



East Bay SPCA Volunteer Position: Training Class Assistant (TCA)

The East Bay SPCA provides competitively priced group dog training classes at both our Oakland and Dublin campuses. Our team is committed to providing the most up to date, scientifically supported training methods available, taught by trainers whose credentials demonstrate their understanding of dog behavior and commitment to ethical training techniques.

We work hard to keep our curricula dynamic to the needs of our clients and our community, and feel it is important to provide support and encouragement for anyone looking to improve their training skills. Our Training Class Assistant volunteer role is designed to not only offer our volunteers a chance to practice their skills in a classroom setting but offer up-and-coming trainers a chance to accrue hours for credentials in a dynamic hands-on environment while learning practical training curricula.

Prerequisites and Expectations of Applicants

TCA volunteers must be familiar with and have some foundational skills in positive reinforcement animal training. Clicker training experience is preferred. Prior experience in R+ training classes is welcomed but not required.

This role is appropriate for volunteers that have gone through CCE training and demonstrate the necessary skills as indicated above.

This role is appropriate for people who are going through a certification program (KPA, CPDT, etc.) or have recently gone through a certification program and are looking for additional hours and experience. This role is in part intended as a pathway to help aspiring trainers become comfortable teaching group classes in an encouraging atmosphere with access to “mentor” trainers. TCA volunteers who gain training credentials are encouraged to apply for our Part Time Dog Trainer position.

TCA applicants must be 16+ years old, if under 18 years old must have written consent of parent or guardian.

Description of Requirements

- TCA shift will include 30min before and after scheduled class time to assist for setup/breakdown (2hrs total for a single 1hr class, longer on days when classes are scheduled back-to-back).
- TCA must wear EBSPCA branded clothing during the training class in either an EBSPCA Volunteer T-Shirt, branded apron, or both.
- It is highly encouraged that TCA will bring a treat pouch, but if they do not have one, we can provide one.
- Appropriate attire: Long pants and closed toed shoes are required, jeans or other robust fabrics are recommended. Masks are required at all times while in the presence of clients.

TCA will assist instructor in setting up for class. This may include but is not limited to:

- Setting up/breaking down exercise pen/sheet/barriers for student stations
- Cutting up treats (hot dogs/cheese/sausage)
- Preparing enrichment items for students (stuffed Kongs/cardboard DIY enrichment)
- Mopping and/or sweeping classroom

TCA will assist instructor and students during class. This may include but is not limited to:

- Checking in students and verifying vaccination records
- Assisting in demonstrations of training techniques
- Assisting students when dogs show distracted or reactive behaviors (LAT/reinforcing incompatible behaviors/capturing/etc.)
- Providing management when dogs show distracted or reactive behaviors (adding barriers, enrichment, etc.)
- Assisting students in training exercises, providing feedback or suggests where appropriate



- Retrieving any necessary materials not already in classroom as needed (towels, cleaning supplies, toys, high value reinforcers, walking equipment, etc.)

Pathway

- Fill out our volunteer application (located on the bottom of the volunteer [webpage](#)).
- Complete the online New Volunteer Info Session (2 hours).
- Attend an in-person Volunteer Orientation (1 hour).
- Apply for the TCA position via a Microsoft Form. *You can request an application link from the Volunteer Manager at the in-person orientation.*
- A member of the Behavior and Training team will schedule and conduct a brief interview with the candidate and go over their mechanical skills and comfort level with various behaviors.
 - If desired, a shadow shift will be scheduled so that the potential TCA can see a class in action.
 - If the volunteer needs more hands-on skills prior to assisting in a class, they can schedule some “shadow shifts” with either a B&T staff member or an experienced Orange Collar volunteer to practice specific skills such as reading body language, LAT, capturing, and clicker mechanics. B&T staff member can also provide practical training resources such as example videos to practice their skills outside the shelter if applicable.
- Once the Behavior and Training team signs off on the volunteer, they will notify the Volunteer Manager.
- TCA Volunteer will be asked to complete an online training. This training will act as an onboarding training for any applicants who are not currently volunteers with the organization.
- Prior to assisting in their first class, the B&T team will schedule a 30-60 minute training to give new TCAs a walk through of the facility and go over responsibilities and procedures.
- TCAs will be notified via email when new classes are scheduled that need assistants and will be able to sign up online via Trello.
- The Behavior and Training team will notify the Class Instructor about the volunteer’s schedule and include any relevant information about their needs or experience.
- TCA volunteers must begin with assisting in an entry level class, either Puppy Stars OR Skill Builders. After completing one or both of these classes as an assistant, they can request level 2 or specialty classes, approval at their trainer mentor’s discretion.

TCAs will be eligible for other training in other shelter opportunities such as our Orange Collar program (Canine BMOD volunteers) as well as providing services through our Behavior Helpline. Volunteers can contact Volunteer Services to learn more about these opportunities as desired.

Commitment

When scheduling a TCA shift to assist in a specific class, we ask that TCA volunteers commit to a full 6-week course. If the TCA volunteer needs to skip a class during the 6 weeks, **B&T staff must be notified before the course begins**. If an emergency conflict arises, TCA volunteer should notify the Behavior and Training department as soon as possible, either by BOTH emailing training@eastbayspca.org and leaving a message at (510) 563-4624 so that we can schedule a replacement assistant. If you are open to being called as a backup, please let B&T staff know during your initial scheduling.

Volunteer Expectations:

Volunteers are expected to be on time for shifts. Volunteers are expected to be courteous and polite to our clients. We hope our TCAs will be ambassadors for our brand and help to convey the enthusiasm we have for helping our clients better understand and communicate with their dogs. If a TCA is not sure how to answer a client question, they will refer the client to their trainer mentor. If a TCA ever has a question about techniques, methodologies, how to approach clients on certain topics, or how to address specific behaviors, we encourage them to speak with their trainer or a member of the Behavior and Training Staff directly.

Staff/Trainer Expectations:



Our goal is to help our volunteers gain training knowledge, practice their skills, fulfill any of their personal training goals, and further their continuing education in our training community. Trainer mentors should provide a printed copy of the week's outline for their TCA prior to each class and go over any relevant information/expectations during setup. It is encouraged that trainer mentors bcc their TCAs on post-class study guides in case TCA's have access to the exercises and the opportunity to ask any follow up questions.

Qualifying Hours:

If a TCA is working on a certification program, either their trainer mentor or a member of the behavior and training staff will be able to sign off on their hours. TCAs working on a certification are encouraged to approach B&T staff or their trainer mentors with any study questions relevant to their certification, or for resources to assist their continuing education.