



Requirements for Maintaining an Active Volunteer Status

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for our volunteers and the patients, residents, and students that we service, PAWS of CNY is committed to maintaining the highest quality certification standards for our pet therapy program. As a reminder, in order to remain an active volunteer with our organization, and in order for your pet to be designated as a PAWS of CNY certified therapy pet, each volunteer must maintain the following standards:

- All therapy pets are required to be re-certified every two years. Your certification expiration date can be found on your most recent certificate. Historically, even pets that do well in a therapy setting do not always pass the re-certification test due to changes in their temperament, behavior, or training, which reinforces the importance of monitoring such changes in our volunteer pets. Prior to completing the re-certification process volunteers should re-familiarize themselves with the evaluation criteria to ensure you and your pet are comfortable and familiar with what is expected. The evaluation criteria for both [dogs](#) and [cats](#) is available on our website. It is the responsibility of our volunteers to know when they are due for re-evaluation and to contact Carol Bertelli at evaluations@pawsofcny.org in order to be re-certified during the month in which their certification expires.
- All therapy pets must have a current rabies certificate on file with PAWS of CNY. Our maintenance of these records is stipulated in our facility agreements and is crucial to the success of our program. It is the responsibility of our volunteers to know when their pet's rabies certificate is due for renewal and to mail, fax, or email a copy of the current rabies certificate to the board of directors.
- All volunteers must have a copy of the PAWS of CNY annual health screening form completed by a veterinarian every year. An itemized invoice is not acceptable. The annual health screening form provided by PAWS of CNY must be completed in its entirety, including the results of a fecal screening. If it is not possible to complete the annual health screening form, PAWS of CNY can accept a signed statement from a veterinarian, however the statement must certify what date the pet was examined, and that the pet was found to be in good health. Proof of a negative fecal test must be included with the statement. It is the responsibility of our volunteers to have the form completed annually by their vet when their pet receives his/her annual exam and mail, fax, or email a copy of the form to the board of directors.
- Volunteers must not have a break in service exceeding 6 months. Volunteers and/or pets who, for any reason, do not participate in a scheduled PAWS of CNY facility or reading program visit within a 6 month time period will be considered inactive.

When a pet's certification, rabies certificate, or annual health screening form expires, an email will be automatically generated from the PAWS of CNY database and sent to your email address of record as a reminder to either schedule your re-certification evaluation, or turn in your necessary paperwork.

Volunteers are given a 30 day grace period to turn in paperwork or schedule an evaluation. After 30 days, you will receive a phone call to your phone number of record reminding you to complete the necessary steps within ANOTHER 30 days.

If documentation has not been returned, or an evaluation has not been scheduled 30 days after you are contacted by phone, you will be mailed a letter stating that your status has been changed in INACTIVE with our organization. You will not be able to volunteer at your regular visits or attend any community events when you are inactive. Any facilities at which you routinely visit will be contacted and informed that you are no longer an active volunteer. If you are a group leader, a replacement will be identified within your group to perform group leader responsibilities. In order to become an active volunteer again, you will need to complete your outstanding requirements.

If you do not visit at a facility within 6 months, you will receive a letter from the board of directors advising that you are inactive. There is no grace period, or phone or email reminders in the case of volunteers with a gap in volunteer visits of 6 months. In order to become an active volunteer once again, you will need to complete the new volunteer certification process which includes: passing an evaluation test, completing the new volunteer orientation process, and participating in the three month on-site facility evaluation process.

We appreciate the time and effort that our volunteers give to help us offer the highest quality pet therapy services available in Central New York.

If you have any questions regarding what is required in order to maintain an active certification with PAWS of CNY, please contact us at info@pawsofcny.org.