



# Assistance Dogs INTERNATIONAL

## Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Program Summary

ADI was formed in 1986 and became incorporated in 1988. January 2025 starts our thirty-seventh year with 168 Accredited Members. The table below summarizes the census data as of December 2023 of some basic statistics about ADI and its impact:

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|---|--|
| Current ADI Members   | 168 Accredited Members                       |
| Current ADI Candidate Programs                                      | 58 Candidate Programs                        |
| Number of ADI Regions   | 3 (North America, Europe, Oceania)           |
| Number of Members in North America Region                           | 92 Accredited Members; 36 Candidate Programs |
| Number of Members in Europe Region                                  | 56 Accredited Members; 19 Candidate Programs |
| Number of Members in Oceania Region                                 | 12 Accredited Members; 1 Candidate Programs  |
| Number of Members outside of current Regions                        | 8 Accredited Members; 2 Candidate Programs   |
| Total member programs' active Assistance Dog teams as of 12/31/2023 | 27,846 active teams                          |
| New Assistance Dog teams placed by our members as of 12/31/2023     | 4,402 new placements                         |

## I. Who We Are

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) is a worldwide coalition of non-profit programs that train and place assistance dogs for individuals with disabilities to improve their quality of life.

## II. ADI Mission and Vision

**Our Mission:** ADI is a member-centric organization leading a collaborative, global community dedicated to the highest standards and excellence for human-dog partnerships.

**Our Vision:** Creating a world without barriers through exceptional human-dog partnerships and a supporting global network

## III. Objectives

ADI has three main objectives:

- Establish and promote standards of excellence in all areas of Assistance Dog acquisition, training and partnership.
- Facilitate communication and learning among member programs.
- Educate the public to the benefits of Assistance Dogs and ADI membership.

## II. ADI Overview

ADI was raising awareness of the benefits and public access rights for individuals with disabilities to be accompanied with assistance dogs. ADI Standards were developed to raise the quality of training and operations of assistance dog organizations to ensure people served by our member organizations would receive a highly trained assistance dog and they would be treated with respect and dignity. ADI Standards have become the benchmarks to measure excellence in the Assistance Dog sector. Assistance Dog handlers trust their lives and safety to their assistance dogs so everything related to the training of both the dogs and people must meet extraordinary criteria.

Compliance with ADI Standards helps ensure that people with disabilities who are seeking a partnership with an Assistance Dog receive exceptional service from our accredited member organizations, a highly professionally trained Assistance Dog trained to mitigate their disability, a comprehensive education about training and utilization of an Assistance Dog, and a thorough understanding of all aspects of public access with an Assistance Dog.

The ADI Accreditation Program is at the heart of ADI. The Accreditation Program is a comprehensive process that thoroughly evaluates our members and new candidate organizations against our high standards to ensure they are operating to the standards in all aspects of their organization. To demonstrate compliance, member organizations and candidate organizations undergo an accreditation survey that begins with a thorough review of all their administrative and operational policies and procedures by a trained Accreditation Assessor. Next, an on-site survey includes an inspection of their training and kennel facilities, observation of the training of the dogs and clients, and extensive interviews of their staff, volunteers, board members, and client teams. After the on-

site survey is complete, the Accreditation Assessor prepares a detailed report that is reviewed and approved/denied by the Accreditation Review Committee of the ADI Board of Directors. All member organizations and candidate programs must successfully complete the accreditation program to be a member of ADI, and members must complete the re-accreditation process every five years to maintain their membership.

ADI expanded a successful breeding cooperative internationally in 2022. This new International Breeding Cooperative (IBC) allows program members to share genetic material, puppies and dogs, and breeding information with the goal of improving the quality of all Assistance Dogs. The vision of IBC is to collectively improve member access to a reliable and relevant puppy supply while exponentially improving working dog type.

ADI launched a new digital identification system for graduate teams, staff, and volunteers of our member organizations. This new digital ID card was developed to allow our graduate teams a comfortable and stress-free experience in all public venues traveling with their assistance dogs. Graduates through the digital ID card modern technology that is available on personal smartphones that can be presented to verify their assistance dog is trained by an ADI accredited member organization. The security features on this digital ID card combats the growing problem of the presentation of fraudulent assistance dogs in public venues. ADI is working with transportation companies worldwide to implement the digital ID card to verify a legitimate assistance dog.

