



Photo: Peggy Vance

### **Puppies Behind Bars trains prison inmates**

to raise service dogs for wounded war veterans and explosive-detection canines for law enforcement. The puppies live in prison with their puppy-raisers from the age of 8 weeks to 24 months. As the puppies mature into well-loved, well-behaved dogs, their raisers learn what it means to contribute to society rather than take from it.



### **Puppies Behind Bars**

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Puppies  
**Behind**  
Bars

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Cover photo: Andrea Baker  
Inside photo: Peggy Vance



# DOG TAGS®

SERVICE DOGS FOR THOSE WHO'VE SERVED US



Puppies  
**Behind**  
Bars

**Since 2006, Puppies Behind Bars has been raising service dogs exclusively for OIF/OEF veterans. We have no other clients for our service dogs—just you. As a result, we have developed commands that, we’ve found, are especially helpful for vets with amputations, PTSD, and TBI.**

Our dogs, raised in prison, are trained to perform more than 90 service dog commands. All our dogs can open and close doors, turn lights on and off, dial 911 on a phone, carry shopping bags, do laundry, and bring items to you. In addition, we teach them how to enter a room before you, assuring you it’s safe; how to awaken you from nightmares; how to “watch your back;” and how to stop people from approaching, if their approach is making you nervous.



Because our dogs are not raised in a kennel, but instead are around people 24 hours a day/7 days a week, they develop an exceptional bond with humans. Since they are raised by prison inmates, they are able to connect with people who may be socially withdrawn.

Dog Tags, as this initiative is called, can only pair fifteen of these magnificent dogs per year, but as a result of being a small organization, we offer some of the best service dogs

available. We are unique in that we do not send our dogs out to be raised by families, who then return them for formal training; we raise and train them from earliest puppyhood. We’ve known each dog since he or she was 8 weeks old.

Puppies Behind Bars pays for all the costs associated with getting one of these special dogs. We will fly you to upstate New York and provide a hotel room, transportation, and most meals for the sixteen days of training to become a team with your new dog. Half of those days are spent in prison, where you are trained by the inmates who raised your dog. You get an extraordinary amount of information, all about your dog, and get to hear a lot of cute puppy stories, too.

It is the least we can do for you after all you have done for us.

### **How to Apply**

1. To qualify for a Dog Tags service dog, you, an OIF/OEF veteran, must be capable of incorporating a dog into your life. You must be able to provide a stable, safe environment for our dog, as well as love, exercise and food. Most important, you must be willing to become more independent and to work with a highly trained four-legged companion.
2. Access the Dog Tags application on our website at [www.puppiesbehindbars.com](http://www.puppiesbehindbars.com) (click on “Apply for a Service Dog,” then on the “Download the Dog Tags Application” button). Send the completed application and all requested references to our office.
3. After reviewing your application, we will begin the process of interviewing you, speaking with your health care providers, and checking your references.
4. If you are accepted, you will come to us for sixteen days of training with the dog we have chosen for you. Four months after this training is completed, we will do a home visit, and we will see you annually thereafter, to recertify you and your dog as a working service dog team.

For additional information, please contact [nora@puppiesbehindbars.com](mailto:nora@puppiesbehindbars.com) or visit our website at [www.puppiesbehindbars.com](http://www.puppiesbehindbars.com).



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