

What to expect from your Behavior or Rehoming Evaluation

At Our Companions, we want to meet each dog that we are asked to assist with. During your evaluation you will be meeting with our Canine Operations Director Marie Joyner, and one or more volunteers. The volunteers are there to assist and to learn about the evaluation process. It may be intimidating to sit down and discuss your dog in front of a group of people, but please know that they are there to learn about how we evaluate dogs so that they can further their dog training knowledge.

Our desire at Our Companions is to always preserve homes where ever possible, so even if you come to an evaluation with the intent on rehoming, we will discuss ideas with you that would help you keep your dog. Our goal is to preserve the home whenever possible. Please have an open mind on these suggestions. **If rehoming is the only option, please note that we may not accept your dog into our rehoming program, or may ask you to attend training classes or perform medical tests that will help us successfully market your pet for adoption. Undiagnosed medical conditions, and unpredictable aggression cases where a dog cannot safely meet with prospective adopters will not be accepted into our rehoming program.**

When you first arrive, please let us know you are there by coming in the back entrance of the Valerie Friedman Program Center without your dog. Then walk your dog so that they potty outside, and come into the back hallway. Once you come in we will ask you to sit and talk to us for a while. We do this for several reasons. First, the room that we use for the actual temperament testing will be a new and interesting area to the dog, and second it gives the dog a chance to get to know us with you present, before we take the dog away from you to spend time with us alone. We will discuss the dog's history, what issues bring you to us, and any questions that we have left after reading through the paperwork you submitted. We may not progress past this table if the dog is showing any signs of unfriendliness or unwillingness to engage with us. We do not push dogs past their tolerance for human contact, and instead we seek to have the evaluation be as positive an experience as possible for the dog.

If we do bring your dog into the evaluation room, we will give you a new form to fill out giving us further information on how the dog behaves in your home. While you are busy with that form, we are interacting with your dog doing a standard temperament test that we have developed. These activities give us information on how your dog tolerates our handling without you present. We get information on how the dog tolerates stress and what strengths and weaknesses the dog has when it comes to one on one human contact. We will expose them to an umbrella that is opened, squeaky dog toys and fake infant and toddler dolls. We even have a fake dog to show them (and yes the dogs greet the dog at first as if it was a real dog, and for the dog aggressive dogs, they may attack the dog as if it was real).

The end of the appointment is a photo session where we often have you assist us (so that the dog is more relaxed), and an overview of what the recommended next steps are for you and your dog.

Thanks for asking us to evaluate your dog, we look forward to meeting you and discussing how we can get you involved in our programs.