



Shelter to Service Dog Program FAQ's

What do I need to do to get started?

Visit Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) at dogsforbetterlives.org/from-shelter-to-service

How do I sign up?

If you are already a foster for one of our shelter partners, please let the foster coordinator know so you can be directed to the specific training for the Shelter to Service Dog program. If you are brand new, please go to the Dogs for Better Lives website by following the link above.

What happens after I sign up?

After you join you will be directed to our shelter partners website to take their volunteer specific online training courses. These trainings will go over fostering for our shelter partner and the Shelter to Service Dog program with Dogs for Better Lives. Once you finish training, we will have all your pertinent information and reach out to you once there is an eligible dog to foster.

What makes someone a good fit to be a foster for this program?

We encourage everyone who loves dogs and is interested in giving back to the community to consider applying to be a foster for this program.

Can my kids be involved in the program?

Absolutely! Homes with children are helpful throughout the process of training a service dog. It's also a great life lesson opportunity for children to be part of a program where the dog that was fostered in their home goes on to potentially change someone's life. Remember, young children and dogs should never be left unsupervised together.

What if I have other dogs? What if I have other pets? What if I do not have any other pets?

Whether you have other dogs, cats, small animals or no pets at all, your household is still a good fit. If you do have other pets in the home, specifically other dogs, it is important they be healthy and social with other dogs.

So, what happens if I have a vacation planned or have an emergency?

No worries! We understand this is a long-time commitment and we do not expect people to change their whole lives around. We also understand sometimes emergencies or unexpected events come up where you would need a break from your foster pup. Your pup can go to a short-term foster until you return.

Is it hard to foster long-term and then give the dog away?

Yes and no. It is sad having to say goodbye to the dog you have bonded with and love, but once you see what the dog will be doing and changing someone's life it is an extremely rewarding experience.

Can I be a part of this program if I work full time?

Yes. Since these dogs are adult dogs, they will be okay while you are gone during the workday. We just ask that when you are home the dog receives love and attention.

Do I need a fenced yard?

No. If you can provide the dog with a safe and secure (on leash) area to toilet and exercise, then we do not require you to have a fenced in yard.

How are dogs selected?

Dogs for Better Lives staff work with shelter partners to evaluate and identify dogs who are suitable for our Shelter to Service Dog program.

What breeds of dogs will be used?

Most breeds of dogs that have the temperament and behavioral traits we are looking for are eligible. Besides selecting dogs for just temperament and behavior we also select dogs based on our clients' needs and ease of public access rights.

What size of dogs will be used?

Any dog that ranges from small to large is eligible to be part of the program. We care most of all about the dog's temperament.

If I am unable to foster, are there other ways to help?

As with any nonprofit, donating to support this program is always appreciated. Dogs for Better Lives directs 100% of all donations to our programs. The Shelter Dog to Service Dog Program depends on successfully transitioning shelter dogs into a life of service. This takes time, patience, training, and tons of love. We rely on the generosity of our community to give these dogs a second chance at a better life and in doing so transforming the lives of others through independence.

For more information on the From Shelter Dog to Service Dog Program please contact Jessica in Dallas, TX or Melissa in Atlanta, GA at sts@dogsforbetterlives.org