



Home of Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota

9440 Science Center Drive
New Hope, Minnesota 55428
Phone: 763-331-3000
Fax: 763-331-3009
www.can-do-canines.org

Hello!

Thank you for your interest in applying for a Special Skills Dog from Can Do Canines. We train Assistance Dogs to help clients maintain and increase their independence. Training is provided free of charge to qualified applicants. In order to be considered for the Special Skills Assist Dog program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a resident of Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Iowa
- Must be deaf or have a severe to profound hearing loss
- Must have a physical disability, debilitating chronic illness, or neurological disorder
- Must be physically and financially able to take full responsibility for the dog after certification
- Must be at least 18 years old
- The assistance dog must be the only dog in the home

The application you requested is enclosed. Please complete the following forms and return to me:

- \$50 Non-refundable application fee
- Signature portion of "Is a Special Skills Dog Right For You?"
- Part I General Information
- Part II Special Skills Dog Applicant Information
- Medical Release and Reference Form
- Audiogram within the last 5 years

After I receive your application with the items listed above, I will request references from your professional and personal contacts. Your personal contacts should be someone (friend, coworker, etc.) you have known at least a year but not a family member and not living with you. To help keep the application process on task, I recommend you contact the people you listed as references so they know to expect a letter from us.

When your file is complete, training staff will review your application. After this preliminary review, you may be contacted for an interview. We work with individuals on a first come, first served basis, so please be patient. Again, thank you for applying to Can Do Canines!

Sincerely,

Jessi Hiemer
Program Assistant



What are the steps to get a Special Skills Dog?

Answers to this and other questions you may have about our Special Skills Dogs

We are asked a lot of questions about the particulars of getting an assistance dog. We thought it might be helpful to highlight some of the key steps.

- The first step is to request an application from us by phone or email. Complete the application forms and return them to us with the application fee. Once we have received the required forms from you and your references, your application will be reviewed by training staff.
- After the preliminary review of your application, you may be contacted for an in-home interview. During this interview our training staff will answer any questions you might have, and will check your home for its safety and suitability as a new home for an assistance dog.
- Next, if your application is accepted, our training staff will begin looking for a dog for you that will meet your needs. Breeders or animal shelters donate some assistance dogs to us as adults, but most are raised as puppies by volunteer Puppy Raisers. During months of training in their homes, Puppy Raisers prepare the dogs to be well-behaved partners. Regardless of how a dog comes to us, each one goes through many hours of training at our facility and in public settings.
- The training staff will select a dog they feel is best suited for you. You'll be invited to meet the dog, often at our training facility. If you agree that this is the right dog for you, we will continue with any special training the dog may need in order to serve your particular needs. After the dog is trained, we start working with you and your dog together, as a team. You'll receive a manual to guide you with both the training and care of your dog. In addition, our staff works closely with you to teach you the necessary commands and how to handle the dog properly. At first you'll be working at our training center (or, in some cases, at your home). Once you're in good control of the dog, you'll begin going out in public together to practice your skills in real-life situations—including distractions. After a while, the dog will spend the night at your home to see if you're ready to work together even more closely. Eventually, the dog will move in to your home, and training continues as you have more time to practice together.
- Special Skills Dogs are trained to serve as both a Hearing Assist Dog and a Mobility Assist Dog and the Hearing Assist Dog portion of the training begins in your home. You'll be given simple assignments to practice with the dog every day. Though you don't need any experience, your willingness to follow directions and practice every day is very important. Week-by-week, you and your dog will practice specific skills and the dog will learn to respond to sounds in your home like a door knock, doorbell, oven timer, telephone, intruder, smoke alarm, or a child's crying. First, the dog learns to touch you in a significant way, usually with paw or nose, in exchange for a treat. Then it learns to use this significant touch to alert you when it hears one of the sounds. In turn, you'll learn to trust the dog and ask, "What is it?" The dog then leads you to the source of the sound. You'll practice this process from many locations throughout the house, at different times of the day and night, until the dog responds consistently to each of the sounds.
- When your training as a team is complete, you'll take two certification tests. One test demonstrates all of the tasks your dog was trained to perform for you and the other test rates your control over your dog in public settings. When your dog passes both tests it is considered a "Certified Assistance Dog" and your meetings with our trainer will come to an end. You'll continue practicing with your dog on a regular basis to maintain the skills and good habits you've worked so hard to build.

- After certification, we will print a picture of you and your dog in our newsletter, *Tails from Minnesota*, along with a story about your experience with your new dog. You'll receive an identification card and be scheduled to attend the next public graduation ceremony (held in May and November). You and your dog will be properly honored as the special team you've become. You're encouraged to invite your family and friends to help you celebrate this very special day as you receive a diploma and your dog receives a graduate identification cape and a canine-style diploma! After graduation, you and your dog are finally on your own, but Can Do Canine's advice and support remain only a phone call or email away.

What options do I have if I want to train my pet dog to be a Special Skills Dog?

If you want your own pet dog trained as a Special Skills Dog, you and your dog will have to meet certain requirements. Among others, you must already have done some training with your dog, and your dog must meet the same age and medical requirements as a dog provided by Can Do Canines. You should know that most pet dogs do not meet all these requirements. We provide this option because, whenever possible, we want to keep people and their much-loved pets together. Please contact our office and ask for our Special Skills Dog/Owner Trained criteria.



Is A Special Skills Dog Right For You?

Dogs are very special animals. They are highly social animals and need close “family” relationships just as much as they need food, shelter and proper exercise. Like people, each dog is unique with its very own personality, feelings and needs. They are not like people who can understand why something happens or doesn’t happen; therefore, it is essential that their owners assume responsibility for their care and their needs. In return, dogs will be eager to please and serve their owners.

It is most important that the relationship between you and a service dog be one of mutual caring and support. Building a close working relationship will take time. When the dog is teamed with you, it will have changed homes and “families” two or three times from its birth. It will have gone through several different training environments. It will need a period to adjust as it shifts its allegiance from its previous trainer to you. It will need to learn to trust and respect you as the new leader of its extended “family.” This period will be a period of confusion for the dog and you will need to be patient and supportive while it makes the transition.

The dog will not be the only one who will be making a big transition. You will have some major adjustments to make in your life as well. The dog’s arrival will be similar to adding a new family member. Routines must be changed and priorities rearranged. A dog has natural canine needs that must be met at appropriate times whether it is convenient for you or not. If you are unable to meet its needs yourself, you will still be responsible for making sure that SOMEONE takes care of the dog. Even though the dog will be highly trained by the time it is transferred to you, incidents such as unwanted elimination, chewing, barking or vomiting may occur as a result of stress, illness or extreme changes in routine. Unpleasant though such incidents are – immediate clean up is necessary. Housecleaning chores also will increase to cope with the dog hair, tracked-in dirt, etc.

Once the transfer is complete, YOU will be responsible for continuing the training exercises and reinforcing the dog appropriately for doing its tasks well. Staff is always available for follow-up training. It is most important that you consider carefully whether you have the time and energy and are willing to make the commitment necessary to have a Special Skills Dog.

If you do decide that you have the time, energy and commitment and, above all, the desire to maintain your independence, take some time to think about what it is you want a dog to do for you. List some specific tasks you would like a dog to do such as retrieve things for you, turn lights off and on, or open and close doors. Don’t worry at this point whether or not a dog is capable of doing the tasks, just let us know what you would really like help with. Our staff will assess if it is possible to train a dog to do the task. Safety for both you and the dog is a major consideration in making an appropriate team match. It is very important to find out as much as possible about you in order to make the best match possible.

If you are accepted into the program, you will be supplied with the education and training that you will need to assure that the dog is cared for appropriately and that you have the skills to work with and use the dog in the best possible way. Can Do Canines will maintain ongoing contact with you and your dog. It is very important to us that you and your dog are a successful working team. You will be an “ambassador” for Can Do Canines. However, no applicant, client or graduate shall be required to participate in fund raising or public relations activities without their expressed and voluntary permission. We want you to be pleased with your Special Skills Dog and pleased with Can Do Canines, and we want the dog to be a well cared for and devoted worker.

PLEASE SIGN – CUT AND RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR APPLICATION
I have received and read *Is An Assistance Dog Right For You?*

Signature

Date



Can Do Canines - Assistance Dog Application

Part I - General Information

Name _____

Address _____

City, ST, Zip _____

County _____

Emergency Contact - Name _____

Emergency Contact - Phone _____

Home Phone _____ Voice TTY

Work Phone _____ Voice TTY

Cell Phone _____ I am a Veteran of the Armed Forces

Email _____

Date of Birth _____

Gender Male Female

How long have you lived at your current address? _____

Have you ever applied or are you applying to other assistance dog organizations? If yes, please list. Yes No

Occupation _____

Employer _____

Full-time Part-time Not employed

Have you ever been convicted of a crime or misdemeanor? If yes, please explain. Yes No

Annual household income \$ _____
(all individuals combined)

How many people live with you? _____
Fill in their information below.

Do you rent or own your home? Rent Own

If you rent, does your landlord know that you are applying for an assistance dog? Yes No

Are you normally allowed to have pets where you live? Yes No

Do you plan to move in the future? If yes, when and where? Yes No

Name	Relationship	Age
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Describe your home and yard. _____

Is anyone else living in your home deaf, hard of hearing or disabled? Yes No
If yes, list who and explain. _____

Please provide the names and numbers for:			
	Name	Phone	May we contact?
Medical Professional	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Mental Health Professional	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Social/Case Worker	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How many times have you been hospitalized in the last 2 years? _____		Explain any medical treatment you received in the last year. _____	
How long were you in the hospital each time? _____		_____	
Do you have an ongoing physical or mental illness? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you allergic to dogs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Are you under the care of a medical or mental health professional? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Is anyone living in your home allergic to dogs? If yes, list who. _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you under the care of a social/case worker? If yes, how does this person assist you? _____	Do you have any type of learning disability? If yes, please describe. _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Please use additional paper if needed.

Do you own dog(s) now? If yes, fill in age and breed information.

Yes No

Age	Breed
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you hope to train your dog to help you? If yes, which one?

Yes No

Do you have any other pets? If yes, fill in number, age and type.

Yes No

Number	Age	Type of other pet(s)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Do you think you are knowledgeable about dog care and behavior? If yes, please explain.

Yes No

Describe any particular traits that you like or dislike in a dog.

<p>How much do you think it costs to care for an assistance dog?</p> <p>Can you afford to pay these costs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>An assistance dog needs daily training, attention, love and care.</p> <p>Do you have time to spend with the dog? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Are you able to exercise the dog? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Are you able to take the dog to the veterinarian? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Are you able to groom the dog? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Are you able to clean up after the dog goes to the bathroom? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Monthly Cost</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Yearly Cost</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> </tr> </table> <p>Will your assistance dog accompany you to work? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Will your assistance dog accompany you on vacations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>How many hours a day will your assistance dog be alone? _____ hrs/day</p>	Monthly Cost	Yearly Cost	\$ _____	\$ _____
Monthly Cost	Yearly Cost				
\$ _____	\$ _____				

Print the name of person filling out application, if other than applicant, and their relationship to applicant.

Name

Relationship to Applicant

The signature below serves as evidence that the individual (applicant), parent or guardian has supplied the information and, to the best of their knowledge, it is up-to-date and accurate.

Signature

Date

Can Do Canines
9440 Science Center Drive
New Hope, MN 55428
(763) 331-3000
info@can-do-canines.org

CAN DO CANINES – Assistance Dog Application
Part II: Special Skills Dog Applicant Information

Applicant Name _____ **Date** _____

You are applying for a Special Skills Dog. Please explain how you think this kind of dog will help you. Include as much information as possible as it is important that we understand what you want from a Special Skills Dog. Use additional paper if necessary. **Please Print Clearly.**

Hearing Dog Information

Indicate the degree of your hearing loss. mild moderate severe profound deaf
How do you communicate? Check all that apply. ASL lip read PSE oral speech other _____
Do you wear hearing aids? yes _____ no _____ How do they improve your ability to hear? _____

Special Skills Dogs are typically trained to alert to the sound of a telephone/TTY, an alarm clock, a doorbell and/or door knock, a smoke detector, and a burglar or an intruder. Please indicate any additional sounds that could be helpful to you.

pager call of your name dropped object cry of a baby respirator monitor
 oven timer apartment security buzzer other _____

Service Dog Information

What is your primary disability? _____

At what age were you disabled? _____ What caused this disability? _____

Is this disability progressive? yes _____ no _____ If yes, please explain: _____

Do you have any secondary disabilities? yes _____ no _____ If yes, please explain: _____

Do you have personal care attendants (PCA)? yes _____ no _____

If yes, how many hours each week do they work for you? _____ How many times each day? _____

Do any PCAs live with you? yes _____ no _____

Will having a Service Dog reduce your need for PCAs? yes _____ no _____

What kind of assistive equipment do you use? _____

What forms of transportation do you use? _____

Describe your lifestyle in general (i.e. your social life, your home life, your hobbies): _____

Describe your level of activity (i.e. low, moderate, high, other): _____

Describe your level of energy (i.e. low, moderate, high, other): _____



Can Do Canines

9440 Science Center Drive, New Hope, MN 55428

763-331-3000 voice • 763-331-3009 fax • email: info@can-do-canines.org

Can Do Canines – Assistance Dog Application Medical Release and Reference Form

I, _____ (print applicant's name), give permission for the physicians and professionals listed below to release my medical and confidential information in writing or by phone to Can Do Canines. I understand that the information regarding my physical and mental condition and abilities will be limited to information relevant to helping Can Do Canines determine if I can benefit from having an assistance dog. Can Do Canines will not review actual medical records, but will instead receive information provided through questionnaires completed by my physician and references.

My application is for a (check one): Hearing Assist Dog Mobility Assist Dog Diabetic Assist Dog
 Autism Assist Dog Seizure Assist Dog Special Skills Dog

Applicant or Parent/Guardian Signature

Date Signed

Applicant – Date of Birth

Please send this form back with your assistance dog application. We need this contact information to send your doctor our medical form and your professional and personal contacts our reference letter. All information is kept confidential.

Family/Primary Physician	
Name	
Clinic/Hospital	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	

Professional Reference – examples include: specialist, therapist, counselor, social worker, clergy, supervisor, teacher, attorney	
Name	
Organization	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Relationship	

Personal Reference #1 – examples include: friend, teacher, coworker, but not a family member	
Name	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Relationship	

Personal Reference #2 – examples include: friend, teacher, coworker, but not a family member	
Name	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Relationship	