

SENATE, No. 4576

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator NILSA I. CRUZ-PEREZ
District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

SYNOPSIS
Requires licensure of dog trainers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning the licensure of dog trainers and supplementing
2 Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Dog
8 Trainer Licensing Act.”

9

10 2. As used in this act:

11 “Board” means the Dog Trainer Board of Examiners established
12 under section 3 of this act.

13 “Director” means the Director of the Division of Consumer
14 Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

15 “Dog training” means the handling or training of dogs for a fee,
16 salary, or other form of compensation.

17 “Dog trainer” means a person engaged in the practice of dog
18 training or behavior modification who is licensed pursuant to the
19 provisions of this act.

20

21 3. There is created within the Division of Consumer Affairs in
22 the Department of Law and Public Safety the Dog Trainer Board of
23 Examiners. The board shall consist of nine members who are
24 residents of this State and who shall be appointed by the Governor,
25 as follows: two shall be public members to represent the interests of
26 the public, pursuant to the provisions of subsection b. of section 2
27 of P.L.1971, c.60 (C.45:1-2.2); one member shall be from a
28 department in the Executive Branch of State government, pursuant
29 to the provisions of subsection c. of P.L.1971, c.60 (C.45:1-2.2);
30 three members shall be, except for the members first appointed, dog
31 trainers licensed pursuant to the provisions of this act; two members
32 shall be veterinarians licensed in this State; and one member shall
33 be affiliated with an animal protection group. The Governor shall
34 appoint each member, other than the State executive department
35 member, for terms of four years, except that of the members first
36 appointed, two shall serve for a term of four years, two shall serve
37 for a term of three years, two shall serve for a term of two years,
38 and two shall serve for terms of one year. Any vacancy in the
39 membership of the board shall be filled for the unexpired term in
40 the manner provided for the original appointment. No member of
41 the board may serve more than two successive terms in addition to
42 any unexpired term to which the member has been appointed.

43

44 4. The board shall organize within 30 days after the
45 appointment of its members and shall annually elect from among its
46 members a chairperson and vice-chairperson, and shall appoint a
47 secretary who need not be a member of the board. The board shall
48 meet twice a year and may hold additional meetings as necessary to

1 discharge its duties. A majority of the board membership shall
2 constitute a quorum.

3

4 5. The board shall:

5 a. adopt a seal to authenticate its records and proceedings;

6 b. prescribe rules pertaining to types and methods of
7 examination of applicants for licensure;

8 c. examine and pass on the qualifications of applicants for
9 licensure under this act, and issue a license to each qualified and
10 successful applicant, attesting to the applicant's professional
11 qualification to practice as a dog trainer;

12 d. keep records of its proceedings and a register of all persons
13 to whom licenses have been issued, and a record of all license
14 renewals, suspensions and revocations;

15 e. maintain records of expenses incurred by members of the
16 board in the performance of their duties;

17 f. take disciplinary action, in accordance with P.L.1978, c.73
18 (C.45:1-14 et seq.), against any dog trainer who violates the
19 provisions of this act or any regulation promulgated hereunder;

20 g. adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative
21 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) as it deems
22 necessary to administer the provisions of this act; and

23 h. pursuant to P.L.1974, c.46 (C.45:1-3.1 et seq.), prescribe or
24 change the charges for examination, licensure, renewal and other
25 services performed.

26

27 6. There shall be an Executive Director of the board appointed
28 by the director who shall serve at the director's pleasure. The salary
29 of the Executive Director shall be determined by the director within
30 the limit of available funds. The director may, within the limits of
31 available funds, hire any assistants as are necessary to administer
32 this act.

33

34 7. No person shall practice, attempt to practice, or hold himself
35 out as being able to practice dog training unless that person is
36 licensed in accordance with the provisions of this act.

