



F.A.Q.

Canine Companions for Independence®

Frequently Asked Questions

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 assistance dogs:

- **Service Teams** - assist adults with physical disabilities by performing daily tasks.
- **Hearing Teams** - alert the deaf and hard of hearing to important sounds.
- **Skilled Companion Teams** - enhance independence for children and adults with physical, cognitive and developmental disabilities.
- **Facility Teams** - work with a professional in a visitation, education or healthcare setting.

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

There is no charge for a CCI dog assistance dog. Individual participants in our program are not responsible for any of the substantial costs involved in the lengthy process of breeding, raising, and training each Canine Companion.

Q. How is CCI funded?

CCI is funded by private contributions from individuals; gifts from businesses, civic groups, and service clubs; grants from corporations and foundations; and ongoing fundraising activities such as special events and mailings. CCI receives no federal government funding.

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

People with physical or developmental disabilities who can demonstrate that a Canine Companion will enhance their independence or their quality of life are qualified to apply. Also eligible are professionals working for organizations that provide physical or mental health care to clients who will benefit from interaction with a facility dog.

CCI can only accept a limited number of applications per year. Although many individuals with disabilities are eligible and in need of an assistance dog, CCI will determine and select those individuals where the tasks provided by CCI's highly trained dogs will be of the greatest benefit.

Q. What is the application procedure?

Contact the regional center nearest you and ask for an application information packet. This packet includes an overview of CCI's team programs and an Application Request Form that you need to complete to be considered for an assistance dog. The applicant coordinator in your region will review your completed request and assist you throughout the application process.

Q. What are the responsibilities of the person or facility receiving a Canine Companion?

Each candidate must successfully complete a two-week educational course at the regional center designed to match the person and dog and to prepare them to work together successfully. Each candidate 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 breeds of dogs does CCI use?

CCI uses Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, and crosses of these two breeds. Most of our dogs come from CCI's selective breeding program. Occasionally, donated puppies are accepted if they meet the strict qualification requirements.

Q. Can you train my pet dog to be a service dog?

We do not train dogs from outside of the CCI program to be assistance dogs.

Q. Where are CCI dogs trained?

CCI puppies are raised by volunteers who take them to puppy classes and teach them house manners and public etiquette. When they are old enough to enter our formal training program, CCI dogs come to one of our five regional training centers. (see above)

Q. How long does each Canine Companion work?

The average service life of each dog is eight years. After that time the dog is retired and will live out its golden years as a pet.