Policies and Procedures for BEAR (Behavior & Enrichment Academy and Resources)
2023 - 2024 Cohorts

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Introduction

Welcome to the Behavior & Enrichment Academy and Resources (BEAR). BEAR is an innovative educational program developed by Shelter Playgroup Alliance (SPA). Our policies and procedures are designed to ensure a positive and enriching experience for all participants. By enrolling in the BEAR program, participants agree to abide by the following guidelines.

Admission Requirements

Individuals that meet the following requirements may enroll in the BEAR program.

- Able to speak, listen, read, and write in English at an 8th grade level, or provide their own accommodation.
- Aged 18 or older.
- Have daily access to high-speed internet.
- Have daily access to a video camera or a phone with video capabilities.
- Have weekly access to more than one species of animal.
- Have weekly access to dogs in a shelter or rescue (not one's own dog).
- Ability to lift up to 50 lbs, stand, walk, stoop, bend, squat, kneel, grasp, grip, put fingers together firmly, and reach above and below shoulder level.

The BEAR program follows a model of incremental and sequential learning, wherein successful completion of one phase is a prerequisite for progressing to each subsequent phase. This sequential approach ensures a structured and comprehensive learning experience, building on the foundation established in earlier modules and phases before introducing more advanced concepts and skills.

Individuals who have completed the SPA CORE program in 2022 or 2023 are approved to bypass Phase One – BEAR Necessities (online) and move directly to the Phase One - BEAR Necessities Workshop (in-person). Prospective participants who believe that they have completed an equivalent program can submit those program details for review of equivalency. Please email mara@shelterdogplay.org **prior to registration** to make a request for determination on qualification.

Registration

Phase One	Cost
BEAR Necessities (online)	$300
BEAR Necessities Workshop (in-person)	$800

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Phase Two	Cost
BEAR Fundamentals (online)	$300
BEAR Fundamentals Workshop (in-person)	$800

Phase Three	Cost
Advanced BEAR Concepts (online)	$300
Advanced BEAR Concepts Workshop (in-person)	$800

Phase Four	Cost
Leading with BEAR (online)	$800

Total two-year program cost: $4,100.

A full course list can be found in the program overview section. Participants will review dates prior to registration to ensure that they are able to adhere to the required time commitment. Cost of travel and accommodation for the in-person workshops are the responsibility of the participant and are not included in the workshop registration fee.

The location of in-person workshops will be announced at least six months prior to the workshop.

Refunds will be issued in full if a cancellation request is received 30 days prior to the cohort or workshop start date. In the event that a cohort or workshop is canceled, registered participants will be given the option to remain enrolled for future cohorts or receive a full refund of their registration fee.

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All refund requests must be submitted in writing to mara@shelterdogplay.org with the subject line "refund request". Please include participants' full name, contact information, current cohort, workshop date, and reason for the refund request in the email.

If participants would like to transfer registration to another qualified individual, please notify us in writing of the substitute attendee's name and contact information at least 14 days prior to the start of the program. Prerequisites for each phase apply to all individual participants.

No refunds will be issued for registered participants who do not attend the cohorts or workshops without prior notice.

Equipment

The LITMOS Learning Management System platform is used for the majority of the program content and Zoom is used for live virtual sessions. Daily access to a computer and video recording device, such as a GoPro or phone-based video device, is required. Daily access to a reliable high-speed internet connection for accessing learning content and uploading documents and videos.

Videos can be submitted in the following ways: If the video file is smaller than 250MB, participants may upload it to LITMOS for review. If the video file is larger than 250MB, participants can provide a link to the file in the comments section of the submission. In order to expedite the review process, please make sure that we have access to your files. If a participant's submission includes a link to a video on the participant's YouTube channel, please make sure that it is set to "public" or "unlisted, available to anyone with the link". If video is shared via Google drive, please make sure that the link is available to anyone with the link. Not all of the graders use Apple products, so please avoid using Apple mail drop to submit videos.

Participants will require access to more than one species of animal and need regular access to dogs in a shelter or rescue. Participants will need a long slip lead (10 or 12 feet), a treat pouch, a clicker, and daily access to high-quality treats for dogs and a second species.

Commitment

Participants are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the program. This commitment involves active engagement in online self-paced learning modules, attendance to any required live virtual sessions and in-person workshops for full completion of the course. Regular participation and completion of assignments contribute to a successful learning experience.

