



# PAWS Training Centers

[www.PAWSTrainingCenters.com](http://www.PAWSTrainingCenters.com)

[www.facebook.com/PAWSTrain](http://www.facebook.com/PAWSTrain)

## Service Dog Training

PAWS Training Centers recognizes that there are many great organizations that offer service dogs (assistance dogs) to those in need. Tragically, the number of dogs needed far outnumber the available dogs. This often creates very long wait times for individuals to receive their service dogs. There are many people who have, or are willing to find a dog that *could* be trained as a service dog to fill a need with their family.

PAWS Training Centers' trainers have many years of experience in training service dogs. We also help teach the people who benefit from this assistance so the dogs can be used to their fullest potential. We create a customized training plan to teach your dog all the necessary and required skills in order to mitigate your/your child's disability.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a service dog (assistance dog)?**

Service dogs (sometimes referred to as assistance dogs) assist people with physical, neurological, or psychological disabilities to perform everyday tasks. They help people overcome limitations caused by the disability and increase their independence and quality of life. They can provide alerts before the handler experiences a medical problem or assist when the problem occurs. They provide a wide range of assistance to address many types of physical limitations. They alert people with hearing impairment to ringing phones and doorbells. They can help people with Post Traumatic Stress, Military Sexual Trauma, or Traumatic Brain Injury to function successfully in public, helping them to feel secure and easing stressful situations. Each service dog/handler team is individually trained to address the unique needs of the handler. The PAWS Training Centers' Service Dog Training Program is designed to exceed training requirements of service dogs as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you are instead interested in Therapy/Facility Dog training, where dogs are trained to visit individuals in different facilities, please contact us or see our Obedience, Therapy/Facility, and Behavioral Dog Training FAQ.

### **How is having my dog trained through PAWS Training Centers different than getting a dog through a non-profit service dog organization?**

Clients of PAWS Training Centers reap significant benefits that many reputable non-profit service dog organizations do not offer:

1. The most common is that PAWS Training Centers is able to train clients' privately owned dogs, assuming those dogs prove to be good candidates. Most non-profit organizations breed and train their own dogs and do not train their clients' pet dogs.
2. We train dogs for clients of all ages. Sometimes the handler of the dog is not the actual client and is instead the client's parent, guardian, or caretaker. There are no age requirements for handlers, but they must be able to give cues, corrections, and properly handle the dog throughout each phase of the Service Dog Training Program.

3. Our clients are involved in every step of the training process from the beginning to the end, including lessons that we conduct in our clients' homes.
4. There are no wait times with PAWS Training Centers. Most non-profit organizations have lengthy waiting lists (sometimes a few years) to receive a dog.
5. Non-profit organizations typically receive a large number of applications, but very few individuals are accepted because there are a limited number of dogs available.
6. Your dog's training will be customized to your needs rather than having generalized disability mitigation training that may not apply to you.

### **How long does it take?**

The length of training is different for every dog and there are many factors that need to be taken into account (i.e., age of dog, trainability, cue/skill sets they need to acquire, and level of involvement of the owner/handler). Sometimes training can take in excess of 1 year to complete depending on these factors.

### **How much does it cost?**

The cost depends on how much training is involved and the length of time the training will take. Payments are scheduled throughout the course of training to help make this program affordable to as many clients' budgets as possible. [See "*How does the training work?*" for a comprehensive breakdown of costs.]

### **I don't have money for training; do I have other options?**

Many of our clients fundraise to help with the cost of training prior to starting the training process. We have had clients start online fundraisers or ask different businesses in their community to help with the cost. As much as we would like to help in the training process, if you are unable to pay for training and are unable to fundraise, PAWS Training Centers is unable to train you or your dog. An alternative is applying to a non-profit organization that provides service dogs.

### **Is the cost for training tax deductible?**

Likely. Costs associated with purchase of a dog, training costs, veterinarian bills, food if prescribed by the veterinarian, and other expenses may all be tax deductible! Please consult your tax preparer for additional information.

