



# Canine Comfort Policies

## Handler Must:

- Provide their own dog.
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Successfully pass a background check conducted by *Intellicorp*.
- Be evaluated with the dog they plan to work with. VHS will not allow anyone to handle a dog that they haven't been specifically approved to work with through our evaluation and certification process.
- Attend a Canine Comfort orientation/training.
- Pass Valley Humane Society's (VHS) temperament test/evaluation.
- Complete a minimum 2 mentor shifts per area within 2 months. More mentor shifts may be required upon recommendation, some locations require 3 mentors and an observation shift.
- Pass 3-month probationary drop in visit.
- Volunteer a minimum of 2 times a month, unless on an approved leave of absence.
- Wear proper identification. While engaged in approved pet therapy activities, handlers must wear ID badges and dogs must wear purple vests with appropriate patches. Vests should be kept clean.
- Only visit approved facilities/activities and follow all guidelines of locations they wish to visit.
- Permit VHS to send them email communications. Emails will include specific Canine Comfort program updates, information, and volunteer opportunities, as well as general VHS news.
- Volunteer with only one dog at a time (if you have more than one dog in the program).
- Never leave their dog unattended and always hold the leash of your dog.
- **Log volunteer hours monthly.**
- **Follow Valley Humane Society and the Facility COVID-19 policies and mask guidelines**

## Dog Must:

- Be at least one-year-old, and have been under the handler's guardianship for a minimum of six months.
- Pass VHS's certification process (temperament test/evaluation), which requires them to be calm, friendly, enjoy being petted, and able to adapt to different smells, sounds, and surroundings.
- Have some form of obedience training, and the ability to perform simple commands, including "sit," "stay," "down," "come," "leave it," "off," and "drop it."
- **Be up to date on vaccinations, fecal testing, and veterinary examinations.** Updated records must be submitted annually, within 30 days of expiration, with completed accompanying paperwork as required. Program participation will not be allowed beyond 30 days after your annual expiration date. Rabies and fecal exams should be renewed on their expiration dates (if different). Fecal tests must be the **Ova & Parasites** test. New badges will be issued annually after updated medical records are received. Dogs past due on their medical requirements will be put on hold and will not be allowed to participate in the program. Records not updated within 60 days will result in removal from the program and will require re-certification, including paying the fee again.
- Be spayed or neutered. VHS does make some exceptions for dogs involved as registered AKC show dogs (conformation competitor) and breeding dogs for CCI or Guide Dogs. Adequate proof of the dog's status must be provided at the evaluation.
- Be bathed and groomed before each visit, with nails trimmed. Dogs should be current on flea treatments.
- Be on a leash 4 feet in length **at all times** during a visitation, unless otherwise specified by a facility. Use of retractable leashes, choke chains, electronic/training collars, shock collars, martingale chain collars or pinch collars are NOT permitted by VHS.
- Must always be kept at a 2-foot distance from other dogs.
- Not socialize with other dogs during a visit.
- Refrain from barking. Barking before, during, or after a visit is grounds for removal.
- Always exercise your dog before a visit.
- Dog cannot eliminate indoors.
- Dogs may not wear vest for activities outside of approved therapy visits. This includes shopping, eating, and travel.

## Valley Humane Society Reserves the Right to:

- Remove any Canine Comfort Pet Therapy team from the program at any time, for any reason.
- Place a team on hold due to concerns about a dog's behavior, a handler's ability to manage their dog, or because paperwork is late. Reinstatement will require re-evaluation and attending a Canine Comfort orientation
- Update our policies at any time