ADI has regional programs that benefit member organizations in certain regions. American Airlines partners with ADI to implement our Puppies in Flight program that allows trained American Airlines employee volunteers to use their flight benefits to transport Assistance Dogs on American Airlines flights. Transports may include delivering the animal to their puppy raiser, escorting the dog to and from program training, pairing the dog with their new handler, or familiarizing the dog with the flight experience. Another regional program includes our Ground Transportation Program that coordinates ground transportation of dogs and puppies through a large network of volunteers to deliver dogs and puppies to their destination by ground transportation.

ADI is invested in the future as the leading authority of the assistance dog sector. ADI's Strategic Plan outlines our plans to expand our educational programming to our members and the growing need for qualified assistance dog trainers. In January 2024, ADI launched new Standards for Training Dogs and a new Instructors' Certification program will be launched in 2025. We designed a new Learning Management System to track educational programming for new candidate organizations to achieve their accreditation process. The same LMS system will track the new Instructor Certification program. The Education Committee has begun working on educational webinars to further our educational resources for our member organizations training staff, client services staff, administrators', and program staff. These webinars will eventually be available to the general public.

### **III. Operating Principles**

#### **The Public**

By selecting an ADI Accredited Member program, consumers can ensure that the program is meeting the highest standards in the Assistance Dog sector including standards for the treatment of clients

and dogs as well as ethical business practices. Accredited ADI Member organizations provide professionally trained Assistance Dogs that perform tasks to mitigate disabilities, ongoing support for the life of the Assistance Dog team, and education of public access laws.

## ADI Members

ADI has a variety of direct benefits to our members. These include:

- An accreditation and evaluation process that ensures that all ADI Standards are implemented, maintained and current to the highest standards around the world.
- Immediate credibility is awarded to our members due to the outstanding global reputation of ADI as the leader of the sector.
- Ability to state they are meeting “ADI Standards,” which are the highest standards in the Assistance Dog sector.
- Opportunities to be involved with regional legislative advocacy to address issues and access laws related to the rights of individuals partnered with Assistance Dogs.
- Voting rights within the organization.
- An invitation to attend all regional and international ADI Conferences to share best practices, education, and facilitate information.
- Networking with other accredited and Candidate organizations via closed Facebook Group Pages (Directors, Training Directors, Puppy Raiser Managers, Communication and Marketing, Shelter/Rescue Programs, Volunteer Managers, etc.).
- Opportunity to network and build relationships with staff and other programs that meet ADI Standards and share similar values and ethics.
- Opportunity to submit nominations for leadership positions for regional and international board positions, and participation in board and regional councils and committees.
- Listing in the Accredited Members organization search on ADI website for individuals seeking an Assistance Dog.
- Access to the “Members Area” on the ADI website for access to confidential information and resources including detailed information on public access laws.
- Placement of available employment opportunities on the ADI website.
- Participation in Instructors’ Certification Program (currently under revision).
- Receipt of the ADI Newsletter.
- Ability to display ADI Accreditation Logo on their letterhead, website, marketing materials in strict coherence to the ADI Style Guide.
- Opportunity to participate in the ADI International Breeding Cooperative Program (IBC).

In addition, ADI Members may have additional regional benefits depending upon their location.

Regional benefits include:

- Participation in ADI partnered program with American Airlines Puppies in Flight Program and Ground Transportation Program (ADI North America).

Lastly, ADI Members may have additional benefits from sources outside of ADI. These include:

- Accredited Member clients fly with ease on many international airlines with appropriate documentation.
- Accredited Member war veteran graduate teams in the USA may apply and receive veterinary benefits for their service dog from the Veterans Affairs Department (VA).

- Accredited Member graduate teams have access to all United States VA facilities and military bases.
- Ability to participate in CEN Working groups. (Europe)
- Ability to participate in regional groups such as Assistance Dogs UK and others.

## IV. Membership Eligibility, Requirements, and Responsibilities

Membership in ADI is open to non-profit Assistance Dog organizations. Members are required to pay annual dues, submit annual census and information renewal documents, abide by ADI's Standards, and undergo an accreditation survey every 5 years.

Membership in ADI begins when an organization applies to be Candidate program. Candidate organizations must be non-profit or charity and have placed 5 Assistance Dogs that have successfully worked for one year or more. Once a Candidate application is approved by the regional council, a Candidate organization has five years to work towards a successful accreditation survey and placement of 10 Assistance Dog teams. By the end of its fifth year of candidacy a Candidate organization must successfully undergo an accreditation survey to become an accredited member. All member organizations must undergo an accreditation survey every five years.

