



Assistance Dog Instructor

Our Mission

Freedom Service Dogs (FSD) transforms lives by partnering people with custom-trained assistance dogs. Daily tasks and routines that many take for granted can be challenging and complex for a veteran or first responder with PTSD or TBI, an individual with limited mobility, or a young person with autism. Picking up a dropped phone, moving around in a busy public space, or withstanding a stressful environment can feel overwhelming if you don't have the necessary resources to navigate the situation.

At FSD, we purpose-breed and custom train dogs that empower individuals with disabilities to live lives filled with possibility. Since 1987, as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, FSD has graduated hundreds of teams and provided lifetime support services, all at no charge to our clients.

Our Culture

Lead the Pack: Commit to excellence in all we do

Be the Person Your Dog Thinks You Are: Demonstrate integrity to build trust

Work Together, Wag Together: Achieve shared goals while having fun

Keep our Dogs in a Row: Steward all resources efficiently and effectively

Unleash the Power of Diversity: Foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture

We believe in harnessing the power of diversity to create a culture of belonging where all individuals are celebrated and valued for their unique ideas, perspectives, and strengths as a means to achieving personal excellence and organizational success.

The Purpose of Your Role

Assistance Dog Instructors are responsible for providing basic obedience and custom task training to meet the needs of clients using positive reinforcement and clicker training. Train up to 9 dogs at a time including outings & evaluations for each dog assigned in accordance with FSD and Assistance Dogs International standards. Provide training to clients during placement classes. Help train and mentor volunteers that are assisting in dog socialization, walking and training. Reports to the Client Services & Training Manager.

This position is a full-time, non-exempt position, Monday – Friday 7:30am – 4:30pm. These hours may fluctuate depending on the needs of the organization. This position will require working weekends, holidays, and being open to working additional shifts as needed.

Our Investment in You

- Competitive Salary: \$25.50 - \$31.00
- Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance
- 401k
- 14 Paid Holidays & Generous Paid Time Off
- Professional Learning Opportunities
- Career Progression Opportunities
- Wagging tails, dog kisses, and puppy breath

The Work You Will Do

The essential functions listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed; the omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to be completed by the position:

- Train up to nine (9) dogs on beginning and basic obedience commands and advanced custom skills specific to clients' needs
- Adhere to training plans and timelines

- Document training hours, input data, and record communications in company database in a timely manner
- Assist in evaluations for each dog in training in accordance to FSD and Assistance Dogs International standards using the Behavior Checklist (BCL)
- Complete public evaluations of all dogs in training
- Coordinate and supervise playgroups for dogs in training
- Provide weekly updates/reports on each dog's progress
- Work with the Puppy Development team to ensure consistent training methods and effective communication
- Provide input to supervisors to assist in matching clients with service dogs in training
- Educate clients on assistance dog training and cues during Placement Classes
- Support clients on training outings during Placement Classes
- Assist with recertification of graduated dog/client teams as needed
- Help train, mentor, and organize volunteers that are assisting in dog socialization, walking, and training
- Direct and support volunteer dog handlers during Handlers Classes
- Provide support to weekend fosters when training or behavior issues arise and direct all other concerns to appropriate FSD staff

Additional responsibilities may be assigned as needed.

Work Environment

This job operates in dog kennels, surrounding areas and a professional office environment. The noise level in the work environment can often be loud. Employees will work in proximity with all types and breeds of dogs. The location is a non-smoking environment.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, which primarily includes assistance dog training and taking care of dogs and their kennels, the employee is regularly required to be very physically active. The employee is frequently required to stand, bend, stoop, kneel, crouch, crawl and perform a variety of physical motions with his or her hands, arms, shoulders and legs to properly clean kennels, care for and train dogs.

The employee must regularly lift and move up to 50 pounds. This includes the ability to retrieve and distribute dog food and other supplies and ability to retrieve and replace objects from shelves up to 7 feet high. This job requires handling multiple dogs in training every day of up to 100 pounds on and off leash.

Qualifications

- Associate's degree in animal behavior, psychology, zoology, biology or related experience
- Minimum of two (2) years' experience professional positive reinforcement dog training of assistance dogs with an ADI accredited organization
- Advanced understanding of canine behavior and learning theory by completion of an FSD administered evaluation at the time of interview

Preferred Experience

- Nonprofit work and/or volunteer experience
- Bachelor's degree in animal behavior, psychology, zoology, biology or related experience
- Certificate or degree from Animal Behavior College, Bergin University of Canine Studies, Karen Pryor Academy or other positive reinforcement and clicker training dog instruction program
- Experience working with individuals with disabilities

Additional Eligibility Qualifications

Must have a valid driver's license and maintain current vehicle insurance.

Work Authorization/Security Clearance (if applicable)

Must be authorized to work in the United States.

Other Duties

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Essential and marginal job duties, responsibilities and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

Equal Opportunity Employment

Freedom Service Dogs is committed to diversity in its workforce including Equal Opportunity Employment. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, and/or veteran status.

To Apply

Please email your resume and cover to Elizabeth Sheehan, Senior HR Generalist, at esheehan@freedomservicedogs.org.