



# OWNER-ASSISTED SERVICE DOG TRAINING PROGRAM

## Description of Program

True Companion Dog Training (TCDT) is a professional dog training facility offering an owner-training service dog program. This program can be completed via our Board & Train or Private Lesson training formats, or in combination. TCDT does not own or place dogs with handlers. We work with clients to train their own dogs to perform tasks that mitigate their handlers' disability(ies), as well as the critical obedience training to make dogs fit and safe for work in public. We also provide extensive education regarding service dog law, service dog handler rights, and the rights of businesses and other entities that may need to accommodate a handler with a service dog.

## Temperament Assessment & Training Consultation

The prospect dog being considered for training must pass an assessment administered by one of our professional trainers. We consider: temperament, motivation/drive, confidence, and ability to do the work (dogs are the appropriate age, size, health, etc.). In regards to temperament, we evaluate and rule out any behaviors or tendencies that might make a dog unsafe to work, such as aggression towards humans or other animals, fear or shyness, or extreme sensitivity to environmental stimuli. If passed, we also work with the handler to identify their specific training needs, and design a training plan, complete with chosen format and cost estimate, that meets those needs.

### Service Dog – Puppy Jump Start 8 weeks-5 months

If you are starting with a puppy ages 8 weeks-5 months old, this special portion of our program will give you the building blocks you need to prepare your puppy for its future work as a service dog. This program focuses on:

- Building food, play, and work drives
- Luring, free-shaping, body awareness exercises
- Building marker words

- Focus and eye contact
- Nose and paw targeting for future task work
- Accepting handling and grooming - brushing, nail trims, body handling
- Teaching pull/pressure on a harness, stop/no pull on a collar to prepare for loose leash walking and heeling, as well as future task training
- Tether training for settling
- Lots of small field trips for exposure and socialization

We also focus on preparing the handler for continued socialization and confidence building at home, as well as designing a home routine that will set the team up for success, including management of feeding and potty routines, scheduled alone time to avoid developing separation anxiety, and managing relationships with other people and animals in the home.

## **Foundation Partnership + Foundation Task Training 5+ months**

The next step in the service dog journey is to master the core foundation, obedience commands and social skills that all dogs need to be well-functioning members of society, but service dogs especially. TCDT's philosophy is that a service dog prospect dog must master all pet-dog-level obedience before moving on to more difficult tasks and environmental training. In this program, dogs learn:

- Building a training language with marker words and clear communication (if not already addressed in puppy program)
- Name Recognition/Focus
- Sit (Hold for Stay)
- Down (Hold for Stay)
- Come w/ Front finish
- Loose Leash Walking
- Threshold Manners (Doors, gates, cars)
- Platform/target training
- Return to Heel Position
- Addressing common issues like barking, jumping, etc.

This phase of our program also focuses on building some of the core behaviors common in many service dog tasks, such as targeting with their nose or paws, learning to push or pull, holding objects, or learning to imprint a specific scent. Your actual foundation task skills will vary based on your individual needs!

## **Advanced Obedience + Public Access Preparation**

This phase builds upon the skills learned in our foundation program and proofs them with additional duration and distraction to prepare service dog prospects for working in

public. Dogs learn to work in areas of high human, dog, and other environmental distraction (dog-friendly festivals, walking/hiking trails, pet friendly stores, outdoor patios, etc.) and learn the following skills: Heel (or appropriate working position), Place, Under (for tucking under chairs and tables), and discriminating between appropriate times to greet versus ignore humans and other animals.

## **Disability-Related Task Training**

This section of the program may be interspersed amongst the obedience portions, depending upon the number and type of tasks each handler needs, as well as the age and maturity level of the candidate dog. Each task list will be individually determined for each team, and the length of this part of the program will vary based on that information. There are no specific number of tasks that a dog must be able to perform to be considered a service dog, only that the work or task directly mitigates the handler's disability. Tasks include, but are not limited to, behaviors that mitigate symptoms related to physical, mental, emotional, and learning disabilities.

## **Advanced – Off Leash (Strongly Recommended)**

While not required, we strongly recommend all of our service dog teams to go through our Off Leash program, for a variety of reasons:

- Some tasks require a dog to be able to perform off-leash, such as: object retrievals, finding help and leading them back to the handler, and more.
- Exercise and enrichment! Some disabilities make it difficult for a handler to provide enough exercise for their dogs on leash, and having a dog who is reliable OFF leash can help ensure our service dogs get the mental and physical stimulation they need outside of working.

Our off-leash program proofs all obedience commands from a minimum distance of 30 feet and conditions dogs to the use of a remote training collar for reliability and safety.

## **Public Access Training 9+ months**

Once a dog has mastered its obedience training and can perform at least one task that mitigates its handler's disability, this stage of training addresses the additional behaviors a service dog needs to be able to accompany its handler into places of public accommodation. This includes training for specific locations such as: restaurants, grocery stores, doctor's visits, public transportation (including airports), etc. At this point the dog/handler team enter "On The Job Training" and will begin working together in public as they polish their skills. This portion of the program may also be interspersed with task training, depending on the age of the dog and the tasks needing to be trained.

To complete our program, dog/handler teams must pass TCDT's **Public Access Test**.

## Pricing

The pricing below assumes that dogs begin our program with little to no previous training. Additionally, the task training portion of the program will be unique to each dog, so the length and cost of that portion of the program will vary based on the handler's needs. The pricing for PRIVATE LESSONS and BOARD & TRAIN have been listed individually.

**Temperament Assessment & Training Consultation - \$70-\$95**

**Training Gear (Including leashes, collars, vests, harnesses, etc.) - \$250-\$500**

### BOARD & TRAIN

Service Dog Puppy Jump Start	2 Weeks	\$1,400
Foundation Partnership Training + Foundation Tasks	3 Weeks	\$2,700
Advanced Obedience + PA Prep	2 Weeks	\$2,000
(Recommended) Advanced Training – Off Leash	2 Weeks	\$2,000
Task Training	VARIES	\$1,800-\$5,400
Public Access Training	4 Weeks	\$4,000

<b>Total Training Estimate</b>	<b>14-20 Weeks</b>	<b>\$12,600-\$18,000</b>
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### PRIVATE LESSONS

Service Dog Puppy Jump Start	4 Lessons	\$280-\$340
Foundation Partnership Training	4 Lessons	\$280-\$420
Advanced Training (PA Prep)	4 Lessons	\$280-\$420
Advanced Training – Off Leash	4 Lessons	\$2,000
Task Training	VARIES	\$380-\$420
Public Access Training	8 Lessons	\$840

<b>Total Training Estimate</b>	<b>24-32 lessons</b>	<b>\$2,360-\$3,360</b>
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## **Disclosures**

- Dogs who display an inappropriate temperament at any point during the training program may be dismissed, even if they pass initial evaluations. Safety is our primary concern and any dogs that display behaviors that might compromise the safety of their handlers or the public are unsuitable for service dog work
- Board & Train is conducted in 2-4 week increments here at our facility, with similar length practice periods at home for dog and handler to learn the material covered in each section. Dog/handler teams must demonstrate an ability to maintain the behaviors learned in each section prior to moving into the next stage of training

Handlers in our program must follow the direction of their trainer regarding when their dogs are ready to begin accompanying them into public. Handlers who fail to do so or misrepresent their dogs' level of training may be dismissed from our program