



ABOUT SERVICE DOGS FOR AMERICA

Service Dogs for America (SDA) trained its first service dog in 1989 and placed it with SDA’s first client in 1990. In 1992, SDA was officially designated as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. SDA is an accredited service dog school member of Assistance Dogs International.

The mission of SDA is to: *“train and certify service dogs for individuals with disabilities”*

The following describes the different types of dogs trained and placed by SDA							
<p style="text-align: center;">Mobility Assistance Dog</p> <p>Assists with (but not limited to) the following types of diseases or injuries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amputation • Arthritis • Cerebral Palsy • Multiple Sclerosis • Muscular Dystrophy • Paraplegia • Parkinson’s Disease • Spina Bifida • Stroke • Tetra/Quadriplegia • Traumatic brain or spinal cord injury 	<p style="text-align: center;">Mobility Assistance Dog - Task Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrieve dropped object. • Open interior/exterior doors. • Retrieve a beverage, medication, or other item. • Bring medication and/or a beverage to a person. • Help a person stand and brace. • Stabilize during walking. • Turn lights on or off. • Pull/push/open door, drawer, or cupboard. • Operate handicap accessible door switch. • Retrieve a phone or other specified object to person’s hand or lap. • Get help by alerting another person in the environment. • Activate an electronic alert system. • Assist a person in removing clothing. • Carry medication, wallet, etc. • Dog can perform skills while client is using adaptive equipment such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker or specialized leash or harness. 						
<p style="text-align: center;">Seizure Response Emergency Medical Response Dog (EMRD)</p> <p>Assists with (but not limited to) the following types of seizure(s):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence • Atonic • Partial Complex </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gelastic • Myoclonic • Partial Simple </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dacrystic • Tonic-clonic • Status Epilepticus </td> </tr> </table> <p>We do not train service dogs for individuals with psychological origin seizures such as:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pseudo </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychogenic </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cryptogenic </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence • Atonic • Partial Complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gelastic • Myoclonic • Partial Simple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dacrystic • Tonic-clonic • Status Epilepticus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pseudo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychogenic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cryptogenic 	<p style="text-align: center;">Seizure Response (EMRD) - Task Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie close to the client, nudging, licking, lying on the client during an event. • Get help by alerting another person in the environment. • Retrieve an object, such as a phone or medication. • Activate an emergency button, electronic alert system, or pull cord. • Carry medication, wallet, etc.
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<p style="text-align: center;">PTSD Assist Service Dog</p> <p>Assists with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) <p><i>A trained PTSD service dog is a tool and is not intended to substitute or replace a current therapeutic or medication treatment plan. The dog is trained to mitigate and distract from possible stressors related to an individual's PTSD and contribute to their physical, emotional and social well-being.</i></p> <p><i>We do not train service dogs for individuals with multiple complex mental health issues including personality disorders, somatoform disorders, etc.</i></p> <p><i>We do not train service dogs for individuals who have a coexisting diagnosis of autism. Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PTSD Service Dog - Task Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupt anxiety or distress and provide psycho-emotional grounding and deep pressure therapy or by nudging, pawing, and leaning. • Assist a person in waking from night terrors and nightmares. • Distract a person from an event or specific maladaptive behavior by nudging, pawing, and licking. • Bring medication to a person on cue. • Create a passive social barrier in a non-aggressive manner. • Create an opportunity for casual social interaction and increase client's ability to engage socially. • Lead an individual safely to a building exit when experiencing an anxiety or panic attack. • Get help by alerting another person or activate an emergency button or alert system. <p style="text-align: center;">Service Dogs are not trained to offer any guarding or protection tasks. A service dog will never act aggressively. Service Dogs are not trained in room searches or room clearing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Types of Cross-Trained Assistance Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility Assist/PTSD Assist • Mobility Assist/Seizure Response • Mobility Assist/Seizure Response/PTSD Assist 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Facility Dog</p> <p>Facility dogs are usually found in a nursing home or similar type of facility. They 'visit' with residents and families that come to the facility. <i>Please note, this type dog <u>is not</u> certified for public access.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Facility Liaison Dog</p> <p>Facility liaison Dogs (also called a Community Resource Canines) are generally found in schools (typically counselors office), police departments, etc. These dogs are specially trained to be a "social bridge" facilitating the development of more trusting relationships within the populations. These dogs are trained to provide comfort to victims, lower tension and stress of community members (or students, if in a school), work with children to build relationships, engage with the public during community events, etc. <i>Please note, this type dog <u>is</u> certified for public access.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Courthouse Facility Dog</p> <p><i>"Courthouse facility dogs are professionally trained dogs working throughout the country in prosecutor's offices, child advocacy centers, and family courts. They primarily provide a calming influence during stressful legal proceedings. As legally neutral companions for witnesses during the investigation and prosecution of crimes, these dogs help the most vulnerable witnesses feel willing and able to describe what happened."</i> <small>(source: https://courthousedogs.org/)</small></p>



*** SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE YOU WILL RECEIVE A SERVICE DOG ***

Preliminary Application Procedure

- The first step in applying for a service dog from Service Dogs for America (SDA) is to fill out and submit the preliminary application. If you are unable to complete the online application, please contact SDA and a paper copy can be sent to you. Before submitting a preliminary application, please review the following eligibility requirements:
 - Age requirements are as follows:
 - Applicants for Mobility and Seizure Response must be 12 years of age or older and possess the physical and developmental capacity to handle a service dog independently.
 - Applicants for PTSD must be 21 years of age or older
 - Applicants must reside within the lower 48 states of the United States and be able to travel to the SDA campus in Jud, North Dakota, for training. Applicants must also be legal, permanent U.S. residents.
 - If applying for a PTSD service dog, applicants must meet both of the following criteria:
 - have an official PTSD diagnosis from a qualified and licensed mental health professional;
 - be actively engaged in therapy for the PTSD diagnosis, for a minimum of one (1) year, and maintain compliance with therapeutic recommendations.
 - Applicants must present a verifiable medical need for a service dog and understand SDA may not be able to train a dog specific to their needs.
 - Applicants must be compliant with all medical and mental health recommendations
 - Applicants must be available and willing to communicate with SDA staff throughout the application and placement process.
 - Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in handling a service dog at home and in a variety of public environments, while managing the dog's safety, behavior and working skills.
 - Applicants will be required to supply proof of financial resources sufficient for the care of a service dog, including veterinarian care.
- Preliminary applications are reviewed in a timely manner. If the applicant meets SDA's selection criteria, an approval letter will be sent out along with a full application packet.
- Incomplete preliminary applications will not be processed.

Full Application Procedure – APPLICANTS ARE ONLY ELIGIBLE FOR THIS NEXT STEP IF THEIR PRELIMINARY APPLICATION IS APPROVED.

- The second step in applying for a service dog is to return a full application to SDA – including all necessary signatures and a **non-refundable \$50.00 application fee**. Applications returned without the \$50 fee will not be processed.
- Once all supporting documentation for the full application has been received, an independent Medical Review Board (MRB) evaluates the application and determines final eligibility. The MRB bases their decision regarding service dog placement per the following criteria:
 - is a service dog necessary for the applicant so as to mitigate the applicant's disability
 - can a service dog perform enough specific tasks so as benefit the applicant
 - can the applicant properly care for and handle a service dog

Notification, Travel and Training Procedures

- Following the MRB's review of the full application, the applicant will be notified, by mail, as to whether their request for a service dog has been approved or denied or if the MRB needs additional information before making their decision. **Approval of the application by the MRB does not guarantee the applicant will receive a service dog. SDA reserves the right to terminate the application and placement process at any time.**



