

NEADS World Class Service Dogs



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About NEADS®

Mission: NEADS World Class Service Dogs change lives.

Who We Are: NEADS Inc. breeds, raises, trains, and places Service Dogs with adults and children who are deaf or physically disabled, veterans with PTSD, and children with autism. NEADS has trained over 1,900 Service Dog teams since its founding in 1976 and, at any given time, has over 400 active teams throughout the US.

What Our Dogs Do: NEADS Service Dogs provide their human partners with increased independence and connection in their daily lives:

- **Service Dogs** assist adults and children who are physically disabled. Among the tasks they are trained to do: retrieve a phone; pick up dropped objects; open doors; push elevator buttons; and turn light switches on and off.
- **Service Dogs for Hearing** help to increase the level of safety in their human partner's life by alerting them to sounds in their environment such as the telephone, fire/smoke detector, alarm clock, approaching traffic, and their name being called.
- **Service Dogs for children with autism** or other developmental disabilities help with therapeutic goals such as increased socialization, task adherence, and sensory regulation.
- **Trauma Assistance Dogs (TAD Program)** help veterans from all eras who carry a diagnosis of PTSD from trauma that occurred during active duty.
- While our Service Dogs work directly for people with a disability, **NEADS Assistance Dogs** provide integrated therapeutic assistance when partnered with professionals in the Classroom, Hospital, Ministry, Therapeutic, and Courthouse settings.

How We Do It: NEADS Service Dogs learn 50 to 60 tasks and commands that they execute with precision, accuracy, and consistency. The dogs must exhibit good behavior (walking on a leash without pulling; ignoring distractions; and are quiet and unobtrusive unless performing specific task work) in public and be confident and comfortable working in all environments. We invest 18-24 months and over \$45,000 in each dog we raise and train.

What Makes a World Class Service Dog

Purpose breeding: Purpose-bred dogs – obtained through our own breeding program and from other service/guide dog organizations - allow us to better control for temperament, health, and overall suitability for Service Dog work. This allows us to get more dogs through the program and place more dogs with people in need.

Healthcare: Proper healthcare is key to the longevity and good health of our dogs. From the moment they arrive on campus, our dogs have consistent health monitoring that includes routine exams and care, orthopedic screenings, and vaccinations.

Training: NEADS trainers are involved with the dogs from puppyhood through training and placement. Most NEADS Service Dogs are raised in correctional facilities through our **Prison PUP Program**. The dogs live with inmates in MA and RI prisons Monday through Friday, and volunteer **Weekend Puppy Raisers**

take the puppies out of prison each weekend to work on house manners, socialization, and maintaining obedience.

Other Service Dogs in Training live full-time with volunteer puppy raisers for 12 to 16 months. **Full-Time Puppy Raisers** are responsible for socialization and basic obedience training. The dog is then moved into a prison facility to finish its Service Dog training, which includes advanced obedience and task work.

The Match & Client Training: Applying for a Service Dog includes an online application and a personal interview. If accepted into the NEADS program, the length of time until clients are matched depends on our staff identifying the right dog for their needs. Each of our accepted clients is asked to support NEADS by raising \$8,000. This contribution goes towards the operating costs involved in breeding, raising, training, and matching our unique and highly skilled dogs.

When a Service Dog is matched with a client, the client spends 7- 10 days on the NEADS campus where they learn how to work with their new Service Dog. Instruction on task work, care and health of the dog, and public access rights makes them confident and comfortable to work as a team in both private and public settings. NEADS trainers and staff provide training support and follow-up assistance for the working life of their Service Dog.

Support for the Life of the Dog: NEADS is invested in the success of each Service Dog team and offers training advice and follow-up assistance for the working life of their Service Dog.

