

Service Dog Providers in Ontario - Current as of October 2019

Does a service dog need to be certified? No, as of 2012 in Canada. However, certification is available for some organizations; if a professional organization does certify the dog, it can be eligible for the ODSP monthly service dog allowance.

Service Dogs can be categorized differently, including:

- Vision Dog Guide - For those with visual impairment or blindness. Common trained tasks include:
 - Functional community mobility assistance (dogs do NOT react to road signs and cannot tell the handler when to cross a street, but can locate safe crossing areas)
 - Locate areas upon demand (e.g. find an exit, a chair, etc.)
 - Retrieving dropped or out-of-reach items
- Hearing Dog Guide - For those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Common trained tasks include:
 - Alert their handlers to sounds such as alarm clock, stove timer, fire alarms, telephone, doorbell, or a child crying
 - Activating an alert system or alerting others for help if needed
- Service Dog Guide - For those with physical/mobility disabilities. Common trained tasks include:
 - Turning light switches on/off
 - Opening/closing doors and drawers
 - Retrieving dropped or out-of-reach items
 - Assisting with doffing clothing
 - Alerting others for help, and activating alert buttons
- Seizure Response Dog Guide - For those with epilepsy. Common trained tasks include:
 - Sensing a seizure and then seeking help, and activating an alert system
- Autism Assistance Dog Guide - For persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Common trained tasks include:
 - Sensing and reducing anxiety with tactile stimulation
 - Offering comfort and consistency for daily routines
 - Improved social interaction (can train the dog to 'sit' and 'shake a paw' to signal that the dog is 'off duty' so that others may pet the dog and encourage interaction)
- Diabetic Alert Dog Guide - For persons with Type I Diabetes and hypoglycemic unawareness. Common trained tasks include:
 - Via smell can sense low blood sugar levels; then alerts owner to take glucose, or activates an alert system
- Therapy (PTSD/Anxiety/Depression) Dog Guide. Common trained tasks include:
 - Sensing and reducing anxiety with tactile stimulation
 - Offering comfort and consistency for daily routines
 - Improved social interaction (can train the dog to 'sit' and 'shake a paw' to signal that the dog is 'off duty' so that others may pet the dog and encourage interaction)
 - Finding exits, enhancing reality-checking for those with PTSD

NOTE: With the rise of the use of dogs in persons with mental health needs, there has been a lot of confusion regarding terminology. Therapy dogs and Service Dogs are NOT the same. Service Dogs are allowed entry into all public spaces; therapy dogs do NOT have the same public privileges and are not commonly allowed into public spaces. You may see 'therapy' and 'service' dogs used interchangeably in organization names, however this is not always representative of the types of assistance dogs they provide (the organization names were created before this distinction).

NOTE: An allergy-friendly dog breed that is effective as an assistance dog is the standard poodle, and only some organizations provide these. Common service/therapy dog breeds include golden retrievers and labs, which are not allergy-friendly but generally have the natural temperament for being a successful assistance dog. Consider your client’s needs regarding allergies (of the client and other home residents), ability to maintain fur and shedding, and drool.

There are 5 training programs in Ontario supported by the Canadian Association of Guide & Assistance Dog Schools:

1. Autism Dog Services Inc.
2. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind
3. COPE Service Dogs
4. Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides
5. National Service Dogs Training Centre Inc.

Name/Contact of Organization	Type of trained dogs/ Appropriate for...	Cost	Geographic catchment area	Wait List	Application Process	Other
<p>Golden Opportunity Assistance Dogs</p> <p>Donna 519-670-1809</p> <p>http://www.goadogs.ca/html/assistance_dogs.html</p>	<p>-Mobility impairments only (e.g. SCI, stroke, MS, ABI, etc.)</p> <p>-Service Dogs only</p>	<p>\$25,000 to be paid by client before training begins. Includes lifelong re-training for specialized commands.</p>	<p>Within a one-hour radius of London (Sarnia, Kitchener, Waterloo, Brantford)</p>	<p>Often no wait list</p>	<p>1. Phone interview 2. Paper application 3. Home interview 4. Specialist Form (physician completes) 5. Social style form (completed by 5 friends of applicant) 6. Selection</p>	<p>-Training program is Mon-Sat 9-5 for two weeks. First week alternates 1 hour lectures with 1 hour practice with dogs in closed environment. Second week is all public training in the community.</p>
<p>National Service Dogs</p> <p>http://www.nsd.on.ca/</p>	<p>-ASD and PTSD/First Responders</p> <p>-Service Dogs</p>		<p>Ontario?</p>			
<p>COPE Service Dogs</p> <p>http://copedogs.org/info@copedogs.org</p>	<p>-Mobility impairments (e.g. amputee arthritis, back injury, brain injury, CP, developmental delay, dwarfism, Friedreich’s ataxia, Hunter’s Syndrome, Lupus, MS, MD, Paraplegia, Post Polio, quadriplegia, spina bifida, spinal muscular atrophy, stroke, etc.). NOT for persons who need the dog for deficits related to deafness, vision impairment, seizures, epilepsy, ASD, or diabetes.</p>	<p>\$3,500 (the organization fundraises the rest)</p>	<p>Within a 3-hour radius of Barrie (based on Google Maps).</p>	<p>Often 1-5 dogs available each year.</p>	<p>1. Pre-Application available online (due end of July every year) 2. Full application process available online 3. Telephone interview 4. In-person interview 5. Selection</p>	<p>-Training begins in the spring/summer months of the following year after application, and it is 15 days long in Barrie.</p>

	-Service Dogs only					
Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind www.guidedogs.ca	-Service Dogs for persons with mobility impairment. -Guide Dogs for persons with vision impairment over the age of 16.	\$1 to 'lease' the dog	200km radius of Ottawa (about as far West as Kingston)		1. Interviewed in-home by an instructor 2. Placed on a waiting list	2-4 week intensive training process
Lion's Foundation of Canada Dog Guides http://www.dogguides.com/FAQ.html Liz duncan@dogguides.com Colleen cfujita@dogguides.com	-Service Dogs for persons with mobility impairment -Guide Dogs for persons with vision impairment -Canine Ear Dogs for persons with auditory impairment -Diabetic Alert Dogs -Seizure Response Dogs -Autism Assistance Dogs	Free of charge, but handlers can help fundraise.	All of Canada	Often between 4months-1.5 years	1. Online application to be completed by applicant 2. Online application to be completed by physician 3. Placed on wait list if necessary	Residential training in Oakville for 15-26 days depending on the program. Follow-up care is provided.
Thames Centre Service Dogs http://www.thamescentre.servicedogs.com/about-us.html tcsd@live.ca	-Service Dogs for persons with ASD and brain injury -Therapy dogs for veterans and first-responders	Pay-for-service				