The Colorado Dog Protection Act, signed into law May 13, 2013, requires local law enforcement agencies to provide a minimum of three hours of training to officers pertaining to encounters with dogs in the course of duty.

According to the Dog Protection Act, this training must be wholly or principally provided or overseen by either a “qualified animal behavior expert” or “licensed veterinarian.” The expert or veterinarian selected to provide the training must possess minimum qualifications specified by the Dog Protection Task Force (also referred to as the task force). The members of the task force interpreted the statute to intend that a licensed veterinarian also possesses the expertise to provide or oversee the training.

It is the intent of the task force members that the definitions and criteria set forth below apply solely to the provisions set forth in the Dog Protection Act (Colorado Revised Statutes §29-5-112) and are not intended to define a “qualified behavior expert” or qualified licensed veterinarian for any other purpose or context.

At the optimum level, a “qualified animal behavior expert” or qualified licensed veterinarian is an individual with an advanced degree (MA, MS or Ph.D.) in a behavioral science that includes a concentration or specialization in animal behavior from an accredited college or university or a DVM with post-graduate training in animal behavior. The individual should also have extensive practical experience with dogs.

These would be the preferred qualifications for providing or overseeing the training:
- Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists
- Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists
- Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist

The task force recognizes that it may be impractical to hire an individual from one of the preferred categories listed above. Therefore, “qualified dog behavior expert” or qualified licensed veterinarian may include other certification credentials as noted below:
- Certified Professional Dog Trainer – CPDT-KA or CPDT-KSA
- Certified Canine Behavior Consultant – CCBC-KA
- Certified Dog Behavior Consultant – CDBC
- Veterinarians licensed in the State of Colorado
- Certified Animal Control Officer through the Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (provided he/she has three or more years of work as an ACO)

It should be noted that the training program developed by the task force meets the optimum qualifications set forth in this document. Any alternative training program must meet the criteria established by the task force.