



2024/25

Annual Report



CALIFORNIA RESCUE DOG ASSOCIATION

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California Rescue Dog Association
3056 Castro Valley Blvd #101
Castro Valley, CA 94546



July 1, 2025

Since 1976, the California Rescue Dog Association has provided highly trained dog teams to search for the missing in California. Dispatched to all 58 counties by the California Office of Emergency Services, our teams are certified to search large wilderness areas or urban settings. Specialized certifications include Trailing, Area, Water, Human Remains Detection, and Avalanche.

According to the “Objectives and Purposes” outlined in the CARDA Bylaws: The specific purpose of this corporation is to provide highly trained volunteer search dog teams for search and rescue deployment; to train and promote working dogs for search and rescue; to set the standards by which search and rescue dogs are to be certified; to act as a principal testing agency for the certification of search dogs; to further the public knowledge of, interest in, and the use of search and rescue dogs; to promote the positive image and protect the interest of the search and rescue community in the State of California; and to encourage and foster good relationships between the corporation and legislative and law enforcement bodies.

Our commitment runs even deeper: Our canines—owned and trained by each handler—are our partners on the most heartfelt level. We devote uncountable hours to train in every environment and drive uncountable miles to train and search in every corner of California, all at our own expense. We never charge a dime for our service.

In addition to training our canines, we meet and often exceed standards set by the California Office of Emergency Services in every search-related skill, from navigation to incident command protocols to wilderness first aid.

In recent years, CARDA’s K9 teams provided 95% of California’s mutual aid requests for SAR K9s.

For 2024, CARDA had 141 trained and certified teams. Most of these handlers belong to both CARDA and their individual county teams, responding to callouts from both. In all, CARDA-certified teams responded to 232 callouts in 2024.

To carry out our mission requires a strong fiscal foundation, which is currently covered almost entirely by individual handlers. Strengthening this foundation is one of our core goals. We are proud to have earned GuideStar’s Gold Seal of Transparency (<https://www.guidestar.org>), providing donors with the information they need.

CARDA teams are on call 24/7, putting themselves and their canine partners on the line to search for the missing. They meet every challenge and every requirement at their own expense, asking for almost nothing in return. I am inspired and honored to work beside each of these teams, who answered the call to serve others.

Your support of CARDA makes all the difference.


Tracee Walker, President

HIGHLIGHTS

FROM YEAR 2024/25

CORPORATE EFFICIENCY

CARDA is constantly improving our effectiveness as a board-run organization. In February 2025, by a 95% vote in favor, the CARDA membership voted to amend the CARDA Bylaws to provide for an even more seamless transitioning-in of newly elected members of the board. Now, annual board of director elections are held one month earlier than before, providing time for new board members to work closely with outgoing board members streamlining the hand off of responsibilities.

MEMBERSHIP PIPELINE

In fiscal year 2024/2025, our membership pipeline continued to provide new deployable teams to serve our community. We accepted 25 new members as Pre-apprentices. We also approved 10 members to move from Pre-apprentice status to Apprentice. Eight members gained Active membership status by becoming “mission ready” with their canine (aka “certified in discipline”) for the first time.

Additionally, long-term members achieved:

- 78 re-certifications with current canine,
- 14 experienced handlers certified new canines and,
- 11 teams added additional certifications in a new discipline to their certified dog.

Historically, 44% of new CARDA members achieve certification.

A LEADER IN HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION TRAINING

In 2024/2025, working in conjunction with the UC Davis Whole Body Donor program, and thanks to a grant from AKC, CARDA hosted seven specialized trainings in human remains detection for our members throughout the state. 152 class sessions by CARDA members from 26 counties participated in these trainings. No other California OES search and rescue team offers these types of human remains detection trainings.

FIRST WINNER FOR CARDA OF THE PRESTIGIOUS CAL OES LARRY PEABODY AWARD

Please join us in congratulating Yvette Skinner for being awarded the 2024 Larry Peabody Award at this year's SAREX. Yvette was nominated for this award by Celeste Fowler, Assistant Chief with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Yvette was selected from over 6,000 SAR volunteers for going above and beyond the call of duty in her service to the California SAR community.





