

TMH Animal Therapy Program: Extra Standards for Courthouse Therapy Program Teams

In order to participate in the Courthouse Therapy Dogs Program, teams are required to do the following *in addition to passing a therapy team evaluation*:

1. Demonstrate previous experience and proficiency working in complex environments.
2. Demonstrate experience and proficiency working in close environments with children in stressful situations. This includes being physically handled by children.
3. Submit to full background checks.
4. Submit to drug screening and verifying/updating personal vaccinations
5. Study the Courthouse Therapy Dogs Informational Sheet and Home Study Guide and then pass the Exam.
6. Sign Oath of Confidentiality
7. Handler must shadow other teams in dependency court prior to being mentored in dependency court. Shadowing is not allowed in criminal cases.
8. Participate in additional annual training, including the emotional impact of volunteering in courthouse settings.
9. Provide photo of dog and pet team for Courthouse Therapy Dog book. This book is available for victims and families to review and used to try to provide best matches.
10. Third parties are always present when interacting with a minor. Teams are always acting under the direction of court personnel.
11. Volunteers are required to wear Delta/PP ID (logo apparel may also be worn, but is not required), is in control of dog (holding leash at all times), follows all Pet Partner procedures and must stay with dog at all times, including restroom breaks. Note that in courtrooms, the Delta/PP ID will not be visible.
12. Volunteers go through security stations, and in felony cases are escorted by State Attorney personnel.
13. Teams selected for *courtroom* participation must have demonstrated excellence with traumatized children and have experience in other criminal court cases. These teams will follow the protocols established by the court for courtroom proceedings.