

# **KSDS Guide Dog Program Information**



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## ***What is a Guide Dog?***

Guide dogs are trained and placed with persons who are visually impaired. Guide Dogs must get their partners safely from point A to point B. This includes street crossings, obstacles, overhangs and using the find command.

## ***How does a person receive a Guide Dog?***

To receive a Guide dog from KSDS, a person must go through a multi-phase application process. The initial application requests basic information, as well as medical and professional references. Video, phone and personal interviews are also utilized to determine an applicant's qualification. There is a \$25.00 application fee. Students attend the 21 day team training session on the KSDS campus to learn all aspects of caring for and utilizing a Guide dog.

## ***Can KSDS train or certify my own dog?***

KSDS does not train or certify pets for individuals. We have our own, carefully selected breeding stock that produces the dogs that we use in the program. KSDS uses Black and Yellow Labradors as well as Golden Retrievers.

## ***What are the qualifications to receive a dog?***

KSDS reviews each application on an individual basis. The staff will consider the applicant's need for a canine assistant, mobility and ability to maintain the dog's health and training. Since most communication with the dog is done verbally, clarity of speech is also important.

In the case of a child who is applying, the staff will also closely review the support of the family unit as well as the cognitive ability to control and utilize a service dog. The goal of KSDS is to place safe, happy and confident assistance dog teams. If the staff feel that this goal can be obtained, the process will continue towards a placement.

## **How long is the waiting list?**

The waiting list for those accepted to receive a dog is approximately two years. The first priority is ensuring the best possible match for each person's needs. KSDS typically sets aside the Summer class for children and students who otherwise would miss school to attend the team training session.

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

While the cost of the dog and training are estimated at \$15,000, these are given to the recipient at no charge. The only costs an individual would incur would be supplies for the dog (grooming, crate, etc) and a few meals.

## ***Who owns the dog?***

KSDS teaches each recipient to be a responsible dog *owner*. Graduates will sign a contract that gives them *full* ownership of the dog after one year of successful team work. KSDS is one of few schools to give total ownership to recipients. We do, however, reserve the right to retain ownership if the dog were to be abused as reported by a group or agency.

## ***How long can a Guide Dog work?***

The dogs that we place are in top condition, having passed numerous physical exams. However, much like humans, things can arise that may cause an "early retirement". Our goal is for a Guide dog to be able to assist a person for eight to ten years.

## ***What is the Team Training like?***

KSDS Team Training is a fairly intense course. All aspects of owning and working with an assistance dog are covered. Students receive their dogs on the second day of class and are responsible for their total care from then on.

A typical day begins with the morning routine (feeding, watering, toileting and grooming the dog) at 8 am. A day's session will include obedience plus lectures, group activities, route work and training trips.

There are both brief morning and afternoon breaks plus a one-hour lunch break. Work will continue until the afternoon routine (same as morning). Evenings are usually reserved for individual work time or for additional lectures and group activities.

All recipients will complete KSDS and Assistance Dogs International requirements and certification evaluations. Students must demonstrate their ability to care for and utilize their dogs before ownership is granted.

### ***Can family members attend the Team Training?***

Family is welcome to participate in the Team Training as long as they don't disrupt the team's relationship. It is very important to include them in this process. In the case of a minor, a parent or legal guardian is required to attend the classes.

### ***What is Assistance Dogs International?***

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) is an organization comprised of assistance dog providers throughout the world. ADI sets the minimum standards of ethics for training and placing Service, Guide and Hearing dogs. KSDS has played an active role in ADI and is proud to be members in good standing that meet and exceed ADI requirements.

### ***I am interested in receiving an application, what do I do next?***

If you would like to receive the application packet please complete the enclosed questions and send to KSDS. For questions concerning the application process please feel free to contact KSDS. We would be happy to visit with you further about how a Guide dog may benefit you. A \$25.00 application processing fee will need to be sent in with the completed application.