



## Veteran Dogs Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What if I am wounded but still on active duty?**

In limited circumstances, Saint Francis may be able to place a service dog with you. You will need your commanding officer's approval. Contact Saint Francis for more information.

**2. Why should I work with my local VA rehabilitation specialist as I apply?**

You may qualify for benefits related to service dog training and care that are available only to veterans enrolled through the Department of Veterans Affairs. By applying through your rehabilitation specialist, you ensure that you will receive all applicable benefits.

**3. What is the law regarding service dogs' access to public places?**

Under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Virginia law, all businesses that serve the public, such as restaurants, hotels, retail stores, taxicabs, theaters, concert halls and sports facilities, are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. The ADA requires these businesses to allow people with disabilities to bring their service dogs onto business premises in whatever areas customers are generally allowed. Additional charges for admitting the service dog to an establishment or fares for transportation cannot be required.

**4. What is the success rate of matching service dogs with owners?**

Overall, Saint Francis Service Dogs has a 90% success rate for service dog partnerships. This high success rate is due to careful suitability screening of both dogs and owners.

**5. Can a service dog be transferred from one owner to another?**

Unlike many similar organizations, Saint Francis Service Dogs allows partners to own their dogs. If for some reason the owner cannot keep the dog, Saint Francis Service Dogs has first rights of refusal for ownership. If a partner dies, the family or a close friend may wish to keep the dog, and Saint Francis Service Dogs normally grants them that right.



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### 6. What is a service dog worth?

Saint Francis estimates that it costs up to \$25,000 to select, raise and train a service dog. Saint Francis raises the funds to cover this cost through fundraising efforts and volunteer efforts. Saint Francis does not ask or require you to raise funds for your dog.

Behind a Saint Francis Service Dog is hundreds of hours of volunteer time: from puppy raisers, puppy sitters, inmate puppy raisers, and foster families working with the dogs to office volunteers and fundraising volunteers raising awareness and donations. And behind a Saint Francis Service Dog is hundreds of donors contributing to the cause. All of these people are invested in your partnership with a service dog.

### 7. What are the costs and fees associated with obtaining and owning a service dog?

The prospective partner living in the Roanoke area pays a \$25 non-refundable application fee. Prospective partners living outside the Roanoke area pay a \$75 non-refundable application fee. At the time of transfer of ownership, Saint Francis requests \$200 to help to cover the cost of the equipment that comes with your service dog. This equipment includes a crate, vest or harness, collar, leash and training tools.

Although Saint Francis does not ask that you pay for your service dog, you are responsible for all costs of your dog when it lives with you – including both routine and non-routine veterinary care. You should budget at least \$1,000 a year for your service dog. Below is a list of routine costs that are involved in dog ownership:

**Initial costs:        \$100-\$500**

Food/water bowls, grooming equipment, dog bed, toys

**Regular Yearly Expenses:        \$645-\$1,750**

Yearly vaccines:	\$150 - \$300
Food:	\$200 - \$500
Heartworm preventative:	\$120 - \$150
Flea preventative:	\$ 75 - \$150
Treats:	\$ 50 - \$150
Grooming:	\$ 50 - \$500

Please note that this cost range starts at the bare minimum that a dog needs. If any added care is needed such as additional trips to the vet for an injury or illness, then the cost will increase.