

FAQs for Participating Ophthalmologists and Staff

ACVO and participating veterinary ophthalmologists have joined forces to provide eye screening exams to any certified service animals, working or in training. Exams should be inclusive of all formally certified service animals be it dogs, cats, horses, etc. This is an effort to make a collective impact to assist these animals and to promote veterinary ophthalmology.

We have attempted to clarify that to qualify these Service Animals must have been formally trained and/or have certification or paperwork attesting to their training through a national, regional or local organization. We understand that there are many trainer-owned animals who have self-trained but have not gone through a formal program. The intent of the event is to care for working animals. While we recognize that many assistance animals are privately trained, we have had to draw the line at formal certification. If your clinic wishes to treat non-certified service animals and has the time to do so, please do and encourage them to register and schedule an appointment with you.

Dates of Event

Registration is open April 1 - April 30, 2024. The event will run May 1 - May 31, 2024. You may schedule your appointments internally in any way you wish within that month. Please make sure clients know about available dates and times.

What groups of animals are invited?

Active certified animals (or those in training) from the following Service Animal groups are being invited to participate: guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs (drug, etc.), military, police, noxious plants, and search and rescue. Some specialists may choose to include retired working dogs, that is up to the individual office. *Service Animals must be active working animals that were certified by a formal training program or organization or are currently enrolled in a formal training program to qualify.* (Additionally, due to the IAADP's membership requirements and screening, the ACVO will permit "current, Active, Partner Members" of this organization to participate in the program.) *Service Animals need to have completed or currently be enrolled in a formal training program that provides documented proof of certification.* Whether your office asks for proof of this paperwork is up to each individual clinic, but it is advised to prevent abuse. Availability is advertised as a first-come, first-served registration process. Once your appointment slots are full you may certainly redirect clients to other participating ophthalmologists and or request that your listing with us show your clinic as 'full'. Accepting late applicants is at your discretion. Other Service Animals (horses, cats, etc.) that meet these same qualifications may be accepted at the clinic's discretion as well.

Locating an ophthalmologist's office for an appointment

Here is what you need to know about how clients will locate your clinic information:

1. The client must register through www.ACVOEyeExam.org website. They will receive a registration confirmation with a registration number that they will be asked to bring to their appointment. Once registered, the website will provide a participant list from which they can search for participating ophthalmology clinics by state. Once located, the client will call the clinic and make an appointment directly with staff.
2. The client will see you for the eye exam. A simple exam form should be printed off the website, available 1 month prior to the event. Your clinic may keep one copy, and the client should be provided one to take back to their primary care veterinarian.
3. Forms are no longer to be sent to the ACVO. Thank you.

When should appointment times be allotted?

You may schedule these exams for any day/time that you wish during the month of May. The event is being promoted for the entire month of May. Your clinic's general contact information will be provided to the customer via this website, they will call your office to schedule the appointment and should identify themselves as participating in this program. Registration will take place from April 1 to April 30. Please be clear that the client knows the appropriate appointment dates and times.

What cost is involved?

Clinics are not asked to contribute funding toward this program, nor is the client. If services beyond the screening exam are offered, specific pricing should be discussed with the client. The screening eye exam should be of no cost to the client. We acknowledge that the clinic is making a donation in the form of time, staff and supplies. This is not an OFA exam and as such filing of OFA exam forms is not required.

Can we perform billable services beyond eye screening exams?

Clients have been informed that the complimentary exam is of a screening nature only. Animals with previously diagnosed conditions do not require services under this program beyond the screening. Should other medical concerns need addressing, tests run, blood draws needed, follow-up exams, etc. these would all be at your normal billable rates and/or you may refer them back to their primary care veterinarian when appropriate. The client would need to be clearly notified if billable services are offered at the time of the exam.

Exams

This is a screening exam only. You may choose to dilate if the animal is not working, and the owner/agent agrees. Dilation is not required. This is not an OFA exam & forms will not be provided to OFA.

Is this an OFA Exam?

No. This is a screening exam only. Please use our downloadable forms, to provide to the client. Do not send forms to ACVO or OFA.

Where can I find the exam forms?

ACVO will upload new forms for the event each year to ACVOEyeExam.org, prior to the opening of client registration. Please use this updated form. You may print as many copies as needed. We ask that when possible, one form be provided to the client and to take to their primary care veterinarian.

Are residents and/or board-eligible veterinarians invited to participate?

This event is intended to promote the importance of referring to boarded veterinary specialists for care. While supervised residents and board-eligible specialists are medically qualified to conduct screening exams, ACVO would like to focus on the boarded specialists for public relation purposes. Utilization of a qualified resident, or board-eligible veterinarian, is up to the clinic.

Media Interviews

Should press contact your clinic for an interview, please make certain that a Member, Diplomate of the College conducts the interview. As long as the press contact is with a Member, the ACVO sees no problem with veterinary ophthalmology residents or board-eligible DVMs conducting the screening exams as long as they are under the supervision of a boarded Diplomate of the ACVO, and are qualified to do so.

Media Coverage

Links to a standard press release and a suggested release that a clinic may edit and use are provided to all participating veterinary ophthalmologists on the event website. You are encouraged to forward this information to your local press to gain coverage of the overall event for your local clinic. A National Press Release is being distributed on the "newswire" by ACVO. Banner ads are also available from our office to promote the event on your website, social media, or in a client newsletter. As a result of our public relations efforts, the media MAY contact you directly to arrange a visit. If you prefer NOT to be contacted by the media, please contact the ACVO by emailing us at ServiceAnimal@acvo.org.

Sharing media coverage

If your clinic receives press coverage, please forward a copy of the article or link to the article/video to the ACVO if at all possible for archival purposes. We would like to be able to quantify the reach of this program to the public and to referring veterinarians if possible. While we realize this is an additional step in the process, it would go a long way to develop future promotion for PR events for your clinic and the College.

Your clinic information

In order for people to attend this event and receive the complimentary screening they should have registered on the Service Animal website prior to calling your clinic. This is just about guaranteed because we're only offering the clinic information via the registration form. Potential participants will be able to view the participating clinics (doctors are not listed by name after they register...they are then pushed to a page to search for clinics by state. If your clinic allows non-registered animals to participate, please encourage them to complete the online form. Every year after the event has concluded, we will make the list of participating clinics available for acknowledgement of their contribution and post this on the website with thanks.

Sponsorship

Epicur Pharma is the primary namesake sponsor. Other sponsors vary year to year and are available on the ACVOEyeExam.org website.

Photographs

If you take pictures at this year's event, please send them to our office! We would love to use them for future events or to provide to press upon request. The ACVO office will be contacting select clinics that expressed interest in having photography coverage to coordinate logistics.

Additional Questions

If you have questions regarding the event, please contact the ACVO office.