### Membership Categories

Candidate Organization- the Candidate organization is a non-profit organization that is working towards ADI Accredited Member status. Candidate organizations must remain a candidate in "good standing" for a minimum of two years and no more than five years. Candidate organizations receive some but not all of the benefits of member programs:

- Access to the "Candidates Area" of the ADI website for access to educational resources.
- A Benchmark Learning Management program that educates and guides them to prepare for the accreditation process.
- An invitation to attend all regional and international ADI Conferences to share best practices, education, and facilitate information sharing.
- Networking with other accredited and Candidate organizations via closed Facebook Group Pages (Directors, Training Directors, Puppy Raiser Managers, Communication and Marketing, Shelter/Rescue programs, Volunteer Managers, etc.).
- Candidate website listing on the ADI

website. Candidate organization limitations:

- Do not have voting rights within ADI.
- May not use the ADI logo.
- May not claim that they are a member of ADI or that they meet ADI Standards.
- Are not allowed to nominate any individual, nor have a representative stand for elected positions or committee membership with ADI.
- May not state their graduate teams are "ADI Certified."

Member Organization- the member organization has successfully completed at least one ADI accreditation assessment. Member organizations may mentor Candidate organizations to help them with the accreditation process and enjoy all the full benefits offered by ADI. Member organizations

must undergo an accreditation assessment every five years.

## **Termination of Membership**

The Accreditation Review Committee and the ADI International Board of Directors have the right to terminate any member organization that fails to maintain compliance with ADI Standards.

## **V. Organizational Structure**

ADI is organized as a coalition of Assistance Dog organizations throughout the world. ADI is a virtual organization with five full-time staff members and two part-time staff throughout the world. ADI does not directly provide, train, certify, or register individual Assistance Dogs or Assistance Dog teams, as that is the function of our member organizations. ADI certification is only available to Assistance Dog partnered teams that were trained by our accredited member organizations. ADI is managed through an international board of directors, regional councils, and a variety of committees: Advocacy, Education, Governance, IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility), Marketing, Membership, Standards, Accreditation Review, and Regional Candidate Review. Member organizations of ADI assist in the development of ADI Standards and provide input about ADI policies and procedures through our committees.

### **ADI International Board of Directors**

The ADI International Board of Directors is comprised of a minimum of five and maximum of 21 volunteer members. The International Board is made of ex-officio representatives appointed from each region as well as members at-large.

### **ADI Regional Council Members**

ADI Regional Council Members exist for ADI's three regions: North America, Europe, and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand). Regional Council members address issues specific to their region such as public access issues and regional cultural differences.

### **Advocacy Committee**

The international advocacy committee collaborates with the regions' legislative and advocacy committees to identify and develop outcome strategies that supports our graduates with disabilities partnered with assistance dogs to ensure their public safety and eliminate barriers to all public areas and entities.

### **Education Committee**

The Education Committee develops and implements educational programs and activities to our Member and Candidate programs to provide opportunities to achieve the level and skills necessary to serve Assistance Dog clients with competence, professionalism, and the ability to achieve ADI Accreditation status; and externally to targeted audiences to further educate the public on the objectives, programs, and standards of ADI.

## **IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility)**

The IDEA committee is responsible for supporting inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility best practices within ADI and amongst ADI accredited members and candidate organizations designed to attract and retain diverse internal and external constituents.

## **Governance Committee**

The Governance Committee ensures the board fulfills its legal, ethical, and functional responsibilities through governance, strategic planning and organizational policy development, and board member recruitment strategies.

## **Marketing Committee**

The Marketing Committee develops outward facing marketing materials and public awareness campaigns to engage the community in the mission of the Assistance Dog sector and ADI.

## **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee promotes and provides guidance on ADI membership and retention around the world including organizations that are outside of the regional chapters.

## **Standards Committee**

The Standards Committee develops new standards and revises/updates existing standards, and converts standards into appropriate assessment criteria for the Accreditation Manual and Compliance Guidance Notes.

## **Accreditation Review Committee**

The Accreditation Review Committee oversees the accreditation process including the approval/denial of the accreditation status. This committee has five members: two from the North America region, two from the European region, and a fifth regional member. Members to this committee are appointed by the ADI International Board of Directors and must have been an Accreditation Assessor for a minimum of five years.

## **Regional Candidate Review Committee**

The Regional Candidate Review Committee assesses potential Candidate organization applicants and makes recommendations to approve or deny candidacy status to the Regional Councils.