



# Playbook

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## 1. Capital Therapy Dogs Overview

Capital Therapy Dogs Incorporated (CTD) registers handlers and their dogs as therapy dog teams to engage in animal-assisted activities at our programs in the Greater Sacramento, California area. CTD members are supportive, respectful, and kind. Volunteers without dogs help operate the organization and assist handler/dog teams.

Our mission: We share canine kindness.

Our vision: We collaborate with others to continually learn and develop as caring individuals and dog handlers, contributing to the happiness and well-being of our community members.

Capital Therapy Dogs is a 501(c)(3) public charity as determined by the IRS.

## 2. Purpose of the Playbook

The playbook summarizes how we conduct ourselves as volunteers and how we work together as an organization to serve others. We demonstrate respect, integrity and professionalism through our actions as volunteers. We operate through simplicity, innovation and teamwork as an organization.

## 3. Our Primary Plays

CTD's primary plays focus on minimizing management of the organization and maximizing sharing canine kindness. We recognize that energy devoted to serving others is more beneficial than energy devoted to developing complex guidelines and comprehensive documentation.

Our primary plays are:

- Welcome volunteers
- Value flexibility and discretion
- Embrace innovation and change
- Implement policies and procedures that are simple and intuitive
- Build a foundation of experienced therapy dog handlers
- Structure expenditures to support service to our clients and communities

## 4. Becoming a CTD Handler/Dog Team

Provisional and Registered Memberships in Capital Therapy Dogs are granted by the CTD Board of Directors upon completion of a phased process known as MAPS: Meet – Apply – Practice – Success!

People seeking CTD registration should do so out of a desire to help others through genuine care and kindness. Our handlers must represent themselves and their dogs in the proper manner as a team offering comfort.

Keep in mind that therapy dogs are not service dogs and do not have the access and other Americans with Disabilities Act rights.

### PHASE 1: MEET

Prospective volunteers complete the Contact Us form on the CTD website: [capitaltherapydogs.org](http://capitaltherapydogs.org). Your dog must be at least one year of age and been with you for a minimum of six months. Intact dogs are only accepted with approval of the CTD Board of Directors.

A CTD member will contact you and arrange for a CTD Greeter to meet you and your dog. CTD Greeters meet you in a public location such as a senior facility, library, coffee shop, pet store or other dog-friendly location. Our Greeters do their best to put you at ease and answer any questions you have. They will interview you and conduct an initial assessment of you and your dog as a potential therapy dog team. They will simulate interactions that are common to our programs, take notes and provide you with instruction as appropriate.

The outcome of Phase 1 is a determination regarding your readiness and desire to apply for Provisional Membership as a CTD volunteer handler/dog team. If you are not ready, we'll discuss options with you.

Prospective members may sample our programs by attending without a dog. If desired, we will provide you with information.

### PHASE 2: APPLY

In this phase you apply for Provisional Membership through the Apply to Join option on CTD website. CTD representatives review your application to ensure it is complete and verify your references. CTD may follow up with you regarding any questions or concerns.

The outcome of Phase 2 is our determination regarding your acceptance as a Provisional Member.

### PHASE 3: PRACTICE

As a Provisional Member during Phase 3, you and your dog attend CTD programs and gain experience as a therapy dog team. Each CTD program is managed by an experienced Program Liaison who supports, guides and encourages you. We recommend that you try different types of programs to see what you and your dog enjoy together.

The Practice Phase is usually six months in length. You may attend as many programs as you like. We request attendance at a minimum of three programs for Provisional Members in this phase.

The outcome of Phase 3 is our determination regarding your readiness to move to Phase 4 and acceptance as a Registered Member. If you need more time to perfect your skills or schedule additional therapy dog visits, your Provisional Membership may be extended.

## PHASE 4: SUCCESS!

In the Success! Phase, you and your dog are registered as a therapy dog team with Capital Therapy Dogs. Your commitment to serving our communities, teamwork with your dog and alignment with CTD's mission and vision help to make you and CTD successful.

