



# The Muzzle Up! Project

## Shelter Partners Program Curriculum and Guidelines

### Objectives

- The basics of executing muzzle training plans
- How to troubleshoot muzzle training problems
- How to address shelter-specific challenges for implementing muzzle training protocols
- How to continue implementing muzzle training program as part of shelter services

### Format

- 4-week program
- 2 60-minute Skype sessions per week, for 8 sessions total
- Sessions are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Sessions consist of 30 minutes training coaching with dog of shelter's choosing and 30 minutes Q&A

### Shelter responsibilities and prerequisites:

- Shelter can choose dog for each week's training, using curriculum guidelines
- Shelter provides appropriate sized muzzle and food-based rewards for dog
- Technology prerequisites
  - Computer or laptop with internal or external videocamera and speakers
  - Skype or Google hangout installed
  - Room for training and Q&A with staff

### Guidelines for choosing demo dogs:

- Week 1: Dog new to muzzle training
- Week 2: Dog that can wear a muzzle but needs work on duration/securing the straps
- Week 3: Dog that can wear muzzle and enjoys games like targetting and fetch
- Week 4: Shelter's choice (shy or fearful dog recommended)

\* Shelter can use same dog for more than one week if needed, and can also switch dogs mid-week if previous demo dog is adopted or unavailable



### Curriculum

#### Week 1: Foundations of animal learning and muzzle basics

- How dogs learn (operant and classical conditioning)
- How to apply operant and classical conditioning to muzzle training
- Types of muzzles and how to find best fit for various dogs
- Muzzle safety
- Muzzle modifications for comfort and best fit
- Week 1 dog training focus:
  - Introducing muzzle to dog via classical conditioning
  - Feeding through muzzle and working on securing straps
  - Troubleshooting initial steps for fearful or stressed dogs

#### Week 2: Securing muzzle straps and increasing duration

- Learn how to incorporate splits into a training plan
- How to read dogs' body language and learn when to push ahead in training and when to drop to an easier step
- Learn how to do a +CER check
- Addressing frustration and duration
- Week 2 dog training focus:
  - Securing straps
  - Wearing muzzle and initial activities to increase duration
  - Splits for fearful or stressed dogs

#### Week 3: Muzzle games and enrichment

- Role of games and enrichment in muzzle training
- Choosing games for dog based on dog's strengths and interests
- How to train dogs to play games while wearing muzzle (fetch, soccer, nose work)
- How to incorporate training goals into games and enrichment
- Common splits for muzzle games
- Week 3 dog training focus
  - Teach muzzle fetch and soccer
  - Nosework/sniff-and-see practice

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Advocacy, Education, Training



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- Puzzle toy practice

### **Week 4: Proofing for veterinary procedures and handling**

- Review proofing and how to do it
- Techniques to promote calm while wearing muzzle
- How to build a training plan incorporating handling and muzzle training
- How to create positive muzzle and vet procedure experience
- Week 4 dog training focus
  - Settle on mat
  - Light restraint
  - Desensitization and counterconditioning for fearful or stressed dogs

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