Placement Process

To begin applying to receive an assistance dog from Power Paws you must first complete a partial application on the Power Paws website and submit a $75 application fee. Power Paws will then mail you the full application which will include additional instructions.

When Power Paws receives a completed application from you we will contact you to schedule an initial assessment. This meeting will be at Power Paws facility in Scottsdale, and is your opportunity to meet with staff members and learn more about our training programs. A Power Paws staff member will determine if you are accepted as a client after your initial assessment.

Power Paws encourages all of our clients to do extensive research into service dogs and their uses, laws regarding assistance dogs, and to contact multiple organizations to find the best fit for your needs.

The total cost to receive an assistance dog from Power Paws is $9,000. You will be provided with a payment schedule in your application. There are numerous grants and scholarships available to assist with the cost of a service dog, and most clients are very successful at raising funds. It costs Power Paws over $25,000 to breed, raise, train, and place each assistance dog. We work very hard to subsidize as much of the cost for our clients as possible.

Once you are accepted as a client by Power Paws you will begin attending client meetings with a Power Paws trainer. These meetings typically last around one hour, and are scheduled every 6-8 weeks. Most clients attend between 8-15 client meetings before being matched with a dog. During client meetings you are being instructed on how to care for, train, and handle a working service dog. You will meet with various Power Paws dogs until Power Paws trainers believe they have found the appropriate match in a dog for you. This process typically takes at least six months, but can take up to two years.

Once we have covered enough information and found the right match in a dog for your needs, you will be invited to a two week Team Training (also known as Boot Camp). Power Paws will give you at least one month’s notice prior to inviting you to a Team Training.

The first week of Team Training is held at Power Paws facility, where you will be officially matched with your dog. Training is held Monday through Friday, and typically lasts 5-6 hours each day. You will begin taking your dog home with you the first Thursday of Team Training. You will rest at home with your new service dog during the weekend. You are not to take your dog into public without a trainer during the first week and weekend of Team Training.

The second week of Team Training is held primarily in public. You will be provided with a schedule and itinerary for meeting Power Paws staff throughout the week. We will practice going grocery shopping, riding an elevator, going out to eat, interacting with the public, and
more. One day will be devoted to “dinner & a movie” where we will meet after dark. The last day of Team Training will be a public access evaluation of you and your new service dog.

Following Team Training we ask that you ease your dog and yourself into public access and the stresses of daily life. You can begin going to work, but should avoid excessively stressful situations such as parties or large gatherings. Your dog will be attached to you at all times for at least a two week period, this is called umbilical cord bonding and is crucial to your dog’s successful bond with you. You will not allow friends or family members to pet or interact with your dog excessively, and you will not allow people to interact with your dog in public.

You will return to Power Paws for follow-up appointments at least once a month following placement for the next six months. You and your dog will be considered a graduate team after a minimum of six months of successful partnership. Power Paws holds a graduation ceremony once a year. Only after attending a Power Paws graduation will you be able to contact your dog’s Puppy Raiser. Any training questions or concerns must be directed to Power Paws staff.

Power Paws retains ownership of our dogs for the life of each dog. We do not remove dogs unless abuse or severe mishandling is occurring. You will complete monthly reports on your dog for the first six months after placement, and then complete a yearly public access evaluation. Out of town clients can call, face-time, skype, and submit videos to Power Paws.

Clients who receive a diabetic alert dog from Power Paws must submit monthly alert logs to Power Paws for at least the first six months. You are encouraged to continue keeping logs of your dog’s alerts for the life of your dog. Diabetic alert dogs require consistent practice to maintain their skills, and it can take several months of bonding before their alerts become reliable for you. Many diabetic alert dogs become expensive pets when their handler fails to practice and maintain their dog’s skills.

Power Paws provides follow-up training and assistance to our clients for the life of the dog at no additional charge. If you are an out of state client you may be asked to cover the cost of having a Power Paws trainer travel to you.

Having an assistance dog is a life-style choice. We tell all of our clients that you are agreeing to live with a two year old child, a very well trained toddler, but mentally a two year old nonetheless. You will have to consider your dog’s needs in every situation, and you are responsible for ensuring that you and your dog are a good representative of service dogs when in public. You will receive a lot of attention from the public, because you have a dog with you. These are just a few of the things you need to consider before deciding if a service dog is the right mitigation for your disability. Every organization does things a little differently, we encourage you to “shop around” for the best fit in an organization for your needs.