### **How does the training work?**

The training consists of four separate phases: (1) basic obedience, (2) advanced obedience, (3) disability skills, and (4) public access. At the end of these training phases, you and your dog are tested prior to starting the next phase of training. Some dogs may already have the necessary foundational skills to quickly pass through specific phases (i.e. some may be ready to simply take the test for that phase to move to the next phase). The length of each phase and intensity of training will depend on you and your dog. It is very important that you continue working with your dog on a daily basis between their lessons so they continue to learn from you and progress. Depending on the phase and intensity level, your trainer will recommend which training type will be best for you and your dog. A combination of several training options will likely be utilized to pass through all phases of training. The program types are:

## **Initial Evaluation and Consultation**

The first step of the process is scheduling your initial Evaluation and Consultation. During this time we will answer any questions you may have and will explain step-by-step our Service Dog Training Program. We will provide you with our Service Dog Training Program book that itemizes every skill and task required in our program. If you already have a dog, we are able to meet them during this time to have a basic evaluation of their overall temperament. If you do not have a dog, we will discuss your preferences and explain available options. We will convey what to expect throughout the course of training and explain all of the requirements needed.

- Approximately 1.5 - 2 hours - \$200 (due upon scheduling)

\*Please note that no training is conducted during this evaluation

\*Travel charges may apply. See the last page of this FAQ for the Travel Charges Worksheet

\*A telephone Evaluation and Consultation may be scheduled for those located a distance from us

---

## **Wipe Your Paws**

Individual private lessons are conducted at our facility (available at the Southeastern PA branch only) or via Skype/Facetime at the trainer's discretion (many skills/tasks are recommended to be trained in person). These lessons are 1 hour each and are customized to fit the needs of you and your dog. We will be teaching you (and any other members of your household who attend) how to work with your dog in between lessons and will ask for daily practice ("homework") from you!

- \$125 per 1-hour lesson (due upon scheduling)
- Purchase 5 lessons (5 hours) for \$600 (non-transferable) (full payment due upon scheduling first lesson)

\*Lessons may be conducted back-to-back if you would prefer multiple-hour lessons

\*There is no additional charge for multiple dogs of the same household participating in these lessons

---

## **My Dog Ate My Homework**

Individual private lessons are conducted in your own home or at a public venue. These lessons are 1 hour each and are customized to fit the needs of you and your dog. We will be teaching you (and any other members of your household) how to work with your dog in between lessons and will ask for daily practice ("homework") from you!

- \$175 per 1-hour lesson (due upon scheduling)
- Purchase 5 lessons up front for \$800 (non-transferable) (full payment due upon scheduling first lesson)

\*Lessons may be conducted back-to-back if you would prefer multiple-hour lessons

\*Travel charges may apply. See last page of this FAQ for Travel Charges Worksheet

\*There is no additional charge for multiple dogs of the same household participating in these lessons

---

## **Love Me, Love My Dog**

Your dog will come to stay with one of our professional trainers in the trainer's own home. They will be loved and cared for as if they were part of our family. They will be learning new commands and skills throughout their stay while living in a structured environment. A scheduled time will be given for you to drop-off your dog and their luggage to the trainer.

1 Week-Long Stays: (Half-payment is due to schedule training and half-payment is due by the take-home lesson.)

---

- (Minimum)1 week + take-home lesson + 1 follow-up lesson = \$1,500
  - Add a Day = \$200

2 Week-Long Stays: (Half-payment is due to schedule training and half-payment is due by the take-home lesson.)2 weeks + take-home lesson + 1 follow-up lesson = \$2,750

- Add a Day = \$175

3 Week-Long Stays: (Half-payment is due to schedule training and half-payment is due by the take-home lesson.)

- 3 weeks + take-home lesson = \$3,350
  - Add a Day = \$160

4 Week-Long Stays or Longer:

- 4 weeks + take-home lesson = \$3,750 (Half-payment is due to schedule training and half-payment is due by the take-home lesson.)
- If more than one 4-week package (includes take-home lesson at completion of stay) = \$3,500 (after the initial 4-week stay of \$3,750) (Half-payment of the first 4 weeks is due to schedule training; balance is due at the end of the first 4-week training. Subsequent 4-week training: half-payment is due on day one of the new 4-week training; balance is due at the end of the 4-week training.)
  - Add a Day = \$150
  - Add a Week = \$950

\*Special trip to veterinarian, groomer, pick-up of specialty dog food, etc. - \$65 plus travel charges and cost of service/item

\*Only your dog participating in the "Love Me, Love My Dog" program with no other clients' dogs scheduled - \$25/day (not available for 3 week or longer stays)

\*Daily email updates with pictures/video during "Love Me, Love My Dog" - \$25/day

\*Dog pick-up may be scheduled for an additional \$30, plus any applicable travel charges (see "Belly Rubs (Add-Ons)" below).