- If approved for a service dog, SDA's Executive Director will schedule the applicant for their Team Training at SDA's Jud, North Dakota, campus. SDA's Client Services Coordinator will also send out a welcome packet detailing all aspects of Team Training and the placement process. *NOTE: "Team" denotes the pairing of an applicant with a service dog.*
- Team Training is a minimum, mandatory three (3) weeks. Applicants must **successfully complete** their Team Training Course before leaving campus with their service dog. It is highly recommended to purchase travel insurance in conjunction with any airline or train tickets, in the event Team Training needs to be extended or cancelled.
Arrival to campus and participation in Team Training does not guarantee an applicant will leave campus with a service dog. SDA reserves the right to stop placement at any time.
- All applicants traveling to the SDA campus are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including ground transportation and attendant care (if necessary). There are two (2) fully-furnished guest cabins on campus that are available to applicants for Team Training. This lodging is included in the cost of the service dog, however while on campus applicants are responsible for their own groceries, toiletries, etc. If applicants prefer not to stay on campus, off-campus accommodations will need to be approved by SDA prior to arrival and will be the sole financial responsibility of the applicant.
- Prior to the applicant's arrival on campus, SDA will conduct either an in-home visit or a video tour of the applicant's home.
- Each applicant must be prepared to meet his/her own financial needs during Team Training, including outings and any equipment needs or modifications. Applicants with electric wheelchairs must plan on bringing or arranging for a manual wheelchair in the event of an electric wheelchair malfunction.
- Any individuals or family members accompanying the applicant in a supportive role are the responsibility of the applicant and are welcome to stay on campus with the applicant; their attendance during Team Training is at the discretion of the SDA training department.

Team Sponsor

- Each Team is required to have two sponsors; this is not a financial sponsor but rather a mentor or advocate who will look after the best interest of the dog (and the team) and report back to SDA.
- The sponsors must be individuals, outside the applicant's immediate family, who will agree to periodically check on the status of the Team. The sponsor(s) will also agree to look after the dog should something happen to the applicant.
- The sponsor is not asked to intervene or take action unless an emergency exists or concerns arise that may include:
 - the dog is not being cared for properly, including veterinary care and vaccinations
 - the dog is not being used as per the contract, including established safekeeping practices
 - the applicant is not following training protocols
 - the applicant is experiencing additional medical/mental issues that place the dog at risk
 - the applicant talks of surrendering or abandoning the dog



Placement Interruption Procedure

- SDA is involved with the Team for the life of the dog, therefore SDA reserves the right to deny an applicant or terminate a placement at any time before, during, or after Team Training and graduation. Grounds for termination include, but are not limited to:
 - applicant fails to handle the service dog according to SDA requirements
 - applicant fails the Public Access Test required for the Team's graduation
 - applicant handles his or her service dog in an abusive or negligent manner
 - applicant becomes unable to care for the service dog
 - applicant is not using the service dog as intended
 - placement will jeopardize the dog's health, safety, or well-being
 - applicant fails to meet recertification requirement
 - applicant fails to make payments or pay for the service dog, as agreed in the financial arrangement
 - SDA has grounds to believe the dog will not be able to meet the applicant's needs

Post-Placement Procedure

- After graduation, applicants will be expected to provide on-going information regarding the dog's work habits and public behavior. Applicants will be expected to make themselves available for aftercare calls and are required to meet SDA's criteria for Team certification renewal.
- Applicants will be expected to sign a release for their health provider(s), giving SDA access to contact them quarterly for the purpose of follow-up and to document any improvements in physical, emotional, and social interactions as a result of a service dog. This requirement is for the working life of the service dog.
- Teams are required to return to campus at regular intervals post-graduation for public access recertification and additional training (if necessary). The guest cabins are available to the Team at no charge, however all travel expenses are the responsibility of the applicant. The recertification schedule is as follows:
 - within 12 months following graduation
 - every 24 months after the first year

Failure to be compliant with required follow-up could result in repossession of the service dog or being declined for a successor dog placement.

Disclaimers

- All applicants will be considered regardless of race, gender, religion, creed, sexual orientation, and ethnic origin.
- Approved successor dog applicants have priority over first-time applicants.
- Wait time for training and placement will vary depending on specific needs of applicant and dog availability.

SDA reserves the right to stop the application process, training, and placement process at any time.