Accommodations and Accessibility

Requests for reasonable accommodations for participants with disabilities or special needs can be made by emailing mara@shelterdogplay.org. Accommodations for participants with any other needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Please email mara@shelterdogplay.org for support.

Online learning

BEAR provides a flexible online learning environment for participants. Participants should be prepared to spend up to **3-4 hours per week** on the program for successful completion. It is the responsibility of each participant to manage their time effectively and complete assigned modules within the allotted time frame. Participants will access online learning modules at their own pace, demonstrating understanding of new skills by submitting written assessments and recorded video of interactions with sheltered animals. At each step, participants can expect to receive targeted coaching and feedback on training, behavior modification, and behavioral observations.

Extensions beyond the specified end date for each cohort are unavailable, as this timeframe is dedicated to program content review and renewal between cohorts. Participants seeking to continue with online phases after the designated end date may do so by registering for a subsequent cohort, subject to an additional registration fee.

In-person workshops

Participants must attend all days of scheduled in-person sessions. Workshops associated with each phase must be taken within 18 months of completion of that phase. All costs associated with travel, accommodation and associated personal expenses are at the expense of the participant or participant's employer. Daily lunches and light refreshments will be provided on each workshop day. Breakfasts and dinners are not included. In the event of unforeseen circumstances preventing attendance, participants should notify mara@shelterdogplay.org as soon as possible. Any missed sessions may impact program completion.

Grading & Evaluation

Participants will be assessed based on their understanding and application of course content by a team of experienced shelter behavior professionals. The evaluation standards for each assessment and assignment are regulated by a structured rubric. Feedback will be provided to aid in continuous improvement and grading is on a 100-point scale. We aim to grade all assessments within a 24-hour period.

Ethics, Integrity, and Plagiarism Policy

Participants are expected to act in an ethical manner and with integrity. Specifically, the videos and accompanying materials are for BEAR participants only, and may not be shared with non-participants. Participant passwords are for individual use only, and may not be shared with non-participants or other participants. Taking of screenshots or recording the course's videos and accompanying materials, or providing them to non-participants for any use is strictly prohibited, including on social media. Participants must take each module in its entirety and acknowledge that fast forwarding through the recorded lectures is an ethics and integrity

violation. Participants who engage in any ethics, integrity, or plagiarism violations are subject to removal from the program and ineligibility for future cohorts.

According to the Mirriam Webster dictionary, plagiarism is "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own **:** use (another's production) without crediting the source" (*source*: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize). Participants in the BEAR program are expected to credit sources in all written assignments. Participants who misrepresent the provenance of information, opinions, and assessments are subject to removal from the program and ineligibility for future cohorts.

Continuing Education Units

CEUs are submitted a few weeks after the completion of the cohort. KPA, IAABC, and CCPDT all grant CEUs for successful completion for each phase of the program. The phase one on-line portion of the program is approved for 30 CEUs for CCPDT and 36 CEUs for IAABC.

Program Overview

Phase 1

BEAR Necessities (on-line): In this initial phase of the program, we will be exploring the necessary and foundational concepts for the participants' journey to becoming a shelter behavior professional.... the BEAR Necessities! This set of on-line courses will cover key concepts that include how animals learn and communicate, positive reinforcement-based training and behavior modification, ethics related to sheltering and animal training, and enrichment in the shelter environment, including the implementation of inter-dog interactions. ($300/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: February 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: September 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

BEAR Necessities Workshop (in-person): The prerequisite for the first workshop is successful completion of the BEAR Necessities modules. This hands-on workshop will build on the content in the BEAR Necessities modules and consists of four consecutive days during which participants will demonstrate safe handling, defensive handling, behavior modification for cats and dogs, low stress handling for cats and dogs, and manage safe inter-dog interactions. ($800/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: August 6 - 9, 2024 in Arlington, VA
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: January 14-19, 2025 in Dublin, CA

Phase one course list

- LIMA: Deep dive
- Ethics in animal welfare (five freedoms & five domains)
- Operant conditioning

