

LAX at a Glance: PUPs

Pets Unstressing Passengers (PUP) is a program providing stress relief and comfort to passengers through interaction with pets.

It's an opportunity to enhance the customer experience, as traveling through airports may create anxiety. Therapy dogs (PUPs) and their handlers roam Departure Level gate areas of each terminal to greet passengers awaiting flights and provide comfort as well as airport information. Since its start on April 15, 2013, the program has served as an extension of the LAX customer service team,

The Dogs

- At the end of 2019, there were 118 PUPs in the program but the number is always growing.
- The PUPs in the program are of a variety of breeds, sizes, and ages – there's a PUP for all guests to make friends with.
- The breeds with the largest number of dogs are Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Pit Bull mixes, Labra and Golden Doodles and Poodle mixes.
- There are 57 mixed-breed dogs and the rest are pure breeds.
- Smallest PUPs: two Chihuahua mixes.
- Biggest PUPs: two Irish Wolfhounds.
- Dogs are dressed in red "Pet Me" vests with the PUP logo on them so they can easily be identified as one of LAX's PUPs.
- All dogs in the program must be at least 2 years old.

The Handlers

- PUP handlers are volunteers with at least one year of experience working with a recognized dog therapy organization.
- The role of the handler is to:
 - Relieve passenger stress and anxiety.
 - Inform and assist passengers with questions and wayfinding.
 - Promote the PUP Program and LAX projects by participating in community events.
- Handlers are badged Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) volunteers.

Operations

- 5,265 volunteer hours were completed in 2019.
- Each handler and their dog works one weekly shift of one to two hours at one assigned terminal.
- The PUP Program operates in every LAX terminal.

Certification

- Dogs must be privately owned.
- All PUP volunteers and dogs must be registered with Alliance of Therapy Dogs, a national organization that registers, insures and supports members who are involved in volunteer animal-assisted activities, including visits to hospitals, special needs centers, schools, nursing homes, and airports.

Training

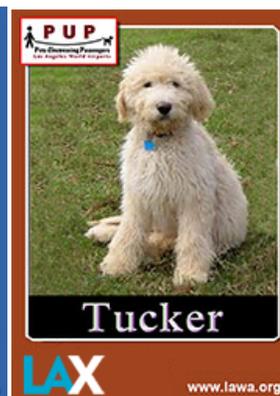
- Each PUP handler and their dog go through an initial meet and greet as well as a walkthrough of LAX to ensure both dog and handler are comfortable with LAX's environment.
- Following the walkthrough, the duo goes through in-terminal training to learn about LAX and how to assist passengers.

Extra Treats

- The PUP Program also educates and informs airport guests about LAX projects and construction-related traffic impacts.
- Each dog in the program has its own personalized baseball cards with a brief "About" section and facts (such as favorite treat, where they're from, and their favorite place to chill, among others). Guests are encouraged to meet all the dogs and collect their baseball cards.

Contact

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