



SEIZURE RESPONSE DOG INFORMATION

What you need to know BEFORE you apply to JoshProvides Epilepsy Assistance Foundation, Inc. for a grant to secure a Seizure Response Dog

Thank you for reaching out to JoshProvides Epilepsy Assistance Foundation, Inc. regarding our seizure response dog grant application process. Before you apply for a grant, you need to know the following:

1. **JoshProvides does not breed or train the dogs.** JoshProvides awards financial grants up to the amount of **\$2,500 towards** the cost of a trained dog. You are responsible for securing the other funding for the dog.
2. **Seizure Response Dogs are expensive.** The cost of breeding and training a seizure response dog is extremely expensive and can run from \$20,000 to 30,000.
3. **Training of Seizure Response Dogs takes time.** The training of a seizure response dog can take up to 2 years.
4. **Neurologist must recommend Seizure Response Dog.** In order to apply for a grant from JoshProvides, your neurologist must agree and sign documents that indicate the dog is necessary.
5. **Finding a reputable breeder/trainer.** You are responsible for identifying the breeder and trainer. The contract is between you and the breeder/trainer. JoshProvides requires the trainer to sign documents and submit a W-9 before payment can be made.
6. **Applying for a grant.** Applications for a seizure response dog grant will not be accepted until these two criteria are met:
 - a. 80% of the cost of the dog has been secured
 - b. Dog will be delivered within the following three months

If you have not yet done so, we suggest you first have a conversation with your neurologist, make sure a seizure dog is truly a good fit, and that you understand your expectations versus what a dog might really be able to do. Seizure response dogs are not pets – they are working dogs!

There are seizure "response" dogs and seizure "detection" dogs. Most are response dogs. This means that when a seizure occurs, the dog may be trained to lick you while you are having a seizure, go find an adult, or some dogs are trained to trigger some kind of alert. Only a small percentage of dogs are detection dogs and are able to sense ahead of time that a seizure is coming on. It is important to understand the difference between the two dogs and find a trainer with experience training the type of dog your family requires. Here are a few other notes:

- First, you should do your research and find a trainer/company you feel comfortable with - check their references, talk with people who have had a dog trained by them, and don't just go by what they claim. Look for complaints, reviews, and any information that can be found. We would suggest you also find out how many seizure dogs the organization has trained and speak to the families that received the dogs. This is a very specific form of training and it is much different than obedience or service dog training.
- Once you have decided on a trainer, you should talk with them about the best breed and age for the ideal dog. You have the option of having the trainer get a dog for you, which is part of the expenses. But there are some breeds with better temperaments that are more amenable to training, etc. There is also a specific age of dog that is best to start training.
- Another factor to consider is timing. Getting a dog can be quite a lengthy process. It may take up to 2 years for a dog to be trained (typically it is a three-part process: obedience training, service dog training, and lastly seizure response training). If a company tells you they can train a dog in a shorter time, it is important to check their references and talk to families who have received their dogs. This is not a short training process and the average time is 18-24 months. The training has to be long enough to include obedience and service dog training, but then also incorporate teaching a dog to identify and respond to seizure activity and then to be able to specifically identify your specific seizures and respond appropriately.

- In addition to purchasing the dog and training, there are also costs to maintain a service dog. There is health insurance, renewal service dog registration, regular veterinarian check-ups and vaccinations, quality food and treats, etc.
- And lastly, these dogs become working, service dogs. It may feel like they are a part of the family, but there will be strict instructions as to how the dog must be treated, how it will interact with your child and members of the family, etc. There have been situations where an individual or family paid a lot of money to have a dog trained, waited over a year to be able to take their dog home. Then, they played with the dog, treated him/her like a pet, and did not stick to the routines established by the trainer. The dog then forgets how to react appropriately when their owner has a seizure because they don't understand when they are "working" and when they are not.

These are just some factors for you to consider as you make a final decision regarding the purchase of a dog. I have attached a copy of our application for financial assistance. We do support the purchase of a dog when we are able to and when a physician has agreed that it is a good fit for the applicant. We are a small organization, so the maximum grant we currently allocate is up to \$2,500 (if the application is approved by our review committee). Our \$2,500 (or the amount that is approved) is paid as the last \$2,500 owed on the balance of the dog/trainer and is paid directly to the trainer when the dog is ready to be picked up by the family.

This was a long email with a lot of information. Please read it over a couple of times and then let us know how we can best support your efforts. I have attached a copy of our application to this email.

We wish you and your family the very best and hope to have the opportunity to support your needs. Please email us at info@JoshProvides.org if you have additional questions or need more information.