



Puppy Sponsorship Guidelines

Puppies Behind Bars trains incarcerated individuals to raise service dogs for wounded war veterans and first responders, facility dogs for police departments, and explosive-detection canines for law enforcement. Puppies enter prison at the age of 8 weeks and live with their incarcerated puppy-raisers for approximately 24 months. As the puppies mature into well-loved, well-behaved dogs, their raisers learn what it means to give back to society rather than take from it.

Puppies Behind Bars depends on the generous support of our puppy sponsors, who are invited to name a puppy entering our program and who then receive quarterly updates from the puppy's incarcerated raiser.

Minimum sponsorship contribution: **\$8,000***

When your contribution is received, you will be asked to provide several name suggestions (keeping in mind that the name should be suitable for a dog that may be paired with a veteran or first responder, or that may work in public with law enforcement). Depending on the length of our sponsor name list, it can take ten to twelve months before your dog arrives in the program, though your contribution supports our work right away. When the puppy enters prison at 8 weeks of age we will send you an announcement card, followed by quarterly updates written by the puppy's incarcerated raiser and distributed by our New York office. These letters are strong testimony to the growth of both the puppy and the raiser as they work toward a common goal, and offer a unique insight into the love, care, and hard work invested in the puppies. You'll receive photos of the puppy as it grows, and when the dog graduates (or is released from the program as a pet, as happens occasionally) you'll receive a detailed "puppy journal," full of photos and day-by-day accounts of the journey to becoming a working dog.

When puppies join us, they are assigned to a career path, either training as service dogs for wounded veterans or first responders, facility dogs for police departments, or as explosive-detection canines (EDCs). We make every effort to accommodate sponsors' wishes as to their dog's career. However, sometimes a puppy's career may change as he matures, or, in some cases, a dog may be released from our program for medical or behavioral reasons. The flexibility we gain by training several types of working dogs ultimately makes our program stronger and more efficient.

Please call Douglas Hamilton at 212.680.9562 if you have any questions about puppy sponsorship.

Thank you for your interest in our work!

** The actual cost of raising and placing a working dog is much higher. PBB's costs to raise a service or facility dog, including approximately 24 months of in-prison training for the dog and travel and hotel expenses for the veteran or first responder for a 14-day intensive Team Training session with their new dog, averages more than \$50,000. Training an EDC costs PBB approximately \$28,000.*

Current as of April 2024.