

VOLUNTEER PUPPY RAISING

Finding the right fit

- Who is the **organization's focus**? Adults, children, veterans, people with physical disabilities, blindness? Do they focus on what they do best?
- What is the organization's **mission statement**? Do you feel they “walk the talk?”
- What is the **history of the organization**? How long have they been training assistance dogs? What breed of dogs do they offer? Do they have their own breeding program?
- **Location of headquarters or closest training center**. Is it a reasonable driving distance or do you have the ability to travel?
- **Where does their funding come from**? Is it personal donations, company sponsorship, community outreach, grants, or does the organization primarily rely on fundraising by their applicants? Ask the organization for a copy of their annual report. Also <https://www.charitynavigator.org/> is a resource.
- **How do they treat their working teams long-term**? Are there follow-ups with the team during the dog's working life? Does the organization manage the destiny of the dog in case of a change to the partnership?
- Ask questions about the **puppy raising program**. When do you get the puppy and for how long? Who takes on the costs of puppy raising? What are their training methods and how do you get trained?
- Does the organization have a **robust volunteer support system**? Can you talk with other puppy raisers before deciding to apply as a volunteer?
- Identify your **personal deal breakers**. Are you ok with raising an intact (unneutered) puppy? Have any limitations on any specific breeds? Have an issue with dog hair on your clothes?
- Remember that **interviews go both ways** when talking with an organization about puppy raising.
- Have fun and **enjoy the journey**. It will change your life.

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