

## **Questions & Answers – “AKC DDTF Webinar Series: 3 – 6 Month Puppies, Getting Started Right for Detection Work”**

*\*Training styles and protocols vary among dog trainers and can depend on the individual dog being trained. The answers provided to your pre-submitted and live questions are for general reference*

1. What temperament traits do you consider essential for this type of work? *Environmental stability/soundness, resilience, toy drive, possession and a socially active puppy. Learn more [here](#).*
2. How do you get the puppy involved once trained for detection? *When appropriate, we can assist our breeders/puppy raisers whose dogs are participating in the Patriotic Puppy Program find the right job with the correct agency for their potential working dog.*
3. Due to space considerations, it’s hard for breeders and trainers to keep extra puppies. At what age do you generally take the puppies? *The AKC does not purchase or broker dogs. The Patriotic Puppy Program (PPP) provides breeders or puppy raisers with the opportunity to learn how to raise “green” dogs suitable for future advanced training as detection dogs, and to help them prepare them for evaluation by various agencies or entities seeking to purchase such dogs.*
4. How do you screen dogs for the Patriot Puppy Program? *As noted in the webinar, the PPP helps puppy trainers/raisers provide puppies with developing a sound foundation for future explosives detection work. PPP doesn’t necessarily screen puppies at the start of the program, we want to empower others to train their puppy for success.*
5. Is there any temperament trait(s) that would disqualify a dog? *Extremely sensitive to visual or auditory stimulus, unenthusiastic about playing and retrieving, nervous in new situations and the consistent need for a recovery period after daily training sessions. This can be a signal or pattern of behavior that the puppy may not be a suitable detection candidate.*
6. What sort of jobs are included in the scope of detection work? *The scope of detection work is on local, state & federal agencies across the country, including private contract work. Drug detection, explosives detection, arson dogs, cadaver dogs, search & rescue dogs, tracking dogs, medical detection, pest/bed bug detection. The field of detection work by specially trained dogs grows consistently.*
7. How do you socialize puppy from 8 weeks old to be around loud noises? *It’s important to take this step slowly and to not overwhelm the puppy or frighten them; this could have a detrimental effect. While it is important to introduce loud noises, siren flashes and other distractions, stimuli should be balanced with calmer “down” time.*

8. I have been told that because my pups have been started on birds, they are unfit for detection - how so? *AKC's Program Manager for the Patriotic Puppy Program regularly takes started gundogs that are retrieving birds and transitions them to detection dogs. In a perfect world, detection candidates would be started on a variety of toys and not birds, but this isn't a requirement for many of the state and federal agencies across the US.*
9. Do trainers ever contract with breeders for a set # of puppies specifically for detection? *When able, and on a case by case basis we are looking forward to assisting our breeders/puppy raisers find the right job with the correct agency for their potential working dog.*
10. How does a breeder who is not one of the program focus breeds get into the program (Golden Retrievers)? *The focus has been on Labrador Retrievers and German Shorthaired Pointers, as this is where the greatest demand lies. However, we are willing to discuss other breeds and assist breeders of other breeds. Breeders should reach out to the program manager directly.*
11. Is it advantageous travel to different cities and locations during the 3-6-month period or is it too risky at that age? *When venturing out on socialization trips, keep your puppies' health of upmost concern: Be aware of how they are feeling and make sure to be aware and respectful of your surroundings. The panelists agreed that vaccinations are crucial for protecting the pups. If taking pups out into heavily travelled public areas before they are fully vaccinated consider ways to keep them safe, such as using a baby carrier to keep the pup off the ground.*
12. How can we get access to places like airports etc. when we don't have a certification of our purpose? Like Service Dogs in training? *While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers service dogs that have completed training and perform tasks to mitigate a user's disability(ies), it does not provide guaranteed access for service dogs in training. In some cases, there are state laws that allow certain for access for the training of service dogs. You may wish to check your local and state laws for specifics. Also, many service dog organizations simply reach out to a public or private facility ahead of time to get direct permission for this training. We recommend that detection dog trainers do the same.*
13. If a pup has a noise sensitivity issue do you cut it from the program or do you think you can get them past it? Genetics? *The PPP doesn't "cut" puppies from the program because we do not contract or purchase your puppy, our main goal is to empower others to train their puppy for success.*
14. How do you manage a pup who seems to be very handler focused? *Encourage the puppy's independence through self-exploration. Also, try utilizing a variety of handlers.*