As a Registered Member, you should attend a minimum of six programs per year. Registered Members may serve as Program Liaisons and Greeters and may run for open positions on CTD's Board of Directors. With recommendations from a Program Liaison and a Board Member, you may attend individual visits by contacting CTD's Secretary.

We ask Registered Members to contribute \$60 per year in dues to help support the organization. Dues are requested annually in July.

## 5. Fundamental CTD Policies and Procedures

We value empathy and compassion in each other, and a combination of: 1) the ability to communicate kindly in all situations; and 2) the ability to appreciate and follow simple, specific policies and procedures that are necessary for safe and successful interactions with the people we serve.

### MEMBER ATTIRE

Attire policies for CTD Provisional and Registered Members (members) include the following:

- Clothing and shoes must be clean, safe and sensible
- CTD ID should be worn unless other program-specific ID is necessary
- CTD logo items may be purchased and are optional
- Closed toed shoes are required by some facilities; check with the CTD Program Liaison

### DOG EQUIPMENT

Policies for dog handling equipment are:

- Leashes, collars, harnesses and other items (e.g., scarves) must be clean, safe and sensible
- Leash length must be appropriate for the size of your dog and cannot exceed six feet
- Scarves, party collars and costumes, if used, should be safe for dogs and clients, and not interfere with dog/client interaction
- Collar and harness buckles or quick-releases must be smooth
- Tags with sharp edges must be removed

If your small dog visits on laps or furniture, we recommend using a clean, small towel or blanket. Bring a towel for use as needed if your dog drools.

### HEALTH AND CLEANLINESS

Handlers and dogs must be in good health to attend CTD programs. If you or your dog are unwell, please remove yourself from visits until you recover fully. Dogs must be clean, groomed and have smooth, trimmed nails. Handlers must ensure dogs are free of fleas and use preventative flea control measures. Each handler must comply with public rabies regulations and have their rabies certificate(s) available for viewing at every visit.

### SIGNING UP TO ATTEND PROGRAMS

New CTD members receive an email with details about accessing our secure Volunteer Information Center Network (VicNet). Members must sign up on VicNet to attend CTD programs as part of our risk management procedure for liability insurance coverage. Members should remove themselves from sign-ups if needed.

## BASIC HANDLING MANNERS

Keep your dog on a leash and under your control. Never drop your leash or hand your leash to a client or facility staff person. If necessary and safe to do so, you may hand your leash to another CTD member for a short time. Clients should not visit with a member while holding two dogs, so please move outside of the program area or outside of the facility if possible.

Handlers are responsible for maintaining space between dogs. Generally, three feet is enough. If more space is needed and if dogs are getting too close, handlers must be proactive and kindly inform others. Take breaks as needed. Let the Program Liaison know if you need to leave a visit prior to its end time. Treats can be distracting to all dogs present. Members should check with the Program Liaison prior to using dog treats on a visit.

## INTERACTING WITH CLIENTS

We serve the public. Members must be respectful and always communicate in friendly terms. Introduce yourself and your dog. Use common sense when engaging in conversations with clients. Keep away from topics such as medical conditions, politics and religion. Ask questions about their lives and their interests. Smile often. And be sure to thank each client for taking the time to visit with you and your dog.

## DOGS WITH MULTIPLE HANDLERS

Members who handle the same dog may share handling at CTD programs if no adverse conditions arise.

## HANDLERS WITH MULTIPLE DOGS

Although dogs are usually handled one at a time, Registered Members may request to handle two dogs on a visit. The CTD Board may grant permission for a member to handle two dogs if no adverse conditions arise.

## PROGRAMS WITH SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Some CTD programs have special requirements that may include TB testing, fingerprint clearance, confidentiality agreements, and so forth. The assigned CTD Program Liaison or a CTD Board member can provide you with information on these programs. Members must comply with applicable special requirements prior to attending these programs.

## PUPPIES

Registered Members may handle puppies. Email [capitaltherapydogs@gmail.com](mailto:capitaltherapydogs@gmail.com) to request information on our Puppy Program.

## MOST IMPORTANTLY...

**Share canine kindness.** Be a positive influence. Have fun. Enjoy time with our clients, members and loving dogs.