Quick Facts

- Founded in 1976; over 40 years of service
- 1,900 Service Dog teams trained
- 400 active Service Dog teams throughout the United States
- 45-50 Service Dog teams trained per fiscal year
- Costs approximately \$45,000 to breed, raise, and train a Service Dog
- Takes approximately 18-24 months to fully train a Service Dog
- 130 Service Dogs partnered with clients in our Service Dogs for Veterans program since 2006
- Oldest continuing Hearing Dog organization in the country, and the first program on the east coast to train a Service Dog.
- Offers the widest array of Service Dog programs in the industry, while still holding true to our core mission of producing Service Dogs for individuals with disabilities.
- Accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI), the internationally recognized governing body that establishes industry standards and practices.
- 18 consecutive years, 4-star rating with Charity Navigator

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of Service Dogs does NEADS train?

NEADS trains and places:

- Service Dogs for adults and children (ages 12 and up) with physical disabilities
- Service Dogs for Hearing for individuals aged 15 and older who are deaf or who suffer hearing loss
- Service Dogs for children with autism or other developmental disabilities (children ages 8-16)
- Assistance Dogs are partnered with professionals in classroom, ministry, therapeutic, hospital, and courthouse settings
- Service Dogs for Veterans who have a permanent disability, are deaf or who suffer from severe hearing loss, or who carry a diagnosis of PTSD from trauma that occurred during active duty.

Where does NEADS place Service Dogs?

You will find NEADS Service Dog teams living in nearly every state of the US.

Which breed of dog does NEADS train most often?

Most of the Service Dogs that NEADS trains are Labrador Retrievers. They come from reputable breeders and our own breeding program.

Are male or female dogs better to train for Service Dog work?

NEADS trains both male and female dogs of all shapes and sizes. All NEADS program dogs are spayed or neutered.

At what age do NEADS dogs start learning to be a Service Dog?

If a puppy is raised through our breeding program, socialization starts when the puppy is 3 days old. Each puppy goes through extensive socialization and is essentially prepped for Service Dog work its entire life. If a puppy enters our program from another source, that puppy has likely received socialization from a very young age as well, and we introduce NEADS socialization and early commands as soon as the puppy arrives on campus in the Early Learning Center, between the ages of 8-12 weeks.

NEADS dogs wear something around their nose. What is that?

Though often mistaken for a muzzle, the strap around the Service Dog is called a Gentle Leader and is not a muzzle. It is a type of collar that makes it easier to walk a dog, particularly for those who have limited or no strength in their arms or hands. The dog can still chew and bark with the collar on.

How much does it cost to train a Service Dog?

It costs NEADS approximately \$45,000 to acquire, raise, train and match a Service Dog. We ask each of our accepted clients to support NEADS by raising \$8,000. This contribution will help us continue to provide dogs for future clients.

What happens to dogs that don't complete the training?

Service Dog work is not right for every dog. Dogs that don't complete the training (they may have a minor medical issue, be too shy in public, or chase squirrels, for example) make great pets.

What is facility-based training?

NEADS was one of the pioneers in developing this intensive training method. People who receive a NEADS Service Dog live on our campus for 7-10 days for extensive training with their new canine partner. Our clients are able to immerse themselves in the process of bonding and training with the dog, offers training advice and follow-up assistance for the working life of their Service Dog.

Do Hearing and Service Dogs have the same public access rights as guide dogs for people who are blind?

Yes. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recognizes Hearing and Service Dogs as vital tools for the deaf or hard of hearing and those with a physical disability. People with Hearing and Service Dogs are granted full access to all places of public accommodation.

Is it ok to pet a Service Dog when he or she is working?

Service Dogs perform an important function for their handler -- any kind of distraction could be dangerous for the person. That's why you should always ask before you pet or distract a Service Dog. Most working dogs will wear a harness, cape or backpack in public to identify them as such. Many owners place a patch on the dog's equipment that reads, "Please don't pet me, I'm working."

What happens when a Service Dog can no longer work?

Usually, the dog is retired as a service animal and becomes a pet for the person with whom the dog was matched. The client may also choose to get another Service Dog. Of course, if a client is unable to keep the dog, NEADS will always take it back and place it in a good home as a pet.