



Thank you for your interest in volunteering for **Puppies Behind Bars**. You must be at least 18 years old and must live in New York City or within 45 minutes of one of our correctional facilities in New York or New Jersey to participate as a “puppy sitter”.

*Bedford Hills Correctional Facility located at 247 Harris Rd., Bedford Hills, NY 10507*

*Downstate Correctional Facility located at 121 Red Schoolhouse Rd, Fishkill, NY 12524*

*Edna Mahan Correctional Facility located at 30 County Rd. 513, Clinton, NJ 08809*

*Fishkill Correctional Facility located at 18 Strack Dr., Beacon, NY 12508*

*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
- **Paws & Reflect** – taking dogs to visit with a homebound elderly person for an hour a month (NYC residents only)

#### **Please note the following considerations:**

- **We ask for a four-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. Since training you and organizing your visits with each prison are quite involved, we ask that you commit to volunteering for us once a month for the next four months. If you find you love it and have more time, we would be thrilled if you wanted to volunteer more than once a month! But, if you do not maintain the monthly commitment, we are sorry, but we will have to make you inactive. We need to be strict with this guideline, so please take this into consideration before committing to the program.
- **Attend required four-hour training session.** Training sessions are held on a Saturday morning, from 11am to 3:00pm. New York City volunteers train at our midtown office; all other New York State volunteers train in Millerton, New York. New Jersey volunteers train in Clinton, New Jersey. At the training, volunteers will learn more about handling the dogs, about the supplies needed, what commands the puppies know, and how to read a dog’s body language, among other valuable tips.

- **NYC Volunteers**
  - 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.
  - NYC training is only open to those who reside in Manhattan and Brooklyn, please.
- **Upstate Volunteers**
  - Volunteers who live closer to prisons will meet PBB instructors in the prisons' parking lots to pick up and return the dogs there. Currently, prisons are not allowing new volunteers to enter, but as soon as they do, we will begin the process of getting all volunteers cleared to pick up and drop off at the prisons on their own, which means that you can choose the day and time of your pick-ups and returns. Not only will this give you more flexibility, but it will allow you to get and return the dog directly to its "puppy raiser", which is a really nice component of our work.
  - Here are the current pickup times; we regret that we cannot be flexible with these:
    - ❖ Bedford Hills Correctional Facility: Pick up or return dogs Mondays at 9:30 a.m. and pick up or return dogs Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.
    - ❖ Fishkill Correctional Facility: Pick up or return dogs Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. and pick up or return dogs Thursdays at 9:00 a.m.
    - ❖ Downstate Correctional Facility: Pick up or return dogs Fridays at 9:00 a.m. and pick up or return dogs Mondays at 10:15 a.m.
    - ❖ Otisville Correctional Facility: Pick up or return dogs Fridays at 1:00 p.m. and pick up or return dogs Mondays at 1:00 p.m.
    - ❖ Wallkill Correctional Facility: Pick up or return dogs Mondays at 9:30 a.m. and pick up or return dogs Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.
  - Volunteers closer to facilities commit to hosting a puppy once a month for four months.
- **Background Check & Application.** You will be asked to complete a background check before being accepted to the training. You will also be asked to complete the online application, sign a photography release form, a liability form, and an emergency medical permission form. To complete the application, you will also 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!**
- **30 Days or less.** Volunteers must begin puppy sitting within 30 days of completing the PBB training session and being approved.

- **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.
- **Paws & Reflect.** New York City volunteers may also participate in our Paws & Reflect program that provides homebound senior citizens with visits from our pups in training and their volunteer handlers. The commitment to volunteer is (2) visits per month for 2 months or (1) visit per month for 4 months.
- **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.)

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 come to prison, walk one of our puppies or be given primary responsibility for one of our puppies at any time. 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 for wounded war veterans or explosive detection dogs 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 to train more volunteers to provide socialization outings for our pups. It may take a month or a few months before we announce the next training session.

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.