



# 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 to everyone. 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 outlines CTD's approach to serving others through animal-assisted activities. The playbook is intended to help people understand how we conduct ourselves as volunteers and how we work together as an organization. We demonstrate respect, integrity and professionalism through our actions. Our organization operates through teamwork, simplicity and innovation.

## 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:

- Build upon a foundation of experienced therapy dog handlers
- Make it easy to volunteer
- Implement policies and procedures that are simple and intuitive
- Value flexibility and discretion
- Strive to understand what each handler and dog needs to be an effective CTD team and work to make every team successful
- Embrace innovation and change
- Structure budgets and expenditures to support service to our clients and communities

## 4. Becoming a CTD 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! While we encourage and support handlers their dogs in seeking registration, attaining registration is a privilege rather than an entitlement. Handlers 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 services 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 to meet you and your dog. Two welcoming CTD Greeters will meet you at a public location such as a coffee shop, pet store, park or other dog-friendly location. They will interview you and conduct an initial assessment of you and your dog as a potential therapy dog team.

Our Greeters will do their best to put you at ease and answer any questions you have. 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 to apply for Provisional Membership. If you are not ready, we'll discuss options with you.

### PHASE 2: APPLY

In this phase you complete and submit an application to join Capital Therapy Dogs Inc. CTD representatives review your application to ensure it is complete and verify your references. CTD representatives may follow up with you regarding any questions or concerns with your application.

We encourage you to sample our programs by attending without your dog. You are welcome to observe, interact with clients and ask us questions. We will provide you with information on how to sample our programs so you can gauge your interest and get an idea about programs that might be a good fit for you and your dog.

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 get on-the-job training as a therapy dog team. Each CTD program is managed by an experienced Program Liaison who will support, guide and encourage you. We recommend that you try different types of programs to see what you and your dog enjoy together.

The Practice Phase is six months in length. You may attend as many programs as you like, however we require attendance at a minimum of six programs during Provisional Membership.

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, your Provisional Membership may be extended.

## **PHASE 4: SUCCESS!**

In the Success! Phase, you are a Registered Member in 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 12 programs per year. Registered Members may serve as Program Liaisons, Greeters, Working Group Leads, and may run for open positions on CTD's Board of Directors. With a recommendation from a Program Liaison and a Board Member, you may attend individual visits at CTD programs where they are offered.

We ask Registered Members to contribute \$60 per year in dues to help support the organization. You may volunteer or be asked to assist in other ways as well.

## **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 shirts may be purchased and are optional
- Closed-toe shoes are required by some facilities; check with the CTD Program Liaison

### **DOG EQUIPMENT**

Policies for selecting equipment for dogs are:

- Leashes, collars, harnesses and other items (e.g., scarves) must be clean, safe and sensible
- 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
- Remove tags with sharp edges
- Use leashes four feet in length or shorter
- If your small dog will sit on laps or furniture, use a clean, small towel or blanket
- If your dog drools, bring a towel for use as needed

## HEALTH AND CLEANLINESS

Dogs must be current on rabies vaccinations and obtain negative fecal test results each year. Have your dog's current rabies certificate available for review at every visit. Dogs must be clean, groomed and have smooth, trimmed nails.

Handlers and dogs must be in good health to be eligible to attend CTD programs. The CTD Program Liaison may remove teams from visits for health or other concerns. Please refrain from attending visits if there is a perception of illness, such as excessive sneezing due to allergies.

## BASIC HANDLING MANNERS

Members must be respectful and communicate in friendly terms at all times.

Keep your dog on a leash and under your control.

Handlers must maintain space between dogs. Generally, three feet is sufficient. Handlers must be proactive and kindly inform other members if more space is needed, and if dogs are getting too close.

Take breaks as needed, and inform the Program Liaison 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 dogs treats on a visit.

As long as it is safe to do so, members may hand their leashes to other CTD members for a short time if necessary. Clients should not visit with a member while holding on to two dogs, so please move outside of the program area or outside of the facility if possible.

## INTERACTING WITH CLIENTS

Introduce yourself and your dog. Offer to shake hands if you'd like. 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.

## MULTIPLE-HANDLER DOGS

With agreement from the assigned CTD Program Liaison, members who share a dog may both handle the dog on a visit as long as 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 can provide you with information on these programs. Members must comply with applicable special requirements prior to attending these programs.

## MOST IMPORTANTLY...

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