

Puppy Steps Service Prep Program

Purpose of Program: Prepare a puppy for service work, public access & further training to assist his/her owner with a disability and to generally educate his/her owner and the public about the rights and responsibilities of service dog handlers in the state of Utah and nationwide.

Enrollment: A puppy may be enrolled into Puppy Steps Service Prep (PSSP) if:

1. The puppy displays no signs of aggression or excessive fearfulness towards people or other dogs or puppies while in training.
2. The puppy's temperament allows him/her to complete all training tasks successfully
3. The owner attests to Puppy Steps Training or provides evidence that a documented disability does exist and can be mitigated with the use of a service dog.

Training Standards: The training standards for the PSSP were created by Puppy Steps Training and in no way represent any other organization, certification or training standard. *As a guideline*, with the exception of age & handler-participation requirements, the PSSP approximates, and, in the majority of the test items exceeds the standards required to pass:

- Assistance Dogs International Public Access Test
- AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program
- AKC Canine Good Citizen Certification
- Intermountain Therapy Animals Training Evaluation

Puppies who graduate from the PSSP achieve several standards which are in addition to the test items included in the aforementioned programs. Training standards are the same as those required to graduate from the Puppy Steps Training program, with the following additional tasks:

In a public setting, the puppy must complete the following:

1. Load and unload in and out of a car while remaining in control & focused on handler
2. Holds a sit-stay or down-stay and allows petting from at least one adult and one child
3. Allows someone other than a trainer to pick up and handle ears, face, legs and feet and be brushed calmly without fear or aggression
4. Sit or stand calmly while handler stops to greet a stranger walking a dog. Puppy must remain in control and show no more than casual interest in the other dog.

5. Walks through a crowd (at least 3 people) while maintaining a loose leash and attention on handler.
6. Sits or stands calmly with a stranger while handler walks out of sight for at least 3 minutes.
7. Remains calm while at least 2 loud distractions occur within 10 feet, such as the clattering of a dropped item, a loud noise, approach of cart or equipment or starting of a motor.

ESA: An emotional support animal or ESA is an animal whose purpose is to provide emotional comfort and support in a home setting. An ESA, which may be recommended by a physician or psychiatrist, has legal protection under the fair housing act, but does not have legal rights to public access and, therefore, would not require training in the PSSP program.

Length of time: Puppies enrolled into the PSSP should not take much if any more time to complete training than puppies completing the standard Puppy Steps training program. As with all of the puppies trained at Puppy Steps, length of time is determined by successful completion of the training standards rather than a set amount of time and generally take 8-10 weeks total.

Certification: Graduation from the PSSP does not certify or register any dog or puppy to be a service animal, as no such registration or certification is required by law or exists under the jurisdiction of federal law. It does, however, prepare the dog to continue in their training to perform a service role as defined in Titles II & III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and meet the handler's legal obligation to maintain control of the dog in all public places.

Upon completion, the owner will be provided a certificate identifying the puppy as having completed the training standards of the PSSP and, as long as the puppy continues training in individual service tasks, is considered to be a legal service dog in training and entitled to protection according to state laws, which, in the state of Utah is the same protection as that of a fully trained service dog.

Puppy owners must acknowledge that the dog's legal classification of a service animal is dependent on the ability of the dog & handler to demonstrate a specific task which is directly related to the person's disability and not from any kind of certification or registration. This certification, as any other service dog certification, is to clarify the rights of the Disabled Person under the ADA, prove the owner's due diligence toward proper training as well as provide evidence of the dog's high level of obedience training in a public setting.

Cost: If the puppy qualifies for and enrolls in the PSSP, an additional \$2000 fee will be applied to the cost of training to cover the additional training tasks and certification.