Handler Capacity / Readiness Self-Assessment

This self-assessment is designed to help life care planners evaluate whether the individual, caregiver, or support system appears ready to participate in service dog placement. This tool is not intended to approve or deny a service animal recommendation by itself, but to identify whether handler readiness is supported, conditional, or in need of further development.

Client / individual	Assessment date	Evaluator

A General Handler Readiness

ASSESSMENT ITEM	YES	NO
Can the individual consistently cue, direct, and control the dog?	☐	☐
Can the individual participate in handler training?	☐	☐
Can the individual provide or arrange feeding, grooming, toileting, exercise, and veterinary care?	☐	☐
If a caregiver, parent, guardian, aide, or support person is needed, has that person been identified and is that support available?	☐	☐
Is the home environment safe and stable for a working dog?	☐	☐
Have any behavioral, sensory, cognitive, psychiatric, or physical barriers that may affect the match been identified and adequately addressed?	☐	☐
Is there a backup care plan if the handler is hospitalized, in crisis, or temporarily unable to care for the dog?	☐	☐

Section A Score _____ / 7

B Guide Dog / Visual Impairment Readiness

Complete when the request involves visual impairment, guide work, or community navigation.

ASSESSMENT ITEM	YES	NO
Has the person received orientation and mobility training?	☐	☐
Does the person use a cane or another established travel method?	☐	☐
Does the person have regular routes, community travel needs, or a functional reason for guide dog travel?	☐	☐
Can the person direct the dog rather than expecting the dog to independently navigate?	☐	☐
Can the person attend team training?	☐	☐
Have transportation, lodging, follow-up training, and related costs been considered for the life care plan?	☐	☐

Section B Score _____ / 6

SCORING Count one point for each "Yes" response.

SECTION A | General Handler Readiness	6–7: Handler Readiness Supported 3–5: Conditional Handler Readiness 0–2: Handler Readiness Not Yet Supported
SECTION B | Guide Dog / Visual Impairment	5–6: Guide Dog Readiness Supported 3–4: Conditional Guide Dog Readiness 0–2: Guide Dog Readiness Not Yet Supported

Developed and distributed by
T. SCOTT SMITH CONSULTING
Mailing Address: 2851 Johnston Street, Suite 527 Lafayette, LA 70503
T. Scott Smith, PhD Phone: (337) 501-2104 scott@tscottsmithconsulting.com
Physical Address: 600 Jefferson Street, Suite 1201 Lafayette, LA 70503