



Behavior & Enrichment Academy and Resources

Behavior and Enrichment Academy & Resources (BEAR) is an innovative new educational program created by Shelter Playgroup Alliance! At the end of this rigorous multi-phase, two-year educational program, participants will be prepared to perform the key tasks of a shelter behavior professional. Through approximately 200 hours of hybrid learning, participants will learn about the key aspects of:

- Training and behavior modification for multiple species.
- Creating behavior-related programs, including for multi-species enrichment.
- Incorporating behavior and training into all aspects of sheltering.

Overview

The BEAR program will be delivered via online modules completed through a learning management system, live Zoom sessions, and live four-day workshops.

The BEAR program incorporates significant coaching and feedback on training, behavior modification and behavioral observations, so we recommend that participants are prepared to spend several hours per week on the program for successful completion.

This program is suited for individuals who currently work or volunteer in a shelter and want to transition to a behavior role, as well as private trainers looking to transition into a shelter environment. This program is also beneficial for individuals who want to incorporate

behavior-related tasks into their existing role, including veterinary staff who want to include low stress and/or fear free handling into their practice.

The BEAR program is divided into four distinct phases. Successful completion of each online phase is required to move on to the next phase. In-person workshops must each be attended within 18 months of completing the corresponding online phase. For example, a student may complete the online components for Phase I (BEAR Necessities) and II (BEAR Fundamentals), and within 18 months complete both in-person workshops.

		Spring 2024 Cohort	Winter 2024 Cohort
Phase 1	Online	Feb. 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024	Sept. 1, 2024 - Dec. 31, 2024
	In-Person Workshop	Aug. 6 - 9, 2024	Jan. 14 -- 17, 2025
Phase 2	Online	Sept. 1, 2024 - Dec. 31, 2024	Feb. 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025
	In-Person Workshop	Jan. 2025 (dates TBD)	Aug. 2025 (dates TBD)
Phase 3	Online	Feb. 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025	Sept. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025
	In-Person Workshop	Aug. 2025 (dates TBD)	Jan. 2026 (dates TBD)
Phase 4	Online	Sept. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025	Feb. 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

**BEAR is created by the Shelter Playgroup Alliance
Find out more and enroll at shelterdogplay.org/bear**

Phase One



BEAR Necessities (online):

In this initial phase of the program, we will explore the necessary and foundational concepts for your journey to becoming a shelter behavior professional... the BEAR Necessities! This set of online 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. (\$500/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates:

Feb. 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Sept. 1, 2024 - Dec. 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 online modules and consists of five 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:

Aug. 5 - 9, 2024

in Arlington, VA (at AWLA)

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Jan. 14 - 17, 2025

in Dublin, CA (at EBSPCA)

Phase One Course List:

- LIMA: Deep Dive
- Ethics in Animal Welfare (Five Freedoms & Five Domains)
- Operant Conditioning
- Classical Conditioning
- Marker and Lure-Reward Training Essentials
- 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 Two



BEAR Fundamentals (online):

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 requires successful completion of the BEAR Necessities online modules, or equivalent*. (\$300/person)

Spring 2024 Cohort Dates:

Sept. 1, 2024 - Dec. 31, 2024

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Feb. 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 online 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:

Jan. 14 - 17, 2025

in Dublin, CA (at EBSPCA)

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Aug. 2025 (dates TBD)

Phase Two Course List:

- 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
- Developing Behavior Plans
- 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

** Process for consideration for program equivalency: Learner submits a detailed overview of the proposed equivalent program for consideration. The overview must include evidence of equivalent content and that the program requires demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities through assessments and assignments, including hands-on assignments. Learners who have successfully completed the SPA CORE Program in 2022 or later will be automatically eligible for program equivalency.*

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Phase Three



Advanced BEAR Concepts (online):

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:

Feb. 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Sept. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025

Advanced BEAR Workshop (in-person):

The prerequisite for this workshop is successful completion of Phase One and Phase Two (both online 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:

Aug. 2025 (dates TBD)

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Jan. 2026 (dates TBD)

Phase Three Course List:

- Integrating Behavior into Vet Med
- Integrating Behavior into Animal Care
- Integrating Behavior into Admissions
- Integrating Behavior into HLE/ACO
- Integrating Behavior into Foster
- Integrating Behavior into Adoption Counseling
- Developing Community Programs
- Working with Bilingual and Multilingual Communities
- Behavior Considerations in Communications
- Post-Adoptions Support
- Welcome Committee Program for Behavior Professionals
- Feline Behavior: Kitten Development
- Feline Behavior: Fear and Anxiety
- Feline Behavior: Aggression
- Feline Behavior: Play
- Collaborating with Other Shelters and Rescues
- Navigating the Shelter Legal Environment

Phase Four



Leading with BEAR (online):

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:

Sept. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025

Winter 2024 Cohort Dates:

Feb. 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

About us:

The Shelter Playgroup Alliance (SPA) provides animal welfare organizations with education, tailorable guidelines, and support materials that support the development of comprehensive, multi-species enrichment programs.

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