

# Finding the Right Service Dog Prospect

This is not an exhaustive list, but is meant to inspire thinking about what dog would best fit your household and needs. It might be worth asking friends, family, or members of your medical team for support.

## 1) Questions to think about

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- 1) Is a service dog right for you?
- 2) Are you in a position to owner train? (think scheduling, disability related limitations, and the time it takes to fully train a service dog)
- 2) What age range do you want to start with? (puppy 8-16wks, teen 6months-2 years, adult 3+ years)
- 3) Do you want to work with a rescue or a dog from a breeder?
- 4) How financially ready are you?
- 5) What support systems do you have? (trainer, friends, back-up care)

## 3) Task needs

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List 3 tasks and what symptom(s) they will mitigate:

**Highlight** tasks that will effect height, weight, or sensitivity of the dog you need.

(ex. **Stands** on my foot when I fidget, helping me recognize when panic is high)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

## 2) Basic dog needs

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- Size\*:
- Sex\*:
- Friendliness:
- Energy Level:
- Grooming care:
- Coat type and length:
- Food and Toy motivation:
- Eagerness to learn (biddability)\*:

\*note all breeds mature at different rates. Some breeds may have distinct differences between sexes such as maturity, sensitivity, and effects of puberty.

## 4) LIFESTYLE

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- Your activity level:
- Frequency of travel:
- Places you **don't** need your service dog:
- Places you **do** need your service dog:
- Other activities you want to do with your dog (sports, show, etc.):
- Household dynamic (# of people, type of home, etc):

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After answering the questions from above, think about your results and make lists of breed options and how to learn more about them.

There will be places you might have to compromise, it is important to recognize what are WANTS vs NEEDS

## List your top breed choices

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## Brainstorm your ideal temperament/characteristics

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## Next Steps:

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- Check AKC for breed descriptions: <https://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/>
- Check out dog shows or sports events to meet owners
- Connect with others that have working service dogs
- Connect with local breed specific clubs to meet owners/ breeders
- Interview trainers to help your search process, and provide temperament assessments
- List breeders to connect with (note: not all breeders are equal, this will require breed specific research)
- For rescues: contact local organizations to learn more about adoption process and keep in touch with dogs available

