



Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Puppies Behind Bars. You must be at least 18 years old and must either live within 45 minutes of one of our seven correctional facilities in New York or New Jersey or live in Brooklyn or Manhattan to participate as a NYC "puppy sitter". NYC volunteers take puppies from our weekend shuttles, which drive 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 that are 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

Green Haven 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 four-month commitment.** It is important that our prospective volunteers understand that this is a serious commitment to a challenging and, at times, exhausting volunteer program. Your efforts 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 the puppies benefit from consistency, we ask that you commit to volunteering once a month (overnight), or twice a month (daytime) for the next four months, consecutively. 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, you must maintain the minimum monthly commitment. We need to be strict with this guideline, so please take this into consideration before committing to the program.
- **We require attendance at two consecutive three-hour training sessions.** New York City volunteers train at our midtown office; all other New York State volunteers train in upstate locations.

At the sessions, volunteers learn about handling the dogs, supplies needed, what commands the puppies know, how to read a dog's body language, among other valuable tips.

- **We strive to have a training session four times per year.** Please continue to check the website session dates and updates.
- **Application & Background Check.** You will be asked to complete our online application. You will also be asked to sign a photography release form, a liability form, and an emergency medical permission form. To complete the application, you will need to submit three-character references stating why you would be a good volunteer. Please make sure your references include their name, number, and email. Only submit your application once you have completed and signed everything as well as attached your three references. Our apologies that all this sounds onerous but working with dogs and prisons mean that we need to follow rules that protect everyone – two and four-legged! For those closer to the facilities, you will be asked to submit a background check sent by the facility. For NYC volunteers, you will be asked to submit a background check sent by Puppies Behind Bars. Once you have cleared your background check you will officially be invited to the training.
- **Volunteers must begin puppy sitting within 30 days of being trained,** as a safety measure for volunteers and our dogs. Puppies must be taken out once per month (for overnight sitters) or twice a month (for day sitters) for four months consecutively, in order to remain an active volunteer.
- **After-visit reports.** Volunteers are required to write feedback letters and take photos of your visiting puppy after each outing. These short letters and photos become part of a scrapbook that is kept on each dog and given to whomever the dog is eventually paired with (war veteran, first responder, law enforcement agent). The scrapbooks tell the story of the dog's life and its fun times with you and are wonderful feedback for both the "puppy raisers" and the final recipients of our magnificent dogs.
- **Transportation.** Please note that our dogs may not be taken on the subway, the PATH, or ferry, so New York City volunteers who do not live within walking distance of the midtown shuttle must be able to ride a city bus with our pup or drive to and from the shuttle location (our dogs are permitted to ride in buses, taxis, or private vehicles.)
- **Purchases.** Overnight sitters will be required to purchase the crate, crate mat, bowls, and toys for the dogs you will be holding overnight once the training is completed. Daytime sitters will be required to purchase bowls and toys in case you decide to take the dog home for the day.

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. Give serious consideration before committing, so you, as a volunteer, are both successful and satisfied. No one under the age of 18 may walk one of our puppies or be given primary responsibility for one of our puppies at any time. No one who has not been trained (including family members) may hold the leash or be given primary responsibility for one of our puppies at any time. Only those who have gone through the two-day training and have been cleared may handle one of our puppies. Children can interact with the puppies while supervised and in the comforts of your home only.

Please be aware that our dogs are not allowed in homes with certain breeds of dogs, which we will discuss with you on an individual basis. If you have dogs, or any other animals, please mention them when you email us.

Examples of things that you can do with a puppy on your outings include:

Going to the park, into a store or two, restaurants, walking on different streets or just 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.

Again, thank you for your interest. Volunteering as a puppy sitter involves a big commitment and can be challenging, but it is also extremely rewarding!

Thank you.