15. Which puppy evaluation process do you use to determine suitability for different areas detection, patrol? *Parties interested in the patriotic puppy program may sign up at [HERE](#). Currently, tests other than a commitment to health testing are not a criterion for participating in the program. When possible, AKC's Subject Matter Expert will share info on test protocols and requirements as pups are in the final phases of training and preparing for evaluation for placement.*
16. At what age do you evaluate candidate animals? *Most agencies are looking at beginning evaluation of a dog at or around 12 months of age.*
17. In a purpose-bred litter, what % of puppies typically meets the evaluation standard? Does the litter size affect pass rate? *Stacey West - We have seen everything from 0% success to 100% success within a litter. Panelists noted that with high quality genetics out of performance-bred parents it is not unusual to see greater than 50% meet the standards of the federal procurement system and the remainder of the litter still have jobs with state and local law enforcement.*
18. How much emphasis do you put on Obedience training during this 3-6 month detection training?
- a. *Stacey West - Obedience training during the early stages of training is mostly treat work done on lead. Puppies receive some restrictions of the lead while learning simple commands including "sit", "here", "heel" and "place". At this time, puppies are learning how to learn and how to be a team player. We balance this out with free searches to build independence as well as building toy drive through a variety of simple to complex retrieves.*
  - b. *Tim Baird - I only put small amount of obedience training on any of our dogs. I want them to understand- "Here & Sit". Use placement here to be calm sit". Walk on leash controllable without fighting it.*
19. What exact breeds are you targeting? *The primary breeds participating in the patriotic puppy program are Labrador Retrievers and German Shorthaired Pointers. This reflects the demand for these breeds as EDDs.*
20. At what age do you think the pup should be handed from breeder to new environment? *After completion of the 10 – 12 month program and working with AKC PPP subject matter expert(s), suggestions will be made as to if and where the dog may have a best fit with a local, state or federal agency. Personnel from the specific agency will conduct final testing and analysis.*

21. If the lovely dog does not meet standards, I am assuming it is returned to the breeder? *The AKC does not purchase or broker dogs. The PPP is a volunteer training opportunity to prepare puppies for detection work. As well as detection work, we are interested in helping our breeders find 'other' jobs for their dogs. AKC encourages breeders to be responsible dog raisers and owners and work diligently to find a suitable home as a pet if the dog is not chosen by an agency during evaluation. Our goal in Phase 2 is to help breeders understand that not all pups make a great dog for the federal Transportation Security Agency (TSA), but a well-trained dog can have a job. Local, state and federal law enforcement, medical and conservation detection or sporting work could all be future jobs for a dog that graduates from the PPP.*
22. Does it matter what your pup starts with (scent)? *For green dogs, we do not encourage imprinting on any odor as this isn't necessary to sell dogs to local/state/federal law enforcement agencies.*
23. Does a breeder have to maintain a complete litter for evaluation by purchasers until selection process is complete? *No, the PPP encourages our breeders/puppy raisers to self-train and identify their pup(s) that they feel is ready for work as a detection dog.*
24. Is the AKC still helping locate breeders who will engage in the supply of puppies for the DOD work? *Yes, we are actively working with breeders across the country to fill the national need for domestically trained detection dogs.*
25. Would it be too late to apply these principles to a 9-month-old puppy? *Not at all, environmental stability, socialization, and physical exercise are crucial for all detection dogs at all ages. Learn more [here](#).*
26. In your opinion is there only one way to imprint a dog? *For green dogs, we do not encourage imprinting on any odor as this isn't necessary to sell dogs to local/state/federal law enforcement agencies.*
27. Are the adult trained dogs used in the field spayed and neutered? If they are, at what point in their development does this take place? *Altering a dog is the individual owner and their prospective veterinarians' decision. We cannot speculate on the statistics of spayed/neutered working dogs as we are certain it's done on a case-by-case basis.*