

Maine Paws for Veterans, Inc. (MPfV) recognizes that the application process for the Psychiatric Service Dog (PSD) Training Program can feel overwhelming and may involve a long wait. We welcome questions to help make the journey toward a positive, life-changing experience easier. Please visit the “Application Process” and “Frequently Asked Questions” sections on our website at mainepawsforveterans.org for helpful documents.

- The application is the first step in the process. Please review all required documents that must be submitted to complete the application. If you have difficulty submitting the documents, please reach out. If you don't, we will assume you are no longer interested in our Program.
 - 1) DD 214 - please visit the website www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records if you need to obtain a copy.
 - 2) Mental Health Report
 - 3) Medical Referral
 - 4) Authorization to Release Confidential Information
 - 5) VA Form #10-5345
 - 6) Veteran/Canine Support System
 - 7) Landlord, Employer, Canine Information, and Veterinarian Report, if applicable.
- Once the application packet is complete it will be reviewed. You receive an email confirming our receipt of all the applicable documents. The email will also include the information needed to complete a Background Check.
- The Background Check is mandatory. For veterans who are adopting a dog with the assistance of MPfV, adults in the household will also be required to obtain a Background Check. When all parties are satisfied with the information from the Background Check, the next step is the interview.
- A staff member will contact each veteran directly for an interview. All interviews are done in person at our office. *(Family members and significant others are welcome.)*
- Home visits are required for all participants and will be scheduled after the completion of the interview. The home visit will assess the home location, indoor and outdoor containment, other animals on the property, and the transport vehicle.
- A letter of Acceptance will be sent to each Applicant.
- Veterans with their own dogs will need to complete a canine evaluation. Dogs are not required to pass all test criteria at this stage, but must meet certain standards for temperament and behaviors.
- Veterans adopting a dog will be notified individually when a suitable dog is available, ideally several weeks before the start of the training class. Dogs available for adoption are vetted in advance using a Safer assessment and must meet standards for temperament and behavior.

Maine Paws for Veterans also considers the veteran's home environment and personal requests. Maine Paws will cover procurement fees, but the veteran will retain ownership either directly from the shelter or through owner transfer.

- When the PSD Training begins, it is the veterans responsibility to attend all 26 weekly, two hour classes. Each class is designed to teach the veteran the skills needed to continue training outside of class. The participant must complete 240 hours of training and record them in a training log. The training is divided into four phases:
PHASE ONE: Basic Training
PHASE TWO: Advanced Training
PHASE THREE: Special Tasks Training
PHASE FOUR: Public Access Training
- Maine Paws for Veterans provides support and resources for the veteran, as well as, their family and friends.
- The success of your service dog depends on continual training. Maine Paws for Veterans offers monthly Refresher Training classes and requires renewal of the advanced, special tasks, and public access requirements. If training is relaxed the dog will still be your companion, but will not meet the standard necessary to be designated as a Service Dog. Maine Paws for Veterans encourages previous veteran/canine teams to attend Refresher Training and to stay in touch, as we provide ongoing support.

Maine Paws for Veterans encourages applicants to reach out by phone, text or email with any questions or concerns. Our Program goal is to provide our veterans with the best possible outcome on their life changing Psychiatric Service Dog journey.