\*Travel charges may apply for the take-home lesson and the follow-up lesson. See the last page of this FAQ for charges.

---

## **Board and Maintenance**

Your dog will come to stay with one of our professional trainers in the trainer's own home. They will be loved and cared for as if they were part of our family. This is primarily a boarding program; **no new training will be conducted**. It is meant for clients who are traveling and want their dog to stay in a structured environment while they are away. Your trainer will practice previously taught and refined commands to upkeep their current level of training. This program is **not** meant to teach refinement of commands, but instead maintain your dog's current level without regression.

- \$110/day

---

## **Public Access Test**

Upon completion of our Service Dog Training Program, you may decide to pursue certification with PAWS Training Centers. The final step of our certification is the Public Access Test. This test is a collaboration of items throughout the entire Service Dog Training Program.

- \$300 (includes an Introduction and Verbal Test (which may be taken via phone), and an in-person Skill Test)

\*Travel charges may apply. See last page of this FAQ for Travel Charges Worksheet

---

### **Belly Rubs (the Add-Ons)**

- Travel Charges – Please see the last page of this FAQ for the Travel Charges Worksheet
- Phone/email/text message interaction between lessons, during "Love Me, Love My Dog" or "Board and Maintenance" program beyond what is agreed upon in the Training Agreement = \$40/30 minutes
- Skype/Facetime interaction between lessons or during "Love Me, Love My Dog" or "Board and Maintenance" program = \$70/up to 30 minutes (minimum); \$55/additional 30 minute slots during same call
- Email including comprehensive overview of lesson notes, feedback, and homework = \$15 each

### **Do you provide training for Emotional Support Animals (ESA), training if I do not need my dog to accompany me in public, or training for just a few specific disability tasks?**

We are happy to help train disability skills even if you decide not to pursue the entire Service Dog Training Program. You would still need to enter into the Service Dog Training Program (with all of the same requirements) and test out of Phase 1: Basic Obedience and Phase 2: Advanced Obedience prior to moving into Phase 3: Disability Skills training. You are not required to complete the full program.

### **I don't currently own a dog. Can you help me find one?**

We are happy to provide helpful information through our Dog Selection Guide and Breeder Recommendation List. Once you have tentatively selected your dog, you may decide to schedule a trainer's assessment of the dog (\$200 + any applicable travel). Prior to the trainer assessing a potential new dog, you first need to have an Initial Evaluation and Consultation with your trainer.

### **Does my dog have to be a certain age to start training?**

We recommend that puppies start training as early as possible to ensure proper puppy development. We train dogs of all ages and start as young as 8 weeks! Older dogs can learn too! Please keep in mind that service/assistance work can be tiring for dogs especially as dogs approach mid-life. We do not recommend starting with a dog older than about 4 years old, depending on the breed. For dogs that will be trained in any type of scent detection work, we recommend that training starts with a dog younger than 1-year-old.

### **What breeds of dogs do you use?**

Although we often use Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers because of the likelihood that they will have the preferred temperament and trainability, we have also trained dogs of many different breeds and sizes that ultimately have become certified service dogs.

### **I am not located close to any of your trainers. Is there any other way you can help me?**

If you are not close to any of the locations listed on our website and are willing to travel, we are happy to discuss potential training options. We have had successful training programs with clients located internationally that have been willing to travel to work with us and use tools such Skype or Facetime for video conferencing in between in-person sessions.

