome new teams and to discuss any glitches or issues that are brought to our attention.

Since you cannot learn all there is to know in a few training sessions, we encourage all teams to continue to attend training classes as needed at no extra charge as long as you maintain an active membership, which is by attending 2 participant sessions per month

ONCE YOU ARE DOGABILITY CERTIFIED

- During your certification process you will attend supervised participant sessions, training classes as well as random zoom meetings.
- You will be included in a list of certified teams who are individually emailed invitations to specific sessions as well as be given access to our live google calendar of sessions to choose from.
- You are required to attend 2 participant sessions per month during a year of membership.
- Some sessions are with individuals and others are with groups. Our participants come to us through therapists, schools, agencies, clubs or parents.
- Some sessions are in the morning while others are in the afternoon. Some sessions are on weekdays while others are on Saturdays (we are closed on Sundays)
- You will also be able to view our online session calendar by logging in with an **ID and Password**.
- All teams are to arrive 1/2 hour prior to group sessions which last 1 hour.
- All teams are to arrive at least 15 min prior to private sessions which last 45 minutes.

Ready to schedule your Team Evaluation?

Contact: DATeamEvaluator@gmail.com