



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. This information can be found in your [PAWS of CNY Volunteer Portal](#), and evaluation schedules are available on the opportunities tab in the portal so you may chose a convenient time to re-certify your pet.
- It is important to remember that you will need to be re-certified during the month in which your certification expires. If you choose to re-certify early (example: a month or two prior to your due date) your certification will still be renewed from your expiration date forward for the full two years (e.g., you are due to re-certify in September, you test in August, your next recertification is due in two years in September).
- 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 at info@pawsofcny.org.
- 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 six-month time period will be considered inactive.

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- Each pet that passes the certification process will be charged a \$100 certification fee which will be due at the time the dog passes the initial evaluation. Every two years, when the pet successfully passes the required re-certification, an additional \$100 fee will be required.

When a pet's certification, rabies certificate, or annual health screening form (including proof of a negative fecal test) expires, the volunteer will be notified that they are not eligible to participate in any pet therapy events unless compliant records are provided. Group leaders and/or facility supervisors will also be contacted and advised or necessary cancelled visits if applicable.

In order to become an active volunteer again, you will need to complete your outstanding requirements.

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.