

FAQ: COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

For which Pet Partners events or activities do I need to be fully vaccinated in order to participate?

This list may not be exhaustive, but some of the most common Pet Partners events and activities include Pet Partners therapy animal visits (indoor or outdoor); team evaluations; and in-person handler workshops.

Do I need to submit proof of vaccination to Pet Partners?

No, the Pet Partners national office is not collecting vaccination information at this time. However, facilities where you visit as a Pet Partners team may require submission of proof as well as other COVID-19 prevention measures, such as submission of a negative test, even for vaccinated individuals. Starting in late September 2021, at time of sign-up for a Pet Partners team evaluation or in-person workshop, volunteers will be asked through a simple yes/no checkbox to state that they have been vaccinating against COVID-19, but it is not necessary to submit vaccine cards or records via this system. If team evaluators and volunteer instructors wish to do so, they may ask for proof of vaccination at their events.

If I am unvaccinated, does that mean my volunteer relationship with Pet Partners ends?

Not at all. If you are unvaccinated, while you cannot currently participate in in-person activities or events, we look forward to having you participate again in those things when the public health situation changes. If you are currently registered and are due for renewal and cannot attend an evaluation due to vaccination status, we can transition your registration to a virtual-only registration. Also, if your standard registration does lapse, you can go through the renewal process at a later time with little additional effort.

Can I submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test in lieu of vaccination?

Not at this time.

I have a health condition or other situation that disallows me from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. Is there a way to continue participating in events and visiting facilities with my animal?

Not at this time. As an organization dedicated to human health and well-being, and with thousands of volunteers interacting with populations vulnerable to serious illness as a result of COVID-19, vaccinations are required. We look forward to having you resume in-person therapy animal program activities when the public health situation changes.

Are masks required if I'm vaccinated?

For Pet Partners events, such as team evaluations and handler workshops, Pet Partners aligns with the CDC on mask guidelines. Evaluators, instructors, or other volunteer leaders (those who are facilitating the event) can choose to require masks at their discretion, so long as requiring masks does not conflict with any local laws around mask mandates. Check with the person responsible for the event if you are unsure.

The facility where I visit does not require vaccination for volunteers, can I still visit there?

At this time, in order to visit, all volunteers must be fully vaccinated, even if the facility does not require it.

I am a volunteer instructor/team evaluator and I understand the policy. Am I responsible for reviewing proof of vaccine prior to anyone attending my team evaluation or handler workshop?

You can review proof if you wish, or you may require a verbal or emailed statement that an individual is vaccinated. Additionally, you can simply make the policy clear to all attendees without requiring proof or

attestation. While Pet Partners is attempting to reach every volunteer and prospective volunteer with this policy, the reality is that some may be unaware. To help ensure compliance, communicate this policy to all individuals enrolled in your event.

I am a volunteer who lives outside the US. Does this policy apply to me?

Yes. We do recognize that access to the vaccine varies around the globe, but the policy applies to all volunteers, regardless of where they live. The policy is based on information and recommendations from both the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the U.S. and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Is this policy in violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other related medical privacy laws?

No. [HIPAA](#) applies only to covered entities, specifically health plans, healthcare clearinghouses, and healthcare providers if they transmit health information electronically. Pet Partners is a voluntary service organization which can legally institute a vaccination policy to protect health and safety during therapy animal visits. Volunteers who are not vaccinated are simply asked to refrain from in-person activities until the public health situation changes.