

What Does It Take to Be a Flight Volunteer?



A flight volunteer accompanies an animal (dog/cat) that is heading to the United States for care and adoption. If you already have planned travel to the United States and you are interested in being a flight volunteer, here are some FAQ's:

1. Am I responsible for getting any medical or other necessary paperwork ready prior to flight departure?

Cartagena Paws will take care of getting all the medical work, paperwork and bank deposit taken care of before departure. Of course, if you would like to be a part of it, you are more than welcome to join us and learn about the procedures involved.

2. When will I take over care for the animal?

Volunteers do NOT have to take over care for the animal until the day of their flight when they are about to check in. We would love for you to meet the animal the day before the flight, however, it is not always necessary. We can meet you at the airport before check in to turn over the animal. If you would like to take the animal a few hours or days prior to your flight, we can discuss options.

3. Where will the animal sit while traveling on the plane?

If the animal is traveling in-cabin, it will be in a carry-on pet bag, provided by Cartagena Paws. If the animal is flying out of Medellin or Bogota, it might fly in the hold (It will be in a crate underneath the plane). If the volunteer is flying the animal as an emotional support animal, the animal would be able to fly out of any airport and fly in-cabin on the lap of the flight volunteer or at their feet.

4. Who will meet me once we arrive?

Depending on the destination, we will have state-side volunteers ready and available to pick up the animal at baggage claim at the time of arrival. A Cartagena Paws representative will meet you right outside of the immigration doors, and or at your baggage claim and receive the animal from you. You are not required to do much more. Simply get the animal from point A to point B.

5. Is it a problem to get the animal through customs?

Cartagena Paws ONLY flies animals that are healthy and have all required medical records and vaccinations and therefore there should never be a problem in customs. We provide all flight volunteers with a folder which contains international health certificates, vaccination card and any other additional paperwork that may be required for the country of entry. For entry to the U.S. and Canada, we always send confirmation of the rabies vaccine in compliance with the requirements. This does not cause your immigration process to be any more than 10 minutes longer than the usual passing time.

6. Is there any extra cost involved?

Cartagena Paws will take care of all necessary fees involved for paperwork. We will also cover any fees for the animals that need to stay in the airport clinic the day prior to travel. Flight volunteers do NOT need to pay any airfare fees. We will have a representative pay at the airport with you or we will send you the money for the payment ahead of time.

7. Who will help me through the whole process?

There will be a group created via FB, what's app, or messenger where we will be able to help you and guide you throughout your trip. We are always available to help. We make sure to connect all the involved parties days before the trip, and to make sure everyone knows their job/role in getting the animal to safety.