Adoption Program FAQ
Southeastern Guide Dogs

Thank you for your interest in adopting a Southeastern Dog! We are committed to finding quality and loving homes for the dogs who have not met the very strict guidelines for guide dog work.

You may have a lot of questions about our adoption process and about the types of dogs that we have available. This brief FAQ will help familiarize you with our Adoption program and help you determine if you would like to move forward with the commitment that comes with dog ownership.

**What type of dog can I expect to be available through the adoption program?**

Dogs that become available for public adoption are dogs that have not met the very strict standards required to be a successful guide dog and do not meet the criteria for other professions such as Arson Detection, Narcotics Detection, etc. for an assortment of reasons. Some of these reasons may include fear of children or animals, small animal or people distraction, or they may have medical concerns that exclude them from guide dog work.

**Will my dog be trained?**

Most dogs that are available for public adoption have been trained to obey basic commands. “Sit”, “stay”, and other basic commands have been taught to the dogs from a very young age. It is important to note that dogs that are available for public adoption have been made available for adoption during various stages of formal guide dog training. All dogs that are available for adoption have been trained by dedicated puppy raisers from 8 weeks of age.

**Are they housebroken?**

Dogs available for public adoption have been housetrained.

**What types of medical issues might my dog have?**

In most cases, the medical issues that require Southeastern Guide Dogs to career change a dog from the guide dog program are not severe. Often, elbows and hips prevent a dog from moving forward with their guide dog development. In many instances, the problem will never develop into a major issue, but it is possible that a dog with medical needs may require veterinary attention during its life. It is important to consider the possible financial implications that come with adopting a dog that may need veterinary care.
I am not sure if I want to adopt a dog with medical concerns. What should I do?

Southeastern guide dogs is committed to quality placement. If you decide as a family that you are not willing to accept a dog with medical concerns, simple let us know by marking it appropriately on your application. Keep in mind, families that are willing to accept this responsibility traditionally have a dog placed more quickly.

Should you make the decision to consider a dog with medical issues, we will always share with you any medical concerns we are aware of before you adopt a dog with us. You will be able to make a reasonably informed decision if you would like to move forward.

How long will I have to wait for a dog?

Southeastern Guide Dogs has committed itself to finding alternative careers to guide dog work before placing a dog up for public adoption. As a result, we may have as few as three dogs available for adoption at any given time. Families who have fewer breed/color restrictions or who are willing to adopt a dog with medical issues usually experience placement more quickly. Also, the wait time for a Golden Retriever is significantly longer than for a Lab or Goldador. This is because we do not have as many Goldens in our training program.

The wait list seems very long. I don’t want to wait. What should I do?

Florida Lab Rescue has a wonderful program for the adoption of rescued labs. Gulf Coast Golden Retriever Rescue has a wonderful program for the adoption of rescued Goldens. You can visit their websites to determine if this is a viable alternative for you.

Will I be able to pick out my own dog?

While we will make every attempt to match your preferences to the dogs we have available for adoption, we do not allow the public to select their own dogs. We carefully identify the strengths of each dog and match them with families- taking into consideration the history of the dog and any idiosyncrasies he/she might have.

Once I submit my application, what happens?

Your name will be added to our wait list. When a dog becomes available, our Career Change Coordinator will email you to let you know about the dog available. You will communicate with them your interest in the dog available and make arrangements to visit the school and meet the dog. If a dog has not yet become available, you will remain on the wait list and the Career Change Coordinator will reach out to you once a year to establish your continued interest in remaining on the list.

Does Southeastern Guide Dogs charge anything to adopt a dog?

There is a $3,000 recovery fee required for the adoption of a Southeastern Guide dog made available through Public Adoption. This fee helps us recuperate the cost incurred during the dog's time in our program including medical expenses, vaccinations, and basic care. In all, the total cost to fully train a guide dog team is estimated at $60,000. Your support will help us continue the breeding, raising, training and placement of guide dogs with visually impaired individuals.