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- Classical conditioning
- Marker and lure-reward training essentials
- Reinforcement overview
- Troubleshooting training
- Breed and behavior
- Documenting behavioral observations
- Canine enrichment in shelters
- Feline enrichment in shelters
- Canine communication basics: Part 1
- Feline communication basics: Part 1
- Canine communication basics: Part 2
- Canine communication: Focus on fear and anxiety
- Canine communication: Focus on aggression
- Canine play behaviors: Part 1
- Canine play behaviors: Part 2
- Basics of LIMA-based play
- Handling skills
- Dog introductions
- Playgroups for behavior modification: Part 1
- Playgroups for behavior modification: Part 2

Phase 2

BEAR Fundamentals (on-line): The second phase of the BEAR program explores the differences between evaluations and assessments, types of evaluations, risk assessment, gathering and documenting objective behavioral information, identifying manageable behavioral concerns, prioritizing interventions to focus on behaviors that may limit opportunities for placement, and engaging with community members in a variety of situations. Enrollment in BEAR Fundamentals is contingent upon successful completion of BEAR Necessities, or equivalent*. ($300/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: September 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: February 1, 2025 -June 30, 2025

BEAR Fundamentals Workshop (in-person): The prerequisite for this workshop is successful completion of the BEAR Fundamentals modules and Phase One on-line and in-person content. This hands-on workshop will build on all of the previous content and consists of five consecutive days during which participants will engage in conducting evaluations, identifying and problem-solving behavior concerns, conducting canine risk assessments, creating behavior modification plans for multiple species, and working with the public. ($800/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: January 14-19, 2025 in Dublin, CA
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: August 2025 (dates TBD)

Phase two course list

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- Overview of shelter models
- Overview of socially conscious sheltering
- Capacity for care
- Intake and pathway planning
- Shelter evaluations
- Data: Your best friend
- Euthanasia decisions
- Volunteer programs
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) overview
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) human interactions scale
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) conspecific interactions scale
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) domestic animal interactions
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) bite index
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) separation related problem behaviors
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) quality of life
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) summary sheet
- Canine assessment of risk (CARS) in-shelter behavior modification overview

Phase 3

Advanced BEAR Concepts (on-line): The third phase of the BEAR program explores how shelter behavior professionals work across the organization and the community to improve animal welfare. This phase of the BEAR program also includes in-depth feline behavior content. ($300/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: February 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: September 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

Advanced BEAR Workshop (in-person): The prerequisite for this workshop is successful completion of the first two phases (both on-line and in-person workshops). This hands-on workshop will build on all of the previous content and consists of five consecutive days during which participants will engage in activities and discussions that support implementation of behavior-related concepts across the organization as well as feline behavior modification. ($800/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: August 2025 (dates TBD)
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: January 2026 (dates TBD)

Phase three course list

- Feline behavior: Kitten development
- Feline behavior: Fear and anxiety
- Feline behavior: Aggression
- Feline behavior: Play
- Integrating behavior into vet med

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- Integrating behavior into animal care (for dogs and cats)
- Integrating behavior into admissions (cats and kittens)
- Integrating behavior into HLE/ACO
- Integrating behavior into foster
- Integrating behavior into adoption counseling
- Integrating behavior into guest relations
- Developing community programs
- Working with bilingual and multilingual communities
- Behavior considerations in marketing and communications
- Developing behavior plans
- Post-adoptions support
- Welcome committee program for behavior professionals
- Collaborating with other shelters and rescues
- Navigating the shelter legal environment

Phase 4

Leading with BEAR (on-line): The final phase of the BEAR program will explore the influence and leadership skills required of a shelter behavior professional to improve animal welfare through activating others for positive change. This phase will include theories of leadership, coaching, mentoring, leading without authority, and organizational savvy. ($800/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates: September 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025
Winter 2024 Cohort Dates: February 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

Phase four course list

- Leadership frameworks
- Coaching frameworks
- Teaching as leading
- Decision making frameworks
- Organizational savvy
- Accountability
- Peer coaching
- Leading without authority
- Program and project leadership
- Navigating the organization
- Person-organization fit considerations for hiring and promotions

Conclusion

By enrolling in BEAR programs, participants agree to adhere to these policies and procedures. The Shelter Playgroup Alliance reserves the right to modify these guidelines as needed, with any updates communicated to participants within 24 hours of program updates. We appreciate participants' commitment to fostering positive behavior and enrichment through BEAR.