

Is a Service Dog right for you?

While a Service Dog is rewarding for many, it isn't going to be the answer for everyone. A lot of consideration needs to be given to the amount of time, ability and finances needed to take care of a dog. Having a Service Dog not only means daily training, but also daily exercise as well as a consistent routine. Exercise might include a daily walk of at least a mile or a game of retrieve. They need to be able to eat a high quality food and get out at least 3 or more times a day to relieve themselves. Training with a Service Dog never ends. All trained behaviors need to be practiced and reinforced on a regular basis, some of them daily. Working with a Service Dog literally means working with a Service Dog. Trained behaviors can only be maintained with regular training and reinforcement. A Service Dog is not a machine which has been programmed and therefore will just be exhibiting those behaviors no matter what you do.

Your Service Dog will be your partner who has your back but that also requires that **you have the Service Dog's back at all times**. You will need to pay attention to your Service Dog and look out for the Service Dog **always**. You will need to position your dog so the dog can't be harmed by careless shoppers, can't be ambushed by unruly children, and so on.

A Service Dog is with his or her partner most of every day, going into the work place, school or stores. It is only natural that Service Dogs will attract the attention of the public. They will be curious when they see a working dog and want to know more about what they do. Veterans with a Service Dog should be prepared for these types of encounters and may even want to prepare a response in anticipation.

Veterans that live with family members or friends need their cooperation and support with a Service Dog. Are all members of the household willing to live with a dog in the home? Do they all like being around dogs? Are they willing to assist with the care and behavior of a Service Dog if needed? A Service Dog is not a pet and most of the attention and care for the Service Dog should come from the Service Dog partner. Other family members will have to respect that at all times.

We are not able to place a dog where there are family members living with allergies to dogs. All of our Service Dogs will shed fur and none would be considered hypo-allergenic.

Our Service Dogs are amazing sentient beings and just like everybody else they may make mistakes. They may need gentle reminders of household rules as well as practice in their training cues and tasks. This will require patience and a positive attitude at all times. Your Service Dog partner trusts you fully; please prove him/her right! All our Service Dogs are trained with positive reinforcement and you will need to commit to that form of training fully before a Service Dog can be placed with you.