



State Farm® Arson Dog Program



Information about the State Farm Arson Dog Program is available at arsondog.statefarm. State Farm provides for the following items; there is no upfront costs to the police or fire department and everything is initially funded by State Farm:

- 1) dog
 - 2) fees associated with training by Maine Specialty Dogs
 - 3) room and board plus most meals during training
 - 4) certification and evaluation by a chemist from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy
 - 5) transportation costs to attend the initial 4-week class in Concord, New Hampshire
- State Farm does not provide scholarships or training for private handlers or companies and we do not provide support for volunteer fire departments. Our program is only open to full-time police or fire departments.
 - There is no requirement that an applicant must be part of a fire investigation team or be a certified fire investigator. The dog is a tool to help identify where there is evidence of an arson fire. That evidence is verified by a lab and becomes part of the lead fire investigators' case. We have handlers who are police officers, deputies, or firefighters. With that being said, we do go over how to collect evidence and how to work with fire investigators.
 - The estimated scholarship value for all of this about \$25,000 per team. We train 10 to 15 teams each year. Our next available class is April 2023 in Concord, NH.
 - Following those initial costs, the individual department/city/state agency that is requesting the handler and arson K-9 will be responsible for the K-9's care and expenses. This includes but is not limited to veterinarian care, food, yearly recertification at one of the sites designated by Maine Specialty Dogs and general care for the K-9. State Farm does not provide funding for veterinary services. Your department must be willing to cover those annual expenses. Additionally, your department will be responsible for any overtime pay for the daily training of the canine or for investigations outside of regular work hours.
 - The annual recertification class is at the expense of the handlers' department as well. In order to remain compliant and accredited, each handler and K-9 must complete one recertification class each year. There are typically three classes held in various states across the country each year and occur over a 2 ½ day period. Each department must cover the expenses associated with the recertification class. These costs include travel to and from the recertification location, hotel, meals, and the chemist test (\$85). The location of the recerts are different from year to year but we try and keep them regionally located.

- As long as the department supports the handler and K-9 and each year the team is recertified, the dog will continue to work for the department until it is ready to retire. The decision to retire a dog is made by the handler, department, and Maine Specialty Dogs. We have dogs that continue to work for 10 plus years. If a dog retires, the department can request a replacement K-9. The handler will then attend the 4-week class to become acquainted with the new dog and develop a working relationship.
- State Farm does not require departments to investigate fires outside of their jurisdiction area. It is up to individual departments on how and where to use the dog and handler. They are also not required to only work State Farm fires. The arson dog team will work any and all fires regardless who the insurer for the property is.
- Teams must have support from your department. Even more importantly, your department must have an acceptable fire load to justify the K-9 team. We look at your location other arson dog teams and structure fire load numbers for the last two years. We like to see that your department responds to at least 50 – 100 structure fires a year. This can be for a single department, multiple jurisdictions that the arson dog will service, or an entire region.
- There is a 5-year commitment for the program that states the department (police or fire) that has the arson dog team will stay in the program for a minimum of 5 years, including annual recertification. If the handler or department decides to leave the program within the first 5 years, Maine Specialty Dogs (our trainer) will take the dog back and place it with a different team or retire the dog. If the department discontinues the program after the first 5 years, the department owns the dog and can retire the dog. This usually means the dog lives with the handler as a family pet.
- Operating costs for the canine vary but typically include veterinary care, food, and annual recertification. The largest cost associated with operating a canine is with overtime pay or compensation for the handler. Because these are food reward dogs, training takes place multiple times a day so the dog is fed when not working a fire scene.
- Applications are CLOSED for the April 2022 training class.
- We accept applications beginning now through the end of August 2022 for 2023 class consideration. If your department is not placed in a 2023 class, the application will be considered for the 2024 class.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [ARSONDOG.STATEFARM](https://www.statefarm.com/arson-dog)

Heather Paul
State Farm Arson Dog Program Coordinator
Office: 309-766-0922
Heather.paul.jaw8@statefarm.com