



Frequently Asked Questions

Canine Companions for Independence

Q. What is Canine Companions for Independence (CCI)?

CCI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships.

Q. What types of assistance dogs does CCI train?

CCI trains four types of Canine Companions:

- **Service Dogs** assist independent adults with physical disabilities by enhancing their ability to perform practical daily tasks such as retrieving dropped items, opening doors, and turning on and off light switches.
- **Skilled Companion Dogs** help children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities by performing many of the functions of the Service Dog. Skilled Companions are equally valued for the role they play in providing their partners with a social bridge to others.
- **Hearing Dogs** benefit adults who are deaf or hard of hearing by alerting them to important everyday sounds such as an alarm clock, a doorbell, or the cry of a baby.
- **Facility Dogs** work at the side of able-bodied adults who are professional care givers, educators, or skilled volunteers in such fields as physical and occupational therapy, special education, hospice care and hospital visitation. Facility Dogs engage patients in activities to stimulate healing and recovery, provide comfort and unconditional love to the seriously ill or confined, and serve in teaching programs for students with special needs.

Q. Who is eligible to apply for a Canine Companion?

Adults and children with physical and/or developmental disabilities who can demonstrate that a Canine Companion will enhance their independence or quality of life are eligible to apply. Professionals and skilled volunteers working in medical and mental health care settings and educational environments where clients could benefit from interaction with a Facility Dog are also eligible to apply.

Q. What does it cost to receive a Canine Companion?

There is no charge for the substantial costs involved in breeding, raising and training CCI's Canine Companions or for the ongoing follow-up services provided to each team after graduation.

Q. What are the responsibilities of the person(s) receiving a Canine Companion?

Each applicant must successfully complete a two-week educational course that matches the person and dog and prepares them to work together effectively. Each applicant is also responsible for the proper care, feeding, housing, and medical needs of the canine. The dog must be used in the working capacity for which it was intended.

Q. What is the application procedure?

Interested individuals can contact their nearest regional training center at one of the CCI locations listed below to request an Application Information Packet. This packet includes an overview of the types of dogs CCI offers, and an Application Request Form that needs to be completed and returned to CCI for review. The applicant coordinator in your region will assist you throughout the application process.

Q. What breeds of dogs does CCI use?

CCI uses Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers and crosses of these two breeds. Breeder dogs are selected and then placed in a permanent home with one of CCI's volunteer Breeder Caretakers, who live within 90 miles of our National Headquarters in Santa Rosa, Calif. These volunteers provide a loving home to a breeder dog for its lifetime. Donated puppies are occasionally accepted to the breeding program or for placement if they meet our strict qualification requirements.

Q. Where are CCI dogs trained?

At eight weeks of age, CCI puppies are placed in the homes of CCI's volunteer puppy raisers who take them to puppy classes and teach them house manners and public etiquette. This early training includes being socialized to important sights, sounds and activities. At roughly 13 to 18 months of age, CCI dogs are returned to one of our five regional training centers for a minimum of six months of Advanced Training under the guidance of professional instructors.

Q. What happens to CCI dogs that are not placed into active service?

Instead of becoming a working assistance dog, a CCI dog may be selected to join the breeding colony. It may also be released due to a temperament or medical problem. There is a long waiting list of people who are eager to adopt our release dogs, though the volunteer who raised the dog as a puppy often chooses to keep it as a family pet. Sometimes, a CCI dog is released to a police, fire, or other government agency for detection work.

Q. How long does each Canine Companion work?

The average working life of each dog is seven to ten years. After that time, the dog is retired and lives out its golden years as a pet.

Q. How is CCI funded?

CCI is funded by private contributions from individuals, businesses, civic groups and clubs, and grants from corporations and foundations. CCI also organizes regular fundraising activities such as special events and mailing campaigns. CCI receives no government funding.

National Headquarters & Northwest Regional Center
PO Box 446, Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0446 707-577-
1700 V/TDD www.caninecompanions.org
info@caninecompanions.org

Southwest Regional Center
PO Box 4568
Oceanside, CA
92052 760-901-4300
V 760-901-4326

TDD Colorado Satellite Office
1045-P Garden of the Gods
Rd. Colorado Springs, CO
80907 719-260-6151 V

North Central Regional Center
4989 State Route 37 East
Delaware, OH 43015-
9682 740-548-4447
V/TDD

Chicago Satellite Office
PO Box 41
Woodstock, IL
60098 847-816-
7360 V

Northeast Regional Center
PO Box 205 Farmingdale,
NY 11735-0205 631-694-
6938 V/TDD

Southeast Regional Center
PO Box 680388
Orlando, FL 32868-
0388 407-522-3300 V