

Service and Guide Dog – This program offers payment of certain veterinary services and special functional equipment for veterans who utilize a service or guide dog for the purpose of rehabilitation or restorative care as a part of an established treatment plan. This program does not support the acquisition of a service/guide dog; however, does recommend and establish the use of a service or guide dog in coordination with accredited service dog organizations. Only after the establishment of a service dog has been determined will Prosthetics take responsibility for payment of pre-authorized veterinary services and equipment. **Note: At this time, this program does not support the use of service/guide dogs for mental health diagnosis including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or animal-assisted therapy/activity dogs.**

Types of Dogs:

- Service Dog – works with an individual with one or more disabilities
- Guide Dog – provide specialized services for visually impaired
- Hearing Dog – assists persons with deafness or severe hearing impairment
- Mobility Dog – provide physical assistance to a person with musculoskeletal or neurological disability impacting gait, balance, strength, or dexterity
- Seizure Response Dog – recognize and provide support to a person during and after a seizure

Services and Special Equipment Provided:

- Office visits for medical procedures
- Annual wellness exam
- Necessary vaccinations
- Dog harness
- Dental procedures requiring sedation (one time per year)
- Prescribed medications
- Prescription food (case by case basis only)

Note: There is no dollar limit to the cost of services and equipment provided per annum.

Items that are not covered:

- Food/treats/etc.
- Dental care that is not procedural
- Over the counter medications (includes flea and tick treatments)
- Grooming
- Boarding
- Other routine expenses

Eligibility:

The decision to provide a Service or Guide Dog rests with the service dog organization that will issue the dog in the event the Veteran meets the service dog organization's requirements. The

Veteran must be willing and able to complete all specified training and be physical willing and able to provide needed care for the dog.

Process for Approval:

1. The Veteran must obtain a clinical determination from their VA provider confirming the service/guide dog is appropriate for the purpose of rehabilitation or restorative care as a part of an established treatment plan
2. The Veteran must provide documentation that the service/guide dog has been trained by a certified service dog training organization consistent with the disability for which the dog is required.
3. The VA provider referral is then submitted to Prosthetic Treatment Center along with supporting documentation and forwarded to VA Central Office for review and final determination of eligibility for this program.

References:

VHA Handbook 1173.05 – Aids for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Clinical Practice Recommendations for use of Guide/Service Dog in Plan of Care