



# ABOUT HANDI-DOGS SERVICE DOG TRAINING PROGRAM

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## **Professionally guided owner-training for over 40 years.**

You benefit from being an active part of your dog's training.

- It strengthens your bond with your dog
  - It focuses on training tasks to meet your own specific needs
  - It provides you with the tools to train more tasks should your needs change in the future
  - It is empowering
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## **We use positive training methods.**

Dogs are taught with treat, toy and praise motivation. We do NOT allow the use of choke, prong, pinch, or shock collars. We do NOT train using punishment methods such as jerking of the collar, or by dominating the dog physically or mentally.

Not only is reward-based training enjoyable for dogs, it is especially important for service dog work. Our goal is for your dog to learn to anticipate your needs and offer helpful behaviors. If you punish the dog, it will "shut down." It will become afraid to offer you help. Punishment can also cause anxiety. Working dogs must be calm and confident.

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## **Training is customized for you and your dog.**

It includes both group and private lessons. Lessons are held in our Training Center, in your home, and in various public venues. On average it takes 1 – 1 ½ years for students to complete training.

The length of time it will take you to complete training depends on several factors:

- Frequency of lessons with your instructor and how consistently you practice with your dog between lessons
  - 6 lessons every month is strongly recommended. A minimum of 4 lessons every month and on-going progress is required to remain in the program
  - Your ability to train your dog, and how quickly your dog learns
  - Your commitment to following your professional instructor's advice
  - The specific behaviors and tasks being trained to help you with your disability
  - Your dog's current level of training
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## **Your fee is only a small portion of our cost to provide this service.**

Our training fees do not cover the cost of operating the program. Our expenses are subsidized by donations. Without public support, the cost to you would be 3—4 times greater.

\*Handi-Dogs, Inc. reserves the right to change pricing & program parameters at any time.

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# HANDI-DOGS SERVICE DOG TRAINING OVERVIEW

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- Attend weekly training lessons with your dog. Most will be private lessons with your Handi-Dogs instructor at the Training Center, your home, or at a public place. Some will be group lessons. (6 lessons every month is recommended; a minimum of 4 is required).
- In between lessons, you will spend 10 – 15 minutes each day practicing what you learned.
- You advance at your own pace. On average it takes 1 – 1 ½ years to complete.

<b>Introduction Level</b> <i>Introduction &amp; Foundation Work</i>	Orientation — Ongoing assessment of team potential — Relationship & focus building
<b>Basic Level</b> <i>Basic Obedience &amp; Introduction to Assistance Tasks</i>	Basic obedience training — Early stages of assistance task training — Socialization around humans, dogs, & distractions — Handling of dog
<b>Advanced Level</b> <i>Advanced Skills &amp; Public Access Training</i>	Advanced obedience training — Public access training — Assistance task training
<b>Handi-Dogs Certification Test</b>	Test to become a Handi-Dogs certified service dog team.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- 8 lessons are purchased at a time, at a cost of \$200.\* (*About 1 ½ - 2 months of training.*)
- Expect to pay \$1,200 - \$1,500 over the course of your 1 – 1 ½ years of training.
- Financial Assistance is occasionally available for those who qualify.
- When ready to test for certification with Handi-Dogs, an additional \$100 fee is charged. This fee includes additional post-certification support.
- If you live 20-40 miles from our training center, there will be an extra charge for travel time and mileage for home visits. We are not able to provide service to areas more than 40 miles from our training center.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Complete and submit these 3 forms (available at [http://handi-dogs.org/home/service\\_dogs](http://handi-dogs.org/home/service_dogs), or 520-326-3412:

1. **Service Dog Program Application**
2. **Veterinarian's Report** on your dog's temperament, current vaccinations, & health condition
3. **Physician Statement** (for physical disabilities such as mobility, hearing alert, diabetic alert) and/or **Mental Health Report** (for psychiatric service dog tasks). If dog will be trained for both types of disabilities, include both forms.

Once we receive your forms, our Training Manager will schedule a consultation (\$15 fee) to discuss your needs and goals, evaluate your dog's suitability for service work, and help determine if this is the right program for you and your dog.

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**NOTE:** If you do not have a dog, call the Training Center at 520-326-3412 for guidance on how to choose an appropriate dog **BEFORE** you obtain one.

## Appropriate Dogs for Service Dog Training at Handi-Dogs

Over our 40 year history, Handi-Dogs has successfully trained a wide variety of breeds to be service dogs. However, not all dogs are good candidates to be service dogs. We evaluate each dog prior to acceptance in our program.

**Some of the criteria we will be evaluating before acceptance:**

- 5 months to 4 years of age preferred (for dogs under 5 months, please call us about puppy kindergarten)
- Current on all vaccinations
- Deemed healthy by your veterinarian (including being at a healthy weight)
- Confident – comfortable in different places, around loud noises and strange sounds, etc.
- Motivated to learn new skills
- Likes to work — not a ‘couch potato’
- No aggressive history or tendencies – towards people or other animals
- Large enough to walk safely by your side (on the floor) in a crowded store
- Spayed/Neutered before entering the Advanced Level (training will be suspended if dog is in heat)
- Additional criteria (below) based on the tasks you will be training

Type of Tasks to be Trained	Recommended Size of Dog & Other Criteria
Diabetic Alert	At least 10 pounds Have a good ‘nose’ – success is based on your dog’s ability to smell differences in your glucose levels.
Hearing Alert	At least 10 pounds Responsive to sounds and not affected by loud alarms/noises.
Pick up dropped objects and/or retrieve items.	Large enough to pick up items such as a phone, & tall enough to easily give you items. If you have to bend over to take the item from the dog, the dog is too small.
Stabilization support while walking, and/or bracing to help you get out of a chair or help you stand after a fall.	A sturdy body frame & about hip height to you. Requires medical evaluation for sound hips and joints. Must be 18 months old before being used for bracing (training can begin earlier).
Turn on/off lights, help open doors/drawers, push the handicap button on automatic doors, etc.	Appropriate height to perform these tasks in public or in a standard configured home.
Assisting with PTSD or other Psychiatric disability	Medium to large size dog is needed to perform ADA recognized psychiatric service dog tasks. Note: A “Medium” sized dog is a minimum of 30 pounds.

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