MISSION STATEMENT

The specific purpose of this corporation is to provide highly trained volunteer search dog teams for:

- Search and rescue deployments;
- to **train and promote** working dogs for search and rescue;
- to **set the standards** by which search and rescue dogs are to be certified;
- to **act as a principal testing agency** for the certification of search dogs;
- to **further the public knowledge** of, interest in, and the use of search and rescue dogs;
- to **promote the positive image** and protect the interest of the search and rescue community in the State of California;
- and to **encourage and foster good relationships** between the corporation and legislative and law enforcement bodies.



**Help
Law Enforcement
Find the Missing**

MUTUAL AID SEARCH MISSIONS

Types of search and rescue services provided by CARDA

- Many teams are certified in multiple disciplines
- No.= Number of CARDA teams certified in this discipline

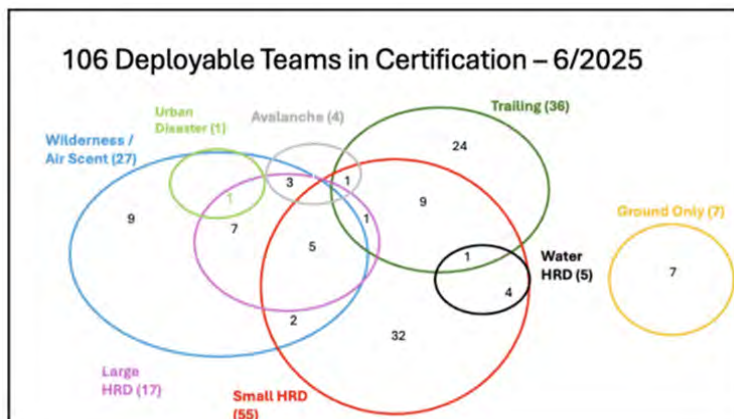
Type	Use	Notes	No.
Trailing	Used to determine the direction of travel of an individual	Requires a scent article and a Point Last Seen.	36
Area	Trained to find anyone within their search area. Roughly 100-150a / day.	Most CARDA Area Teams are also C2 certified. In 2026 C2 will be a requirement for all CARDA teams.	27
Cadaver C1	Find deceased or disarticulated individuals	Generally, more intensely work smaller areas 10a.	55
Water C3	Find deceased individuals in water	Lakes, streams, bays or other bodies of water	5
Avalanche	Find alive or deceased individuals in an avalanche	Search avalanche debris flow to locate victims.	4
Disaster	Locate individuals in a collapsed building	Separate certifications for finding live or deceased	1
Ground Support	Provide flanker support to CARDA K9 teams.	AKA: Flankers	7
K9 Operations Support	Provide overhead with assistance in requesting and managing K9 teams.	AKA: Dog Ops	22

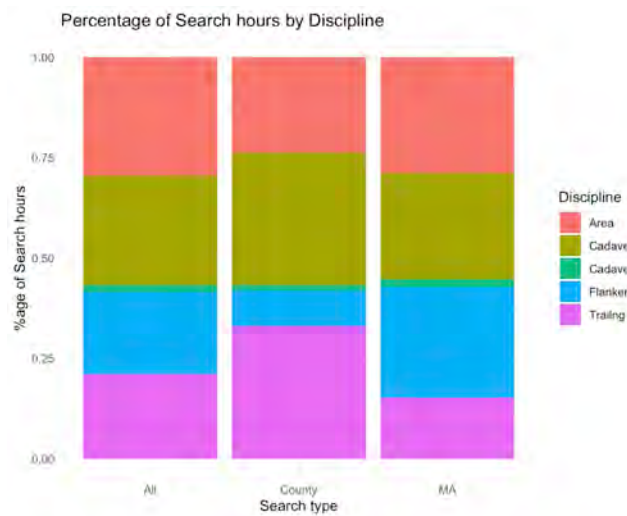
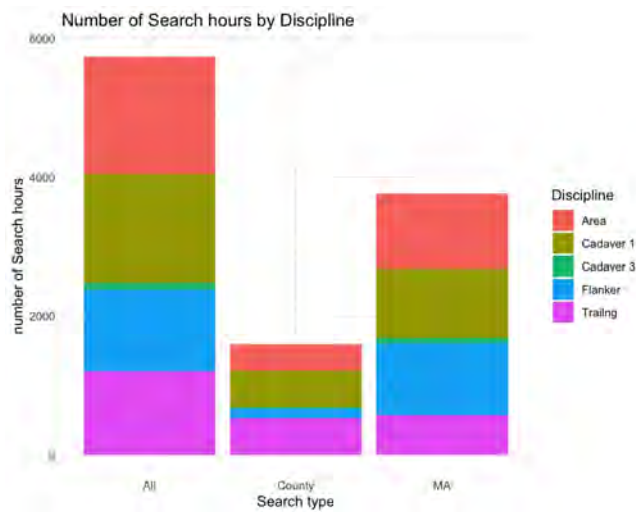
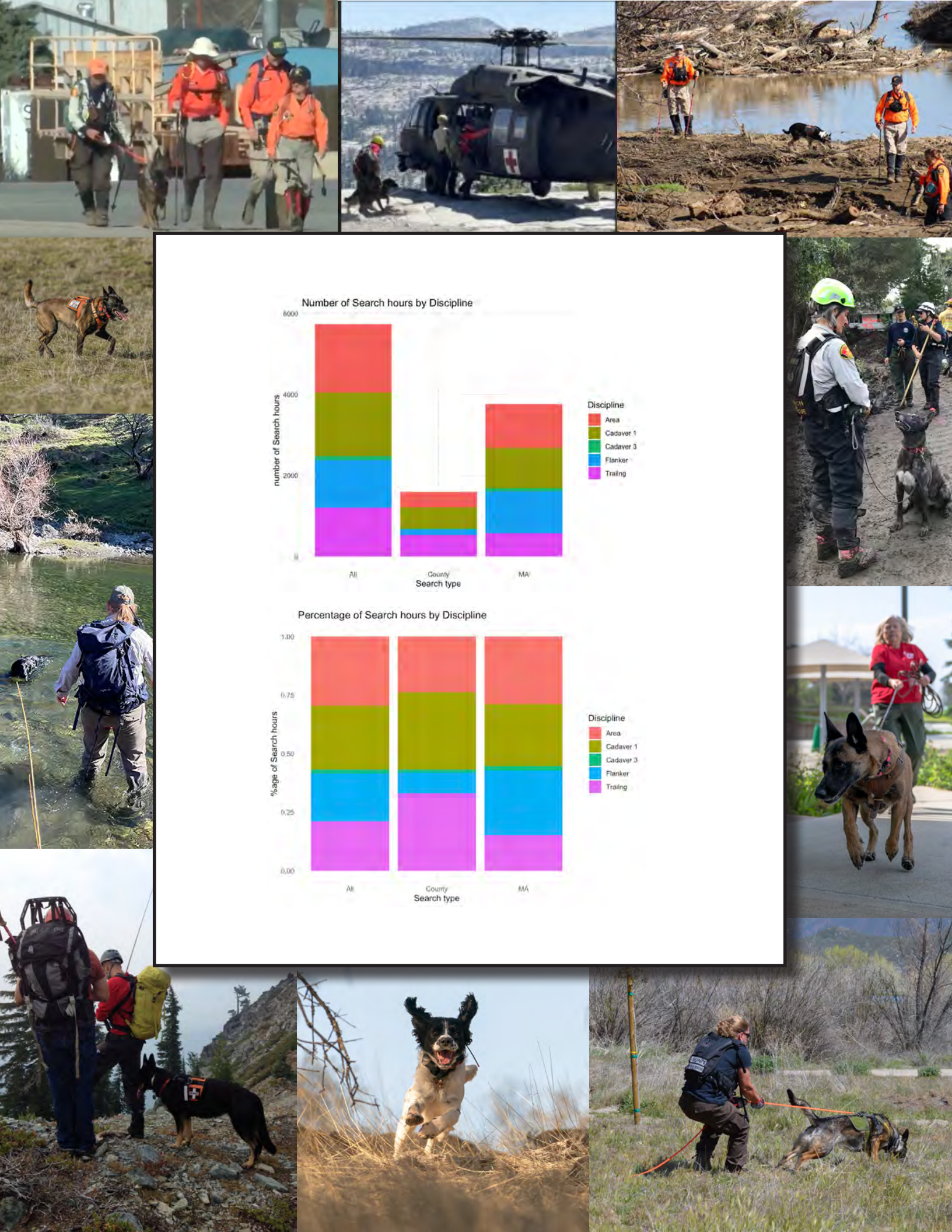
These services can be provided either via:

1. **Mutual aid request** via California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). Where a county makes a request to Cal OES and that request is then fulfilled by CARDA. For example, San Mateo County Sheriff makes a mutual aid request to Cal OES for 5 Area K9 teams with flankers. Cal OES then requests teams from CARDA who then respond to assist in the search in San Mateo County.

Or

2. **In County**, CARDA Members who also belong to a County Search and Rescue Team respond directly. For example, a K9 team which is certified via CARDA and who is also part of a counties SAR team can respond with that team. This can be either in county or respond with their county team to another county.





The year in summary:

In FY24-25 CARDA provided search and rescue services to 29 counties in 6 different disciplines. We assisted on 48 Mutual Aid searches and 149 In-County searches for a total of 5,666 volunteer hours.

Searches

For our Fiscal year from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, CARDA assisted in the following searches:

Number of searches	FY 24-25	FY 23-24
OES Mutual Aid	48	59
In County	149	154
Total	197	213



The searches in FY 24-25 can be further broken down by Mutual Aid and In County and then by the type of search. Number of volunteer Hours.

Number of volunteer hours searching	Mutual Aid	In County
Trailing	573	634
Area	1,083	608
Cadaver 1, Small source	966	569
Cadaver 3, Water	75	21
Ground Support	1,036	Na
K9 Ops Support	101	Na
Total	3,834	1,832
Grand Total	5,666	





Train and Promote Working Dogs for Search and Rescue

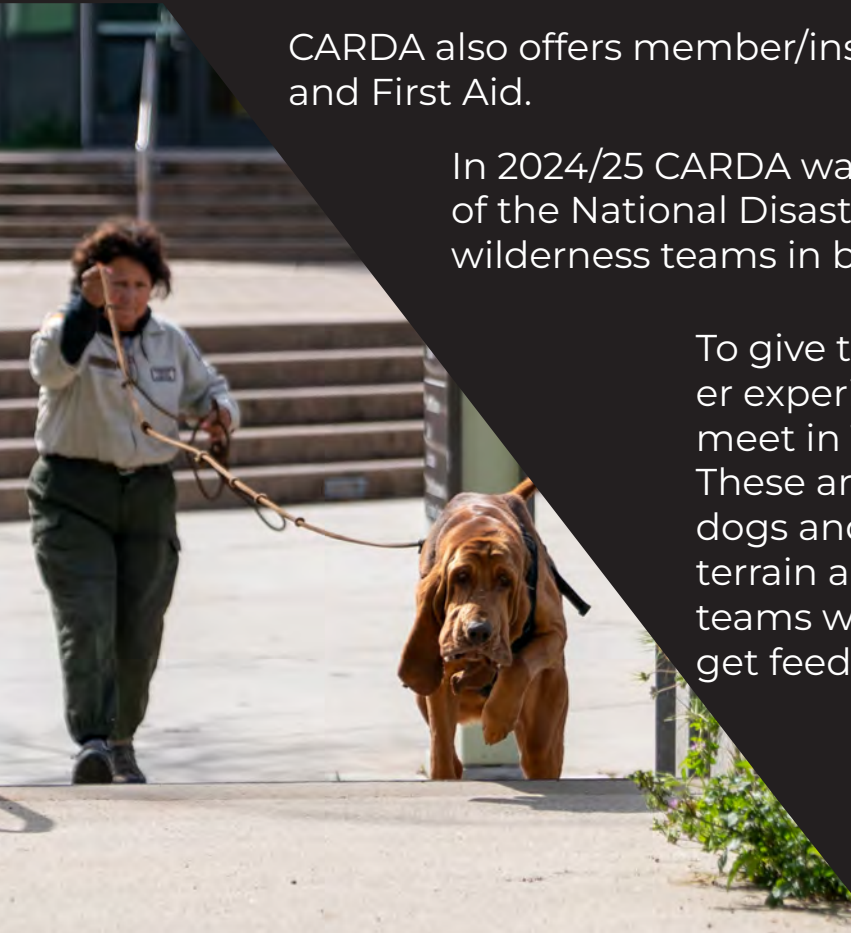
CARDA has 22 training groups across California that meet at least once a week in varying locations to set up scenarios for the local teams to train in their discipline.

CARDA also offers member/instructors for certification in CPR/AED and First Aid.

In 2024/25 CARDA was able to use the Santa Paula facility of the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation and train wilderness teams in basic urban disaster techniques.

To give the dogs and their handlers broader experience, CARDA teams across the state meet in 1-3 day trainings throughout the year. These are weekend events designed to expose dogs and their handlers to California's varying terrain and weather conditions and to provide teams with opportunities to be assessed and get feedback from different instructors.

In addition to the CARDA training, handlers work with their dogs daily to provide physical exercise, maintain obedience and ensure environmental stability.



TRAINING STATEWIDE



CARDA's annual training efforts reflect an outstanding commitment to readiness and skill development. Over the past year, teams have logged approximately 4,531 hours across 1,477 scheduled trainings, reinforcing operational excellence across 510 locations. Additional monthly trainings, specialty-focused sessions, and fitness activities have further contributed to a well-rounded and rigorous program, ensuring teams remain highly proficient in their roles. This dedication highlights CARDA's unwavering focus on preparedness and excellence in service.



Certification Testing for K9 Search Teams



To remain eligible to be deployed in a discipline, every canine team must pass a certification test every two years (except human remains detection for which the state of California requires annual recertification).


Many of our canine teams are cross-certified in multiple disciplines. Most wilderness air scent canines and about a quarter of our trailing teams are certified to locate both live and deceased missing persons. Another portion of both area and trailing are also certified for avalanche searches and water searches.

	Test Given	Passed	New Certification	Re-certification
Area	28	25	4	21
40 acre	5	3	3	0
Trailing	26	20	8	12
C2	5	3	2	1
C1	59	51	11	40
C3	6	5	3	2
Avalanche	3	3	1	2
Disaster	1	1	1	0
	133	111	33	78





**Dedication
&
Experience**



Since its founding in 1978, CARDA has been dedicated to supporting law enforcement throughout the state of California. Remarkably, we still count two of our original members among our ranks. While no longer active in the field, they continue to contribute by mentoring and passing on their knowledge to newer generations.

Approximately 30% of CARDA members have been with the organization for over 20 years. Many of them are still actively searching, now partnered with their fifth or sixth K9. Their depth of experience is an invaluable asset to our team, especially for newer handlers.

Another 40% of our members joined between 2005 and 2020. Most are currently active and working their second or third K9, demonstrating both longevity and sustained commitment to the organization's mission.

Each year, we welcome around 30 new trainees. Roughly 44% of them successfully complete CARDA's rigorous two-year certification process. These new members bring fresh energy and ideas, reinforcing our organization's vitality and continued growth.

The steady progression of seasoned, mid-career, and new members—whether in training or deployed—reflects the strength of CARDA's mission: **to train, certify, and deploy qualified K9 search teams in service of our communities.**



FINANCIALS



Sources and Uses of Funds

Grants	\$ 27,500
Donations	16,591
Sponsorships	2,000
Behest	20,000
Membership Dues	39,129
Other	225

Total Funds Sourced \$105,445

Admin (Software and Storage)	\$6,042
Board Meetings	2,318
Training (Monthlies and Special)	6,386
Liability Insurance	5,985
Website (Internal/Members)	3,689
Website (Public)	423
Search Expense Reimbursement	6,240
Tax Preparation	1,920
Misc Equipment	141

Total Expenses Paid \$33,144

Cash Balance 7/1/2024	\$211,469
Cash Balance 7/1/2025	\$256,197



2024/25 Donations

Donor Honor Roll

\$69,286

Legacy Endowments

Carol J Shapiro Legacy Fund for Water HRD Certification \$20,000

Grants

Direct Relief / Search and Rescue Fund \$25,000

American Kennel Club \$ 2,500

Corporations

Toyota Dealer Match/Auburn \$ 1,000

Motherlode Vet Hospital/Tavish Mathiasen \$ 1,000

Facebook/Meta

Facebook Birthday Campaigns \$ 1,486

Facebook General \$ 370

Bonfire/Branded Gear Sales

2019 Designs \$ 78

2025 Designs \$ 761

Additional Donations Through Bonfire \$ 457

Individuals

Estate of Kathy Spooner \$5,808

D Kaye Hall Family \$2,084

Lucille Rasmussen \$2,000

Kim Honeywell \$1,450

Janeen McMurtrie \$1,000

Nancy Cleveland Trust \$1,000

Patrick Delangis \$ 555

Cynthia Schwartz \$ 400

Robert Maher \$ 325

Bank of America Gift \$ 250

In Honor of Buzz Dean \$ 250

Patricia Silverman \$ 200

NEBay Training (in honor of Alex Del Rio) \$ 200

United Way Bay Area \$ 154

Sarah Schooss \$ 125

Marjorie Goux \$ 120

Kathleen Heston \$ 100

Jane Lang \$ 100

Gideon Bernstein \$ 70

Naomi Harada \$ 50

Tyler Bishop \$ 50

Ryan Bremer \$ 50

Nicole Dincau \$ 50

Maya Conrad \$ 50

Marilyn Lang \$ 50

Ethan Palm \$ 50

Diane Blackman \$ 50



**Mother Lode
Veterinary Hospital**
\$1,000

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

**CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association**
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

October 10, 2024

In an incredible rescue story, Tucker the dog saved his 11-year-old owner Jamie from a mudslide during Hurricane Helene 🐕

Jamie was trapped under 12 feet of rubble, but Tucker's persistent barking led rescuers to the boy's location. This heartwarming tale reminds us of the amazing bond between humans and their canine companions.

While we celebrate Tucker's heroism, please remember: search and rescue operations are best left to trained professionals 🚒



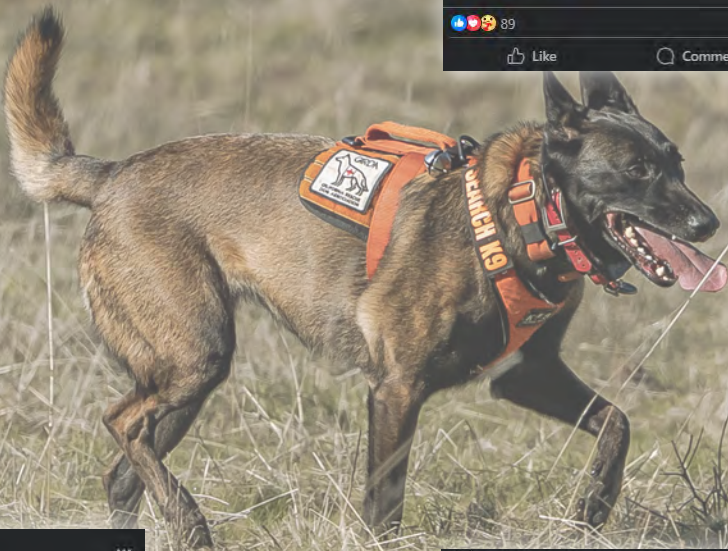
WCNC.COM

Family dog finds 11-year-old boy under several feet of rubble after mudslide during Helene

See insights and ads

89 6 comments 32 shares

Like Comment Share



**CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association**
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

October 2, 2024

In 1989, National Geographic shined a spotlight on the incredible work of search and rescue K9s in their special 'Those Wonderful Dogs.' 🎥 Featuring founding members of CARDA including Shirley Hammond, the episode showcased the vital role of search dog teams during the aftermath of the devastating Mexico City earthquake.

This powerful footage reminds us of the long-standing dedication and impact of search and rescue dogs. From our early days to now, CARDA continues to train and deploy these amazing K9 heroes 🐕

Watch the clip to see how far we've come and how our mission remains as crucial as ever.




One phase of training similar to that for war dogs is used in

0:01 / 6:09

See insights and ads


113 19 comments 72 shares

Like Comment Share

**CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association**
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

September 4, 2024

Time for take-off! ✈️ ... See more




See insights and ads

Southern CA K9 Seminar and 195 others 7 comments 14 shares

Like Comment Share

View more comments



Suzanne Eriqat Veta

Such a great training day! (I was one of the air crew, but I'm also in the process of joining CARDA.)


39w Like Reply Hide

CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

July 22, 2024 · 🌐

Update: Warren has been found safe and uninjured 🙌 Huge thank you to everyone, across agencies, who contributed.

This week it's all hands on deck for the search for missing hiker Warren Elliott in the Rubicon Springs area. Dozens of our K9 teams and 100+ searchers from other agencies are supporting [Placer County Sheriff's Office](#). Safe searching, everyone.



See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

👍❤️🔥 181 19 comments 42 shares

👍 Like 🔍 Comment ➦ Share


[View more comments](#)

CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

June 10, 2024 · 🌐

"I'll never forget the first time I watched a trailing team work: it looked like literal magic. Watching a dog follow a human's path days after they walked it is a humbling experience. It lets us understand that dogs live in a totally unique, rich world thanks to their ability to obtain and analyze scent."

Read the full story from CARDA K9 handler Cat McBride in this issue of [Bay Woof](#).



BAYWOOF.ORG
Lost and Found: On the Front Lines with a Search and Rescue Trailing Dog — BAY WOOF

See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

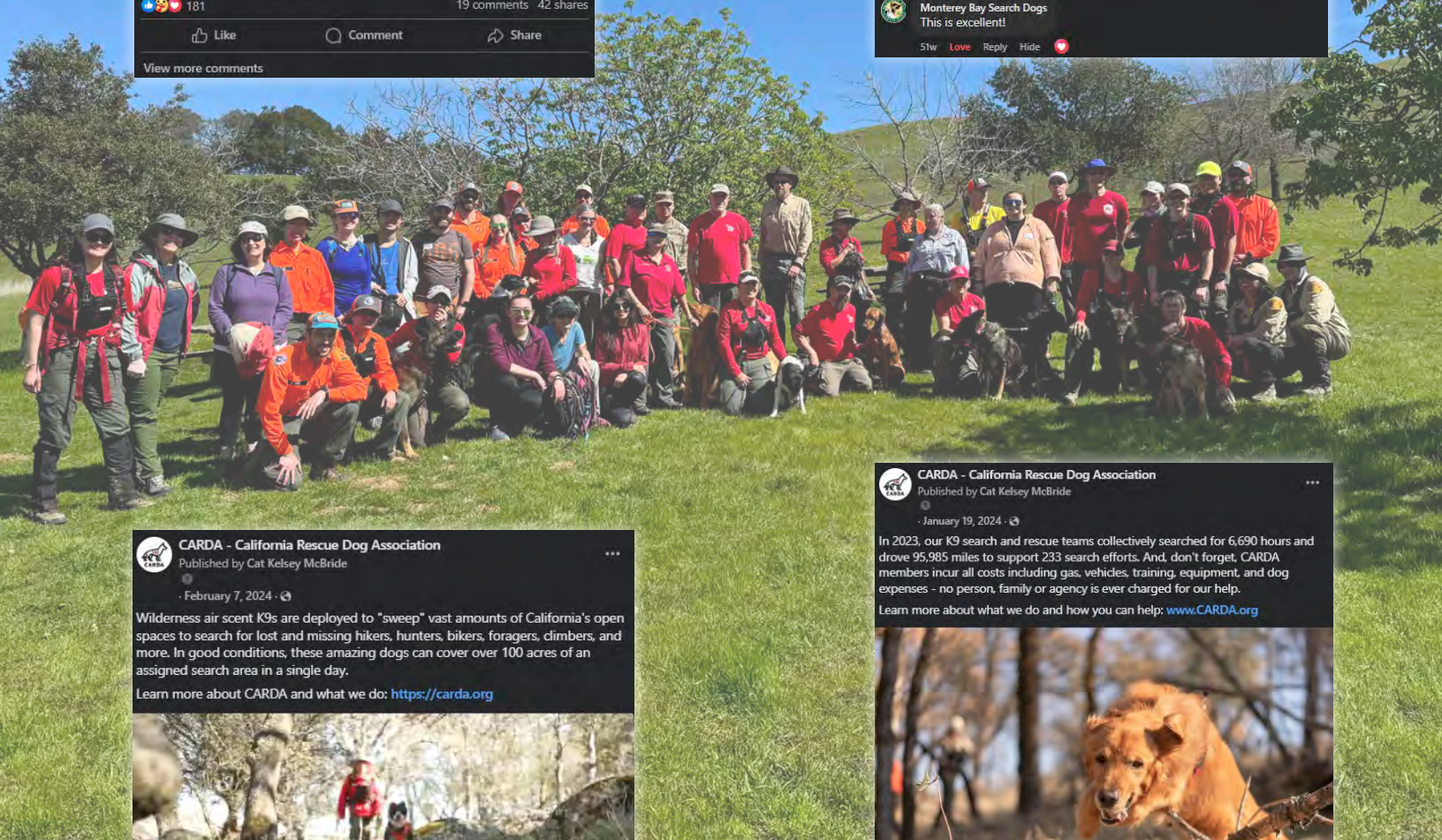
👍❤️🔥 80 12 comments 20 shares

👍 Like 🔍 Comment ➦ Share

[View more comments](#)

Monterey Bay Search Dogs
This is excellent!

👍❤️🔥 Love Reply Hide




CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

February 7, 2024 · 🌐

Wilderness air scent K9s are deployed to "sweep" vast amounts of California's open spaces to search for lost and missing hikers, hunters, bikers, foragers, climbers, and more. In good conditions, these amazing dogs can cover over 100 acres of an assigned search area in a single day.

Learn more about CARDA and what we do: <https://carda.org>



0:04 / 1:30

See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

👍❤️🔥 81 9 comments 21 shares

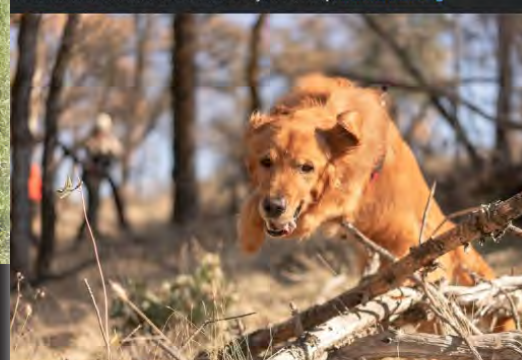
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CARDA - California Rescue Dog Association
Published by Cat Kelsey McBride

January 19, 2024 · 🌐

In 2023, our K9 search and rescue teams collectively searched for 6,690 hours and drove 95,985 miles to support 233 search efforts. And, don't forget, CARDA members incur all costs including gas, vehicles, training, equipment, and dog expenses - no person, family or agency is ever charged for our help.

Learn more about what we do and how you can help: www.CARDA.org



See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

👍❤️🔥 63 1 comment 33 shares

👍 Like 🔍 Comment ➦ Share

Mason County Search & Rescue
Thank you for all you do!

👍❤️🔥 Love Reply Hide