CIT CRISIS RESPONSE THERAPY CANINE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

A First-of-Its-Kind Certification for
Law Enforcement Crisis Response Teams

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB), in partnership with the Cook County Sheriff's Office (CCSO), has established the nation's first CIT Crisis Response Therapy Canine Certification Program for law enforcement and co-response teams.

This program provides standardized certification for trained therapy canine teams supporting crisis response, peer support, and community engagement — while reinforcing Illinois' nationally recognized leadership in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training.

KEY FACTS

- Nation's first state-certified law enforcement crisis response therapy canine program
- Established under Public Act 104-0106
- CCSO Tails of Redemption Therapy K9 certification is recognized by the American Kennel Club and was adopted by the board in March 2025
- Training and certification provided at no cost
- Teams support crisis response, peer support, community engagement, victim advocacy and first responder wellness

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

- At least two years of experience post-basic certification
- Completed Illinois-certified CIT Basic training
- Assigned a canine owned or managed by a law enforcement agency
- No muzzle or shock collar
- Meet Board-approved background check

CIVILIAN CO-RESPONDERS

- At least two years of professional experience
- Serve as a co-responder under a formal agreement or MOU with a law enforcement agency
- Completed Approved CIT Basic or ILETSB's Collaborative Crisis Co-Response Course
- Assigned a therapy canine under agency direction and oversight
- Meet Board-approved background check

LAW ENFORCEMENT CRISIS RESPONSE SUPPORT PERSONNEL

- At least two years working directly with law enforcement
- Serve under a formal agreement or MOU
- Completed an Approved CIT De-escalation/Conflict Resolution Course
- Assigned a therapy canine under agency direction and oversight
- Meet Board-approved background check

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The CIT Crisis Response Therapy Canine Certification is a 24-hour, three-day certfication course designed specifically for trained therapy canine teams operating in law enforcement environments.

The curriculum integrates CIT principles, co-response models, peer support strategies, and advanced handling techniques. Upon successful completion, certified teams are eligible for inclusion in the ILETSB mutual aid deployment system for large-scale incidents and critical events statewide.

CANINE REQUIREMENTS

- Canine Good Citizen (CGC)-level obedience
- Current on veterinary care and vaccinations
- No prior training in aggression or apprehension
- No muzzle or shock collar
- Owned, managed, or formally overseen by a law enforcement agency



THE COURSE INCLUDES:

- Classroom Instruction
- Field Training
- Scenario-based actor-led assessments
- A final handler-canine team evaluation

Certification & Renewal

Certification is valid for one year. Annual renewal requires a brief update course and reevaluation by an ILETSB-approved therapy canine assessor.

Re-certification will require a minimum of 8 hours of K9 training each month.



REQUEST A THERAPY CANINE TEAM

773-67-4DOGS (3647), Option 9

CITIllinoisTherapyK9@Illinois.gov

The callout line is monitored 24 hours/ 7 days a week to ensure requests are routed appropriately, prioritizing critical response and accommodating other events as team availability permits.

CONTACT

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