Another option is to utilize an outside trainer to provide a foundation with basic and advanced obedience skills prior to working with PAWS Training Centers directly. To locate an outside trainer, you could either: (a) select a nearby trainer of your choice and work with their basic/advanced skills training; or (b) utilize a Program Prep Trainer (listed on our website). Program Prep Trainers are pre-screened by PAWS Training Centers and are familiar with our service dog program. They are equipped with a specific checklist so they know exactly what skills to teach you and your dog to help expedite you through the PAWS Training Centers' initial training phases once you have completed your foundational training with them. All training costs, agreements, and arrangements that you agree to with the Program Prep Trainer will be directly between you and the trainer. PAWS Training Centers is not involved in the training or terms while you are working with the Program Prep Trainer. If you are interested in using this type of arrangement with a Program Prep Trainer, please visit our website page for distance training locations. Under the FAQ question "How much does it cost?" there is a cost estimate that addresses the costs with PAWS Training Centers once you have completed training with a Program Prep Trainer. If you choose to use a Program Prep Trainer, please first contact PAWS Training Centers through our website contact form so we can ensure that your name and contact information is in our system prior to being assigned to a Program Prep Trainer.

### **Why shouldn't I just buy a vest online that indicates my dog is a service dog?**

There are many scam organizations online that people use to purchase vests for imposter service dogs. Anyone can purchase these vests to give the illusion to the public that their pet is actually a service dog. Unlike scam organizations, PAWS Training Centers' program ensures that dogs are highly trained and tested so they are able to mitigate the disabilities of their owner, properly trained for all public venues, and have a handler that thoroughly understands how to work with them.

### **Is my dog guaranteed to become a service dog?**

Everyone at PAWS Training Centers is committed to being completely honest and forthcoming with all observations to give you a realistic expectation of what will be accomplished during training. We will listen and work with you diligently and take time to answer any questions throughout the training process. We certainly want to see continued success and progress. We also know that there are no absolutes with dog training. How well your dog learns and how much he improves will depend on many factors including his level of socialization, genetic predisposition, and how much time you train with him. Our ultimate goal at PAWS Training Centers is to give you the tools to establish clear communication, mutual respect, and the necessary confidence that is crucial between you and your dog. We will show you how to understand your dog, how to teach your dog to understand you, and how to remain consistent in every situation. The trainers at PAWS Training Centers believe that building this close relationship with your dog is accomplished through constant, positive interaction thereby creating a healthy foundation on which even the most difficult challenges can be resolved. Participation in our training program does not guarantee certification. If, at any time the trainer feels the dog is not well suited for assistance work due to behavior or lack of response with training, the handler will be promptly informed.

### **What documentation do you require for the program?**

We require a letter of medical necessity from one of your licensed medical providers, a copy of your dog's Rabies Certificate (if old enough), documentation of distemper combo vaccination (i.e., DHPP), and documentation of a negative fecal test within the last six-months to commence training. Throughout the course of training, we also need a veterinarian health check letter. In addition to passing all training requirements, to complete the program you must maintain at least a 6-month relationship with PAWS Training Centers, and your dog must be at least 1 year old, be mentally and physically mature, and be sterilized (spayed/neutered). If you are pursuing certification with an ADI-recognized organization following our program, we also require that you provide us with your dog's microchip identification number.

### **What is Assistance Dogs International (ADI)?**

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) is an internationally recognized accreditor of legitimate service dog organizations. Currently, ADI only recognizes non-profit organizations. Because PAWS Training Centers is a for-profit company, we are not eligible to seek recognition or accreditation through ADI. Some government agencies do require that service dogs on premises maintain a certification through an ADI-accredited organization (i.e., military bases, flying internationally, etc.). For these reasons, PAWS Training Centers recommends that all clients consider pursuing certification with an ADI-recognized organization. However, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) you are not required to be certified by any organization to have your service dog with you in public environments.

### **Are you affiliated with any organization that is recognized by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and would provide certification for me and my dog?**

PAWS Training Centers believes that legitimate service dog organizations' primary mission is to help people with disabilities, while collectively promoting what is best for clients, dogs, and the service dog industry. Communication, interaction and strong relationships with like-minded service dog organizations results in a mutual benefit to everyone. Assistance Dogs International provides a comprehensive listing of service dog organizations that they recognize as having exemplary standards. If you are seeking a certification from an organization that is recognized by ADI, we recommend contacting your desired organization to determine their process and whether or not they certify privately-owned dogs. Each ADI recognized organization will have different requirements, procedures, and costs for privately owned dogs to pursue certification. Eligibility for certification with any organization is separate from your training with PAWS Training Centers, so you will need to contact your preferred organization directly. We have many clients that have passed our PAWS Training Centers' Service Dog Training Program that have successfully pursued and graduated with an ADI-recognized certification!

