



Volunteer Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Puppies Behind Bars. To qualify as a puppy sitter, you must be at least 18 years old and live either in Brooklyn or Manhattan, or within 45 minutes of one of our six correctional facilities in New York state. NYC volunteers take puppies from our weekend shuttles, which transport puppies into Manhattan on weekends. New York City volunteers commit to hosting a puppy one weekend a month in their home from mid-morning Saturday until mid-afternoon Sunday. Below are all the facilities for those NOT located in Manhattan or Brooklyn:

- Bedford Hills Correctional Facility located at 247 Harris Rd., Bedford Hills, NY 10507
- Eastern Correctional Facility located at 30 Institution Rd, Napanoch, NY 12458
- Fishkill Correctional Facility located at 18 Strack Dr., Beacon, NY 12508
- Greenhaven Correctional Facility located at 594 Rt. 216, Stormville, NY 12582
- Otisville Correctional Facility located at 57 Sanitorium Ave, Otisville, NY 10963
- Wallkill Correctional Facility located at 50 McKendrick Rd., Wallkill, NY 12589

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Overnight Sitter – taking dogs of all ages into your home overnight to socialize
- Daytime Sitter – taking dogs of all ages for a few hours to socialize

Please note the following considerations:

- We ask for a twelve-month/visit commitment. It is important that our prospective volunteers understand that this is a serious commitment to a challenging and, at times, exhausting volunteer program. Being a PBB volunteer is being part of a special breed. Your efforts directly help shape the future of a service or facility dog for wounded veterans, first responders and police departments, or explosive detection canines (EDCs) for law enforcement. Since training you and organizing your visits with each prison are quite involved, and it is beneficial to our puppies to have consistency, we ask that you commit to volunteering for us once a month for the next twelve months. If you find you love it and have more time, we would be thrilled to have you volunteer more than once a month! However, in order to remain active in our system, it is required to maintain the minimum monthly commitment.

- We need to be strict with this guideline, so please take this into consideration before committing to the program. Required attendance at two three-hour training sessions. New York City volunteers train at our midtown Manhattan office; all other New York State volunteers train in upstate locations. At the training, volunteers will learn about handling the dogs, the supplies needed, what commands the puppies know, how to read a dog's body language, among other valuable tips.
- Paws & Reflect. New York City volunteers may also participate in our Paws & Reflect program, which provides homebound senior citizens with visits from our pups in training and their volunteer handlers. The commitment to volunteer is two (2) visits per month for two months or one (1) visit per month for four months.
- Many of our puppies are energetic and strong. They pull on lead; they may bark during the night; they could have an "accident" on your living room rug – it is not always easy! This is a rewarding opportunity, but we want you to know of the less glamorous details before you commit your time.
- Examples of things that you can do with a puppy on your outings include: Go to the park, into a store or two, restaurants, walk on different streets or just have a laid-back day close to home.
- This program is about training future working dogs, either service dogs and department dogs for wounded war veterans or first responders, or explosive detection canines for law enforcement. Please do not get involved in volunteering only to gauge whether your family is ready for a dog of its own. Our dogs are not pets.
- Please note that we do not have a pre-set schedule of upcoming training sessions for the year; trainings are scheduled as needed (remove: to train more volunteers to provide socialization outings for our pups) and may take a month or more before we announce the next training session.

Again, thank you for your interest. We could not fully socialize our puppies without your help and commitment. Your efforts have a direct impact on helping shape our puppies into the best working dogs they can be!