Am I responsible for meals?
We provide three meals a day, prepared by our staff chefs. We can accommodate special dietary needs and will adjust your menu accordingly.

How long is the waiting list to get a service dog?
Three months to one year. For people with special requirements or requests, the wait may be longer.

I want more information about the admissions process.
Please visit www.VetDogs.org or call us at 1-866-282-8047 to request a preliminary application. Our Consumer Services team will answer any questions you might have about getting a service dog and our requirements. If you meet our criteria, we will send you a detailed application packet within 15 days.

What happens next?
Once you qualify and have completed the application, we will arrange an interview and request a video so we can evaluate your particular needs, your home environment, etc. Please note, completion of this application does not automatically guarantee you a service dog. After we receive your completed application, our instructors will evaluate your needs to determine if we can serve you. If you are accepted into our program, we will begin looking for the right dog to match your needs and lifestyle.

If you are a veteran and registered with the Department of Veterans Affairs, we will accept your VA medical records as part of your application.

What happens after I graduate?
We support our graduates after they have completed their training. We continue to follow up with you to provide aftercare support if you have questions regarding behavioral or obedience issues with your dog, help with accessibility (ADA) problems, veterinary care, etc. This support can range from answering questions over the phone, to refresher training on campus or in your home community, to advice on when to retire a dog from its career.

We will also help you with “dog of record” status with the VA, which will enable you to receive certain medical benefits for your service dog.

What if I’m still not sure if a service dog is right for me?
Please call our Consumer Services Office, toll-free at 866-282-8047. We can answer any additional questions you might have and put you in touch with a member of the Veterans Concerns team from our alumni council. They will talk to you about what life is like with a service dog and offer you a first-hand perspective of our programs.

Is a Service Dog Right for Me?
Consumer Services Office
Phone: 1-866-282-8047
Email: ConsumerServices@VetDogs.org
Website: www.VetDogs.org
Smithtown, New York
Is a service dog right for me?
A service dog is specially trained to help people with disabilities other than visual impairment by performing tasks that assist them with the activities of daily living. Our goal is to match the right dog with the right person to help our graduates live a life without boundaries.

The decision to get a service dog is a momentous one. We’ve prepared this short guide to help you answer the question: “Is a service dog right for me?”

Why should I get a service dog?
A service dog can help mitigate your disability. This dog can be trained to provide balance, retrieve dropped items, aid an amputee getting in and out of a chair, turn light switches on and off, alert to sounds (for people who are hearing impaired) or respond to seizures (for people with seizure disorder). A service dog provides companionship and enhances mobility and independence.

Who is eligible for a service dog?
A person who has a documented disability, defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act as one that “substantially limits one or more major life activities.” Currently, our service dog program primarily serves veterans who have been honorably discharged from the U.S. military, those who are still on active duty, first responders, or others who have honorably served our country. You must be willing and able to care for your service dog (food, veterinary care, grooming), maintain its training, and use it for its intended purpose.

What kinds of dogs do you use?
We use Labrador and Golden Retrievers and Lab/Golden crosses. We also train Standard Poodles for individuals with documented allergies.

What are the different types of assistance dogs?
- **Service dogs** pick up dropped items, retrieve articles off high countertops, open doors and turn light switches on and off. They can provide balance and pull a wheelchair.
- **Seizure response dogs** are trained to respond appropriately when their partner is having a seizure and to allow others to approach. Specific tasks such as pushing an emergency button or rousing through licking can also be taught.
- **Hearing dogs** alert and orient their partners to sounds such as an alarm clock, door knock, smoke alarm, telephone and doorbells
- **Military facility dogs** assist wounded veterans in their physical and emotional rehabilitation process
- **Combat stress control dogs** help troops who are deployed overseas cope with home front and combat stress issues.

How old are the dogs when they are matched?
Dogs are approximately 16 to 24 months old.

How much does it cost to get a service dog?
Students are provided their service dogs and training free of charge. We also cover transportation (within the United States and Canada), and room and board during training. Once they return home, graduates are responsible for food and veterinary costs for their dog. We also provide a stipend for veterinary care and financial assistance is available on a case-by-case basis.

I have my own dog. Can you train him to be a service dog?
No. We have extensive breeding, puppy raising, and training protocols to ensure that dogs in our programs have the health, temperament, and ability to be service dogs.

What if I have other pets in my home?
Instructors will make a decision on a case-by-case basis if it is feasible to place a service dog in your household with your other pets.

How long is training?
Students attend an intensive 12-day in-residence training program on our campus in Smithtown, NY, with our team of service dog instructors. Training begins with lectures and practice training before you begin to work on obedience and task training with your dog. Eventually, you move to “real-world” training situations in a variety of different locations.

Where do I stay?
Students stay in our student residence in private rooms, with attached bathrooms, individual climate control, and access to our secure WiFi network. Each room has a small portable safe for your valuables. There is a communal dining hall; recreation room with cable TV; fitness room; snack room; and outdoor patio with picnic benches.