



## The American Kennel Club Therapy Dog Title

We are delighted that the American Kennel Club has approved Fairfax Pets On Wheels as an AKC-recognized therapy dog organization!

The American Kennel Club has created a program recognizing the work of therapy dogs and their owners who have given their time and helped people by volunteering as therapy dog and owner teams. The AKC Therapy Dog Program awards official AKC titles to dogs who have worked to improve the lives of people they have visited. The goal of the program is not to certify dogs for therapy work, but to recognize the achievements of therapy dogs. Dogs can earn these titles if they have been certified as therapy dogs by AKC recognized therapy dog organizations such as FPOW and have performed a specified minimum number of visits.

The five titles to recognize therapy dogs are:

1. AKC Therapy Dog Novice – a dog is eligible after 20 hours of FPOW visiting.
2. AKC Therapy Dog - a dog is eligible after 100 hours of FPOW visiting.
3. AKC Therapy Dog Advanced- a dog is eligible after 200 hours of FPOW visiting.
4. AKC Therapy Dog Excellent - a dog is eligible after 400 hours of FPOW visiting.
5. AKC Therapy Dog Distinguished- a dog is eligible after 800 hours of FPOW visiting.

All dogs, including purebred dogs and mixed breed dogs, are eligible for the title.

There are three steps to the title application process:

1. You must register with AKC. You can register as a purebred dog or as a Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL – formerly ILP), or you can enroll in the AKC Canine Partners Program (for mixed breed dogs).
2. You must have documentation that you are an FPOW volunteer and that you have made the required number of visits. (Note: two visiting hours equal one visit.) You can request this documentation by sending an email to [dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov). FPOW will mail you a letter certifying your visits, which you can attach to your application for the title.
3. You must submit the application, the required fees, and the FPOW certification letter to the American Kennel Club.

You can find detailed information on the title and the entire application process, including all of the requirements and downloadable forms, at <http://www.akc.org>. When you earn the title, please let us know so we can celebrate too. Email your good news to [dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov)