

Chicago Summers Push Dogs to Their Limits. K9 University Takes the Ones Others Won't

The behavior-forward dog care campus is serving more than 130 dogs daily this summer, driven largely by owners whose dogs were turned away elsewhere



CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- K9

University Chicago, one of the city's largest indoor/outdoor dog care campuses, is marking National Dog Month with a milestone: its highest summer attendance on record, with daily care topping 130 dogs. The surge is being led not by easy-going dogs, but by Chicago's most overlooked ones -- reactive, anxious, and high-drive dogs whose owners were turned away by traditional facilities before finding K9U.

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Josh Johnson, trainer at K9 University

Chicago summers concentrate exactly the kind of stimulation that pushes dogs past their limits. Fourth of July fireworks, the Air and Water Show, street festivals, and sustained heat create what K9U trainers call a "perfect storm" of behavioral pressure for urban dogs. This summer, K9U's training and care team worked with a record volume of dogs navigating those stressors, many

arriving mid-season after incidents at patios, parks, or other facilities where their needs were not understood.

"Once you learn dog body language, you see how expressive and talkative dogs actually are," said Josh Johnson, trainer at K9 University Chicago. "When a dog stops wanting to play in a new environment, that is almost always the clearest signal that something there is making them uncomfortable -- not that the dog is bad. Our job is to understand what that environment means to them, and then change it."

K9U's intake process starts with an individual evaluation before any dog joins a group. Expert staff assess each dog's motivators -- whether food, a toy, or play -- and build integration from there. For dogs with noise sensitivity around fireworks or the Air and Water Show, the team applies counterconditioning methods to shift the emotional association from fear to anticipation of something rewarding. It is the same approach that K9U uses across its daycare, boarding, and

private training programs year-round.

Founded in 1992, K9 University Chicago has built 30+ years on a single commitment: no dog is turned away because of breed, age, or behavior. The facility holds a 4.6-star rating from more than 600 Google reviews, with more than 70 specifically crediting the training team for transforming reactive or anxious dogs. More than 150 reviews name individual staff members by name.

National Dog Month, observed throughout August, marks K9U's biggest awareness push of the year. This summer, the team is sharing a Chicago-specific summer safety series covering paw protection on hot pavement, overstimulation signals, noise anxiety management, and how structured daycare outperforms free play for dogs managing a seasonally demanding city. Resources are available at k9universitychicago.com.

Dog owners in Chicago can book a behavioral evaluation or learn more about summer daycare and boarding at k9universitychicago.com.

About K9 University Chicago

K9 University Chicago is one of the city's largest indoor/outdoor dog care campuses, offering daycare, overnight boarding, transportation, private and group training, and grooming for dogs of all breeds, ages, and temperaments. K9U operates on the belief that every dog deserves expert, enrichment-focused care, including those other facilities turn away. The facility holds a 4.6-star rating from more than 600 reviews. Learn more at k9universitychicago.com.

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