

## **Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.**

103 Vision Way, Bloomfield, CT 06002

[www.fidelco.org](http://www.fidelco.org)

### **What is the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation?**

Fidelco is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, based in Bloomfield, Connecticut. Fidelco's mission is to partner men and women who are blind or visually impaired with German Shepherd guide dogs, providing clients with increased independence to pursue their life's goals.

### **What is the demand for guide dogs?**

People who are blind or visually impaired are our children, parents, friends, and co-workers. They are community members, teachers, mountain climbers, Paralympians, and veterans who want Fidelco guide dogs to maintain, or regain, their increased independence in a world that presumes the ability of everyone to see.

### **How much does a guide dog cost?**

It takes two years, 15,000 hours, and \$65,000 to breed, train, and place each guide dog. Fidelco gives these life-changing canine partners to its clients at no cost. Fidelco also provides 24/7 lifetime service to clients with annual follow-up visits.

### **How is Fidelco's mission supported?**

Thanks solely to the generosity of our donors and tireless work of our staff and volunteers, Fidelco is able to create guide dog partnerships that empower our clients' independence and forever change their lives. Fidelco has placed more than 1,400 German Shepherd guide dogs throughout North America in 41 states and five Canadian provinces.

### **What types of dogs does Fidelco use?**

Fidelco is the only guide dog organization in the world that exclusively breeds, trains, and places German Shepherd guide dogs. The hallmarks of Fidelco's "breed within a breed" bloodlines have been refined over five decades to produce predictable and required qualities of intelligence, temperament, stamina, and a desire to work.

### **How long does a Fidelco guide dog work?**

Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs typically work for 8-10 years, which means they are 10-12 years old when they reach retirement age. Annual check-ups are performed with each guide dog team to ensure the team's safety.

### **What is Fidelco's "In-Community Placement"?**

Fidelco pioneered "In-Community Placement" in the United States. Fidelco's exclusive home-based training program makes it possible for our clients to be trained in the communities where they live and work to ensure that each team works together safely and effectively.

### **How is a Fidelco guide dog produced?**

The entire process takes two years from breeding to placement with a client. Fidelco's Puppy Development Department begins working with the pups at three days old using its bio-sensory program to ensure the pups are exposed to diverse stimuli as they grow. Volunteer Puppy Raisers love and care for the puppies in their homes from eight weeks to approximately 16 months old. Formal guide dog training is a six-month process conducted by Fidelco's professional staff of certified Guide Dog Instructor/Trainers when the dogs are 18–24 months old. Lifetime client service provides ongoing training support.

### **Giving back to serve and protect our communities.**

Sometimes dogs are assessed as not suitable for guide work. Many of these dogs go on to have other working careers. Fidelco has provided hundreds of its German Shepherd dogs to law enforcement agencies, first responders, search and rescue, and missing child recovery organizations to help protect our communities and keep their citizens safe.

To donate, apply for a Fidelco guide dog, or to learn more about volunteering/working at Fidelco, please visit our website: [www.fidelco.org](http://www.fidelco.org).