



## Equal Employment Opportunity

### Service Dog Trainer

Smoky Mountain Service Dogs, located in Lenoir City, TN. is currently accepting resumes for an experienced Service Dog Staff Trainer.

Smoky Mountain Service Dogs is a nonprofit organization serving qualified U.S. veterans and first responders with physical and psychological disabilities. These service dogs are provided to the client at no charge. The organization is supported primarily by donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

### Job Description

**Job Title:** Service Dog Trainer

**Reports to:** Program Manager

**Job Summary:** Care for, evaluate, and train dogs. As a Service Dog Trainer, you will be responsible for assisting the Lead Trainer with introducing and advancing simple and complex behaviors to dogs of various ages, providing frequent instruction to new volunteers, volunteer dog fosters, and clients receiving service dogs from the program, developing and applying behavioral modification plans, providing husbandry care for dogs, documenting daily training records, creating training materials and visual aids for online classes, conducting virtual meetings and training sessions, providing follow up training support to graduate service dog teams, preparing teams for public access testing, and assisting with occasional public relation activities. This position will require taking dogs in training into your personal home on an as needed basis.

All activities occur at the Veteran Canine Training Center and in a variety of public venues in the counties of Loudon, Blount, and Knox. Occasional travel may be required (Less than 20%)

Occasional weekend or evening hours may be required.

**Job Type:** Full-time

**Salary Range:** This is a salary (non-exempt) full- time position. The average salary for this position is \$45,000. (Negotiated based on experience and qualifications.) Financial assistance for relocation may be provided.

**Benefits:** Smoky Mountain Service Dogs provides paid vacation and paid personal days once the initial 90-day probationary period is reached, six paid holidays per year, opportunity for occasional over-time hours, periodic performance- based bonuses are also provided.

Smoky Mountain Service Dogs provides employees with a short and long-term disability benefit, life insurance benefit, and a healthcare reimbursement agreement in the amount of \$5,000.00 per year.



**Hours Required:** Minimum 40 hours per week, may include occasional weekend and evening hours.

**Work Authorization:** Must be a U.S. Citizen or authorized to work in the United States.

## Relationships

**Positions Supervised:** Oversight of work assignments for Volunteer Dog Handlers

**Person Making Work Assignments:** Program Manager and Lead Trainer

**Frequent Interactions With:** Client Service Team Members, Client Service Coordinator, Program Manager, Lead Trainer, Staff Trainers, Volunteer Coordinators, Puppy Foster Coordinator, Community Events Coordinator, Transport Team Coordinator, Dog Respite Coordinator, Board of Directors, and Volunteers.

If you are passionate and committed to ethically serving veterans and first responders with disabilities, this just might just be your dream job! Previous service dog training experience with an accredited service dog organization is required. Please do not submit resumes and cover letters without reading this announcement in its entirety. Our staff is small and team-oriented. This position requires daily interfacing with clients receiving service dogs from the program that will have a range of physical and psychological disabilities, community volunteers, and with dogs 8 weeks of age and older who are in training for a life of service.

Service Dogs learn more than 40 behaviors during their comprehensive, two-year training process and undergo multiple assessments prior to placement with qualified applicants having mobility impairments and psychological injuries.

**This position requires service dog training experience preferably with an accredited service dog training program.**

Knowledge and experience in dog training and care, typically obtained by three or more years of related work experience. This position requires the use of a telephone and computer to perform work, the ability to perform work without close supervision, and experience and ease in public speaking. A valid driver's license and insurability are required.

Knowledge of and experience in client relations, working with persons with disabilities, working with volunteers, and knowledge of Assistance Dog International (ADI) regulations are preferred.

## What the Job Involves:



- Broad based knowledge and application of positive reinforcement training methods/classical and operant conditioning, and ethology.
- Introduction and advancement of simple to complex behaviors utilizing primary and secondary reinforcement applications.
- Handling Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers of various age groups, sizes, and weights.
- Safe and humane handling of puppies, adolescent, and adult dogs in a variety of low, moderate, and high stimulus public environments.
- Bending, lifting, standing, stooping, and walking across a variety of surfaces for extended periods of time while handling dogs of various sizes in indoor and outdoor settings.
- Instructing private and group lessons; in public, private homes, and other semi- sterile environments for volunteer service dog handlers and clients.
- Oversight, communication, troubleshooting of canine behaviors in a home and public environment.
- Instructing clients with service dogs recovering from both the hidden and visible wounds (e.g., Post Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, Military Sexual Trauma with accompanying physical injuries).
- Documentation of service dog training activities and filing of submitted volunteer or client reports.
- Conducting periodic performance and behavioral assessments for dogs in training and service dog teams.
- Maintaining a clean, safe environment for dogs and humans, always.
- Exceed the minimum standards and ethics as defined by Assistance Dog International.
- Participation in staff meetings, professional development, continuing education, and community activities.
- Performing health inspections, grooming, dental care, nail trimming and bathing for assigned dogs.
- Assisting with kennel care duties, canine fitness activities, administration of medications and assistance during veterinary exams.

### **Experience, Skills, Background:**

- Minimum of 3 years of experience with Service Dog training, preferably with an accredited service dog organization.
- Knowledge of Assistance Dogs International Standards and Ethics.
- Ability to have and maintain a service dog in training in your home environment.
- Comfort in leading one-to-one or group training sessions with novice handlers through experienced handlers.
- Detail oriented and demonstrates a strong work ethic – this is demanding work!
- Friendly, calm, mature, patient, and professional demeanor with excellent communication skills.
- Knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively interface with veterans and first responders who have physical disabilities which may also include combat trauma and psychological disabilities such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision.
- Ability to prioritize work tasks - organization skills, and time management are critical.



- Ability to adapt to a variety of methods for instruction of people with a variety of backgrounds and skill levels, following SMSD's training methodology and best practices.
- Ability to learn and manage a variety of administrative processes.
- Basic computer skills, competency with Microsoft Office 365 and Google Workspace web-based applications.
- Possess a valid driver's license, maintain reliable vehicle transportation and vehicle insurance.

**Additional Desirable Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Biology, Zoology or Animal Science.
- Associate of Science Degree in Service Dog Education.
- Prior service dog training experience with an ADI accredited organization is highly desirable.
- Knowledge, understanding and/or experience with various disabilities.
- Experience interfacing with Veterans with combat related trauma.
- Experience with public speaking and interfacing with media, community groups and public relations partners.

**To Apply for this Position:**

Please submit a cover letter and resume to  
[Heather.w@smokymountain servicedogs.org](mailto:Heather.w@smokymountain servicedogs.org)

Smoky Mountain Service Dogs is an equal opportunity employer.