Please feel free to contact us if you would like information on the organizations our clients have successfully pursued for ADI certification.

### **What happens once I complete the PAWS Training Centers' Service Dog Training Program?**

Certification that exceeds all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can be accomplished through PAWS Training Centers by successfully completing the 4-phased Service Dog Training Program and the final Public Access Test. PAWS Training Centers requires that you maintain a 6-month relationship with us prior to the final test and further requires that your dog is at least 1-year old and fully matured. Upon certification, PAWS Training Centers will provide you with a vest and informational ID Cards. To maintain your certification with PAWS Training Centers, you will be required to re-test annually. We further recommend that you obtain General Liability insurance to ensure proper coverage for you and your dog while in public places.

### **I travel via airplane frequently; will my dog be able to go with me?**

We have an optional add-on to our program that includes a trainer going on a round-trip flight with you to teach you and your dog the appropriate procedures. The cost of this training is the airplane tickets (yours and your trainer's), plus \$125/hour of your trainer's time. We highly recommend that you take advantage of this program if you intend on flying with your dog. Be sure you have a copy of your letter of medical necessity and your certified handler/dog Information ID Cards from PAWS Training Centers anytime you fly.

**Once my dog has completed training, are they able to go everywhere with me?**

Service dogs are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are able to be with their handler out in public anywhere a civilian is permitted.

**What types of service dogs do you train?**

We train service dogs for many types of disabilities. This includes individuals with psychiatric or psychological diagnoses, as well as mobility, balance or other physical and neurological challenges. We also train dogs for medical conditions such as narcolepsy, seizures, traumatic brain injuries, hearing, allergen, and diabetes. We are able to customize training based on need and often work with clients who have rare conditions. We do not train Guide Dogs for the blind.

**Sign me up! How do I start?**

The first step is having an evaluation with one of our trainers (see "*How does the training work?*" above for information and cost of the initial Evaluation and Consultation). If you would like to schedule the Initial Evaluation and Consultation, please contact us. You do not need to have any documentation for the Initial Evaluation and Consultation and we will begin compiling that information from you once a plan has been determined to begin training. We look forward to meeting with you!



## Travel Charges

The following Travel Charges are the estimated costs that PAWS Training Centers recommends to their trainers to compensate them for their time and actual travel cost. The actual fee charged is calculated by the individual trainer and may vary from one program to the next throughout the Service Dog Training Program depending on several other factors. Our trainers always review traffic patterns and account for traffic when determining their travel charge.

Up to 1.5 hours (by car)													
Minutes to Destination One-Way	0-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76-90							
<b>Total (Round-Trip)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$55</b>	<b>\$70</b>	<b>\$85</b>							

More than 1.5 hours one-way travel (by car)													
Hours to Destination One-Way	2 hrs.	2.5 hrs.	3 hrs.	3.5 hrs.	4 hrs.	4.5 hrs.	5 hrs.	5.5 hrs.	6 hrs.	6.5 hrs.	7 hrs.	7.5 hrs.	8.0 hrs.
Travel/Time	\$140	\$190	\$240	\$290	\$340	\$390	\$440	\$490	\$540	\$590	\$640	\$690	\$740
Meals					\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40
Hotel					\$115	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$115
<b>Total (Round-Trip)</b>	<b>\$140</b>	<b>\$190</b>	<b>\$240</b>	<b>\$290</b>	<b>\$495</b>	<b>\$545</b>	<b>\$595</b>	<b>\$645</b>	<b>\$695</b>	<b>\$745</b>	<b>\$795</b>	<b>\$845</b>	<b>\$895</b>

Trainer Flying to a Customer for Training Sessions	
Time	\$200
Meals	\$40
Hotel	\$115
Rental Car + Gas	\$95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$450</b>

- The price chart to the left represents the "per day" cost for a trainer to come to you (plus the cost of the training program and airfare)

- Customer is responsible for paying for the cost of trainer's round-trip airfare and baggage fees

- The "Time" cost is for each day (4+ hours) the trainer blocks off of their calendar for traveling to work with you. If they are blocking off under 4 hours of a day, the cost will be \$100