



Schools

- Currently there are thirteen dog guide schools within the U.S. training dog guide teams—specially trained dogs matched with people who have impaired vision. These teams are allowed by law to go anywhere the general public can go.
- Several schools breed their own dogs. The dog spends its early months with a puppy raiser where they learn basic obedience and appropriate people skills while exposed to a variety of environments. The dog then returns to the school for specialized training.
- All dog guide schools spend four months training each dog to follow a given set of commands for traveling in any environment, going around obstacles, crossing streets, navigating stairs, etc. unless doing so would endanger the owner. They are not trained to guard their owners.

Training

- Before a student can acquire a dog guide she or he must first receive training in cane skills, and master mobility without a dog.
- After acceptance at a school, training for first time dog owners lasts about four weeks. Most programs are center-based but a few schools do intensive, home-based training for shorter periods of time.
- Although the dogs are trained, the owner (not the dog) is in charge of the team and responsible for giving the dog the correct commands for arriving at the desired destination.

Etiquette

- Dog guides in harness are working. Distractions from their job such as eye contact, food temptations, petting, or calling the dog can create dangerous situations for the owner and the dog.
- If a dog guide team needs assistance, do not speak to the dog or grab its harness or grab the owner's left arm—the one holding the harness. The owner will either take your left arm or command the dog to follow you.

Questions? For more information, please contact the Lighthouse Orientation and Mobility Specialists at (850) 942-3658 or toll-free: (888) 827-6033; email: info@lighthousebigbend.org, or 3071 Highland Oaks Terrace, Tallahassee, FL 32301