Service Dog Training Instructor

Warrior Canine Connection – Northern Virginia

Service dog training instructor needed - train service dogs and help Veterans! Warrior Canine Connection has an immediate opening for an experienced Service Dog Training Instructor at our Northern Virginia (NoVA) program location. If you are a passionate, experienced service dog trainer with great people skills, this just might be your dream job!

Warrior Canine Connection is a nonprofit organization with a unique and highly effective service dog training model we call Mission Based Trauma Recovery. In short, active-duty Service Members and Military Veterans with combat related stress are engaged to help us train Golden Retrievers and Labradors to be service dogs. By learning to train service dogs, these Warrior Trainers are given a chance to develop practical skills such as patience, positive reinforcement, emotional regulation, and effective communication skills, while simultaneously helping to prepare the dog to assist a fellow injured Veteran in the future. Our service dogs learn up to 90 commands during a comprehensive, two-year training process. After those two years of training, the dogs are professionally matched with a disabled Veteran who has mobility impairments or psychological injuries.

As a Warrior Canine Connection Service Dog Training Instructor, the Employee will be responsible for the training, socialization and well–being of WCC dogs in training. Instructors provide one-on-one instruction and teach group classes to Warrior Trainers, as well as to puppy parents, third parties, and community volunteers. The Employee is expected to work collaboratively and perform all duties and responsibilities in a timely and professional manner.

This is a full-time position with occasional weekend/evening hours.

This is a job that will truly make a difference in the world, and in the lives of the individual Veterans and Service Members we work with every day.

What the job involves:
Duties and Responsibilities:

A. General:

- Primary and Secondary roles and responsibilities as detailed in the WCC Primary and Secondary Trainer SOP
- Train Golden and Labrador Retrievers to be service dogs, from puppyhood to Advanced Training turn in, through various onsite and field activities.
- Conduct Puppy Parent and volunteer classes in accordance with the schedule and according to the WCC training manual.
- Communicate with Puppy Parents regarding schedules, proper handling, and care of the dogs, and ensure they complete and submit monthly reports.
- Communicate with Puppy Parents and WCC Directors regarding problem behaviors and training progress.
- Review puppy parent monthly reports in a timely manner. Respond to all PP reports, whether in person or in writing, and follow-up promptly on any concerning or unclear information provided.

- Monitor and evaluate the dogs as they progress through training and socialization stages; enter data and complete required forms and reports in a timely manner.
- Routinely evaluate service dogs-in-training and make recommendations for appropriate placement.
- Maintain a clean, safe environment for the dogs and humans at the program site.
- Comply with or exceed Assistance Dog International minimum standards and ethics.
- Participate in staff meetings, professional development, and community awareness activities.
- Participate in programs, trainings, and clinical supervision as required by WCC or the host facility rules.

B. Mission Based Trauma Recovery - MBTR:

- Provide Mission Based Trauma Recovery (MBTR) services to recovering Warriors and their families at designated program site(s) in the Northern VA Region as assigned (e.g. Ft. Belvoir, Virginia VTC, etc.), and on field trips in accordance with program standards and goals.
- Work closely with the NOVA Program Manager and Assistant Director of MBTR Programs
- Understand WCC's KPI, work closely with NOVA Program Manager to ensure that WCC is able to hit projected KPI metrics for current year and projected years.
- Communicate regularly with the Manager of Service Dog Training Programs and other WCC leaders regarding program execution, potential improvements, questions, and other topics related to delivery of MBTR and dog placement recommendations.
- Coordinate with NOVA Program Manager and host facility point of contact (if applicable) to ensure compliance with HIPAA, patient goals, research guidelines, medical record requirements, and facility regulations.
- Establish and maintain strong relationships with referring agencies
- Perform program responsibilities in compliance with contract requirements, host facility rules, instructions from WCC leaders, and WCC policies.
- Maintain proper and accurate record keeping of all administrative taskers, field notes, and indirect documents related to MBTR are completed in a timely manner.

C. Canine Health and Puppy Parent Communications and Support:

- Communicate any emergency canine health problems directly to the Director of Dog Programs and employee's primary supervisor as soon as they are identified. Non-emergency issues should be communicated to your supervisor.
- Ensure WCC dogs-in-training receive monthly flea, tick and heartworm preventatives and any other medications prescribed by a veterinary care provider or Director for Dog Programs.
- Maintain and monitor supplies and equipment for service dogs-in-training and inform manger, or designated supply coordinator, when additional supplies and equipment need to be ordered.
- Transport program dogs, as directed, to receive veterinary care and provide support for exams such as eye and cardiac checks.
- Groom and care for dogs in accordance with Assistance Dogs International and WCC standards and best practices.
- Assist in recruitment of new Puppy Parent volunteers in NoVA Region
- Develop key relationships within the community to expand reach of the Puppy Parent

Program
- Provide timely response to applications, and scheduling of interviews when appropriate.

D. Other:
- Periodically represent WCC at events, participate in presentations to highlight WCC's mission, and conduct demonstrations with WCC dogs as requested. These events will occasionally require travel outside of the MD/VA/DC area.
- Participate in or assist with WCC Social Media platforms as needed (Yappy Hour, Puppy Yoga, etc.)
- Assist with WCC release dog placements, when applicable.
- Periodically assist with skill enhancements, support, evaluations, or recertification tests with graduate teams
- Maintain positive relationships with coworkers, individuals, community groups, government representatives, contractors, volunteers, and organizations that support WCC and/or wounded Warriors and their families.
- Other tasks consistent with the above, as assigned.

Required Experience, