

Canine Companions for Independence® Fact Sheet



2,558	Active graduate teams nationwide	1,106	Puppies currently being raised
246	Teams graduated in 2020	124	Breeder dogs
415	People currently on the waitlist	4,724	Volunteers nationwide
339	Dogs placed supporting veterans since founding	44	Volunteer chapters nationwide
734	In-person and virtual follow up visits in 2020 to date	6,632	Teams graduated since founding in 1975

Several hundred Canine Companions released dogs are currently functioning in human services roles such as search and rescue, border patrol, customs, therapy, medical alert and guide dogs, which are not reflected in the above numbers.

Imagine not being able to pick up a set of keys, open a door or carry a bag of groceries without asking for help from family, friends or paid caregivers. Imagine not being able to hear a fire alarm or a neighbor knocking on your door. Now imagine overcoming these barriers and gaining independence with the help of a Canine Companions® assistance dog.

Canine Companions for Independence provides expertly trained assistance dogs to children, veterans and adults with disabilities. Our assistance dogs serve people with a wide range of disabilities, including multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, stroke, hearing loss, developmental delay and more.

Established in 1975, Canine Companions is the largest non-profit provider of assistance dogs in the United States. Canine Companions is recognized worldwide for the excellence of our dogs and quality and longevity of the matches we make between dogs and people. The result is a life full of increased independence and loving companionship.

Canine Companions Puppies

Canine Companions breeds Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers and crosses of the two breeds. Puppies are raised by volunteer breeder caretakers who provide permanent homes to Canine Companions breeder dogs and nurture newborn pups until they are about 8 weeks old. Then the pups are placed with volunteer puppy raisers for a year and a half, where they receive lots of socialization, love, attention and learn basic obedience skills.



Canine Companions Professional Training

Now dogs are ready for their next step — professional training at one of six training centers across the country. Our dogs complete a multi-month training program where professional instructors teach them to respond to more than 40 commands, including retrieving items, pulling wheelchairs, turning light switches on and off, opening and closing doors, alerting to important sounds, and much more.

After successfully completing professional training, the dogs enter Team Training. Team Training is a two-week intensive training where recipients are matched with their new assistance dogs and learn to work together as a team. Team Training culminates in an inspirational graduation ceremony, signaling the beginning of a new life together.

For some graduates, it means returning to work, reducing medication or their dependency on caregivers. Others gain confidence and security to leave their homes and maximize their potential in the community. But for all Canine Companions graduates, one of the greatest rewards is the unconditional love and unique relationship they experience through partnership with a Canine Companions assistance dog.

Canine Companions assistance dogs take their work seriously and are recognized for their high level of training. When not on the job, a Canine Companions dog enjoys off-duty time just as a pet dog would.

About Canine Companions

Canine Companions for Independence does not charge for assistance dogs or the lifetime of ongoing support we provide. As a result, we depend on private funding through donations from individuals, corporations, foundations and community organizations. Our professional staff is supported by a national network of thousands of volunteers and donors, all committed to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. Canine Companions assistance dogs help recipients overcome physical, psychological and social barriers, helping them lead more independent lives.

Canine Companions for Independence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and founding member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI), a coalition of non-profit assistance dog organizations that are committed to the highest standards in the training, placement, utilization and education around assistance dogs.



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