37

38 8. To be eligible to be licensed as a dog trainer, an applicant
39 shall fulfill the following requirements:

40 a. be at least 18 years of age;

41 b. be of good moral character;

42 c. have successfully completed high school or successfully
43 passed a high school equivalency examination developed by the
44 General Education Development (GED) Testing Service;

45 d. have successfully completed a minimum of 300 hours in dog
46 training, under the supervision of, and documented by, a dog trainer
47 licensed pursuant to this act, within the three years immediately

1 preceding application for licensure under this act pursuant to the
2 following:

3 (1) of the 300 hours required, no less than 225 hours shall
4 include training in conducting group dog training classes,
5 conducting private dog training classes, and consulting with clients;

6 (2) of the 300 hours required, up to 75 hours may include work
7 as a licensed dog trainer's assistant, work as a veterinary technician
8 or assistant, work as a dog groomer, volunteering at an animal
9 shelter, designing dog training lesson plans, or consulting with a
10 licensed dog trainer on client cases;

11 (3) hours of experience gained as a licensed dog trainer's
12 assistant may count toward the hours required under paragraph (1)
13 of this subsection provided that the applicant's role as an assistant
14 includes actively instructing a client or training a dog;

15 (4) if any of the hours of experience gained under paragraph (2)
16 of this subsection are not under the supervision of a licensed dog
17 trainer, the applicant shall provide documentation from any other
18 person that supervised the applicant, including, but not limited to, a
19 veterinarian, an owner or supervisory employee of a dog grooming
20 business, or a supervisory employee of an animal shelter; and

21 (5) the 300 hours of experience required under this subsection
22 shall not apply to any applicant who submits proof satisfactory to
23 the board no later than 180 days after the date procedures are
24 established by the board for applying for licensure under this act
25 that the applicant has engaged in the practice of dog training in this
26 State continuously for at least one year prior to the effective date of
27 this act; and

28 e. pass an examination administered or approved by the board
29 to determine the applicant's competence to practice dog training;
30 except that this requirement shall not apply to any applicant who
31 submits proof satisfactory to the board no later than 180 days after
32 the date procedures are established by the board for applying for
33 licensure under this act that the applicant has passed any
34 Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT)
35 certification examination, or any other examination that is
36 determined by the board to be a substantially similar assessment of
37 dog training skills and competency, prior to the effective date of
38 this act.

39

40 9. Each applicant for a license as a dog trainer shall be
41 examined by the board. The examination shall be held at least
42 twice a year at the times and places to be determined by the board.
43 The board, in consultation with the Certification Council for
44 Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), shall adopt as the examination
45 required under this section any examination as developed and
46 administered by CCPDT, or any other examination that is
47 determined by the board to be a substantially similar assessment of
48 dog training skills and competency.

1 pass an examination administered or approved by the board to
2 determine the applicant's competence to practice dog training.

3 The examination required by the bill must be held at least twice a
4 year at the times and places to be determined by the board. The
5 board, in consultation with the Certification Council for
6 Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), must adopt as the examination
7 required of applicants for licensure under this bill any CCPDT
8 certification examination, or any other examination that is
9 determined by the board to be a substantially similar assessment of
10 dog training skills and competency.

11 The bill provides an exemption from the requirement that an
12 applicant for licensure successfully complete a minimum of 300
13 hours in supervised dog training if the applicant provides proof
14 satisfactory to the board that the applicant has engaged in the
15 practice of dog training in this State continuously for at least one
16 year prior to the effective date of the bill. There is also an
17 exemption from the requirement that an applicant for licensure pass
18 an examination administered or approved by the board if the
19 applicant provides proof satisfactory to the board that the applicant
20 has passed any CCPDT certification examination, or any other
21 examination that is determined by the board to be a substantially
22 similar assessment of dog training skills and competency, prior to
23 the effective date of the bill.

24 The bill provides for licenses to be issued for a three-year period,
25 and will be renewed upon filing a renewal application. A license
26 will not be renewed until the license holder submits satisfactory
27 evidence to the board that during the preceding three years the
28 license holder has completed such continuing education credits as
29 are to be determined by the board pursuant to regulation. The board
30 will approve, in consultation with the Certification Council for
31 Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), continuing education credits
32 that build upon the basic knowledge of dog training and which
33 enhance the competency of the license holder. The board may
34 make exceptions from the continuing education requirement in
35 emergency or hardship cases with the approval of an affirmative
36 vote of a majority of the board.