Our Dog Programs

Guide Dogs
Guide dogs are trained to find and follow a clear path, maneuver around obstacles, and stop at curbs.

Service Dogs
Service dogs are trained to help people who have disabilities other than visual impairment. They may provide balance, retrieve dropped items, open doors, toggle light switches, provide assistance in getting in and out of a chair, or respond to seizures. PTSD service dogs are trained to perform tasks, as well as provide a calming effect and sense of security for those with post-traumatic stress.

Hearing Dogs
Hearing dogs are trained to respond to sounds such as alarm clocks, door knocks or doorbells, telephones, smoke alarms, and alert their hearing-impaired partners that these sounds have occurred.

Specialized Facility Dogs
These dogs are trained to provide physical and occupational therapy assistance at military or VA hospitals for wounded soldiers. They may also make visits to VA nursing homes or hospitals. Combat Operational Stress Control dogs are deployed to offer emotional support for active duty servicemen and women dealing with combat stress and home front issues.

Prison Puppy Program
We work with select correctional institutions to place puppies with inmates who train the pups on the fundamentals of service dog work. Weekend puppy raisers socialize the dogs to experiences they can’t get in prison. The prison puppy program helps us reduce training costs and increases capacity while allowing inmates to give back to society.

How You Can Help
It costs more than $50,000 to breed, raise, train, and place one assistance dog, but all of VetDogs’ services are provided at no charge to the individual. America’s VetDogs relies on voluntary public contributions to fund its efforts. With your help, VetDogs can continue to answer the call for our disabled heroes.

Here’s What You Can Do
• Spread the word about our services.
• Make a financial contribution and/or encourage your employer, club, or congregation to contribute or raise funds.
• Sponsor a puppy, a class, or a team.
• Invite a VetDogs speaker to your meeting or event.
• Include VetDogs in your bequests, legacies, and planned gifts.
• Make a donation in memory or honor of your fallen comrades, friends, or loved ones.
• Consider a charitable gift annuity. You make a gift to us, and in exchange, we guarantee you an income for the rest of your life. There are also tax advantages for you.

CFC #81344

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America’s VetDogs is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, and our programs consistently receive top ratings from charity watchdog organizations. We are proud of our reputation as conscientious stewards of donor dollars.

A New Partner

A guide or service dog provides help with daily life activities and serves as a bridge between the disabled veteran and those around them, allowing them to focus on the dog, rather than the disability. These special dogs give people with disabilities the motivation to continue to conquer the new challenges they face.

Building a Team

The process begins even before the dogs are born. We breed Labrador and Golden Retrievers, and Lab/Golden crosses to ensure they possess excellent health, intelligence, and temperament, as well as the drive to work and thrive on praise and rewards. Our dogs must meet our health, safety, and training standards before they can become a guide, service, or hearing dog for a person with disabilities.

Most individuals train at our headquarters in Smithtown, New York. Our instructors provide personalized attention, which gives students and their dogs time to bond and learn how to work together as a team.

In 2013, VetDogs became the second assistance dog school in the United States to be accredited by both the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International. This international recognition demonstrates that we consistently follow the highest standards for the humane and ethical treatment of our dogs, maintain educational benchmarks for trainers and apprentices, and have procedures in place to address consumers’ concerns.

Our Commitment

America’s VetDogs was created in 2003 in response to the increased need for specially trained service dogs that would assist disabled veterans, no matter when or where they served. In 2015, we expanded our services to first responders and those who had otherwise honorably served our country and their communities.

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Instruction is also available at locations across the U.S., including certain military hospitals and VA medical centers. The team at VetDogs works with applicants to determine where they will be best served while trying to accommodate their preferences.

A person who graduates from VetDogs receives a lifetime of aftercare, including home visits and refresher training as required from our team of field representatives.

We recommend our graduates who are veterans apply with the Department of Veterans Affairs for Dog of Record status because there are certain benefits available from the VA for the care of guide, service, and hearing dogs. We assist veterans by detailing the steps they must follow to obtain Dog of Record status and ensure they have the tools they need. However, it is up to the veteran to follow through.