



INFORMATION PACK
FULLY TRAINED
ASSISTANCE DOG





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ASSISTANCE DOGS - WELCOME!

So, you have decided to look into an assistance dog! There are probably lots of things you already know and much more you need to learn. We can help with your choices so that your dog has the best temperament for the job and ensure that it will pass accreditation to be a registered assistance dog with Shadow Spirit Enterprises.

An assistance dog is trained specifically to help individuals with a medical diagnosis and a specific need. An assistance dog has the right to legally accompany the individual they are registered to anywhere that person goes, including all and any public spaces. To be able to register an assistance dog you, or the person you care for, must have a medical diagnosis.

This pack contains a brief overview of what registering your dog as an assistance animal involves, the costs and final accreditation. There are some forms to fill in and send back to us if you decide you'd like to go ahead. Please note that returning the application form does not guarantee a place in one of our programs. We will contact you once we process the application to let you know an approximate wait time (if there is one). Please be aware that it is not a quick and easy process. We will provide you with ongoing support and training throughout the process and for the working life of your dog.

Please read all parts carefully, fill in the paperwork and return. We will be in contact as soon as is possible. We do have a waiting list but will let you know when we contact you how long we anticipate it will be before training can begin. Returning the paperwork is not an obligation to undertake one of our programs.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

- **Read through this information carefully.**
- Think about the skills required for the dog. Each skill is priced individually, some are more expensive than others depending on the complexity of the task to be taught.
- We will let you know if we can teach that skill or not.
- An assistance dog requires a significant financial commitment. They can cost anywhere between \$15,000 and \$40,000 depending on the complexity of tasks required. Remember, you are not just buying a dog, you are purchasing an intelligent and thinking working animal who will be loyal to you throughout its working life. A professional trainer is required to keep your dog with them 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The trainer will be using all their experience and expertise to train your dog to a very high level. This generally takes anywhere from 16-24 months, depending on the training needs. The cost also includes the health care and wellbeing, vet care and desexing, all of the training, identification cards and working coat, a placement program and follow up for its working life.
- You will need to be able to commit to periodical visits to SSE for bonding and training sessions.
- Once placed with you Shadow Spirit Enterprises will put in place a support program for the working life of the dog. You will always have someone to contact for questions and/or retraining or discussing new needs and the possibility of the need to train a new skill.
- Shadow Spirit Enterprises only uses Labrador Retrievers as assistance dogs. We generally use our own breeding program pups as they will have completed our exclusive assistance dog puppy program from birth, however, in the event that we do not have any pups available at the time of your application we will source a puppy from a network of specially selected breeders who we know breed for temperament and are ethical, registered and have our trust.
- We cannot tell you how much an assistance dog will be for your need until we receive more information from you and discuss which skills the dog may need. We will then prepare a quote for you. We will send you the quote and you let us know if you'd like to accept it or not. If you decide to accept our quote, then we will formalise that with a contract and acceptance of quote form. You will need to submit an application form as well. Once the final cost is calculated we can discuss options for payment. We require instalments for each phase of the program. The dog cannot be placed with you until your dog is fully accredited and paid for. However, you need to know that costs start at \$15,000.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- We will also let you know where you are placed on the waiting list and approximately when your program will begin.
- Ensure your instalments are paid on time.
- Contact us immediately if you are having financial hardship.
- Contact us (via phone or email) for questions and support.
- Follow training techniques, policies & procedures.
- Your dog's daily care, health and wellbeing, including annual vet check-ups and vaccinations once placed with you.
- You are responsible for your dog's behaviour and actions, once placed with you, when you are out in public.
- You are responsible for keeping your dog safe when it is working.
- Your dog's working coat must be kept clean and in good condition at all times.
- An assistance dog must be bathed and groomed (brushed) regularly so they are clean and always welcome.
- You must ensure that your dog is treated for parasites regularly (ask your vet) as an assistance dog with fleas or worms etc. is not acceptable when accessing public spaces and/or wearing a coat.
- When working, your Shadow Spirit Enterprises certified assistance dog must always wear its coat and you must carry your identification card issued by Shadow Spirit.



OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide the first fully accredited working coat for your dog.
- To provide you with identification.
- To provide support and follow up as required.
- To negotiate appropriate meeting times.
- To negotiate appropriate bonding techniques/sessions with your dog.
- To provide you with a fully accredited assistance dog.
- To provide a quality program that ensures your dog will be accredited and certified as a Shadow Spirit Enterprises Assistance Dog.
- When placing your dog with you we will provide guidance and 1:1 training on how to work with your dog.
- We will stay abreast of current and changing legislation affecting assistance dogs and pass that information onto you or retrain your dog to meet any new requirements.
- To provide the correct training equipment and ensure you know how to fit it correctly for the comfort of the dog and the safety of the handler.
- To remain available and as a continued support for the working life of your dog.
- If at any time you engage in cruel and unjust treatment of your assistance dog, we will cancel your registration and make a report to any authorities as we see fit.





WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

If you have any questions, please email them to us or ask us to call you.

If you think you would like to go ahead, please request application form and skills checklist and return them. We will then prepare a quote. Once you have received the quote you let us know if you would like to go ahead, then we will allocate you a place in the program and arrange to meet with you.

*PLEASE NOTE: We only provide Assistance Dogs for Victoria, South Australia and NSW.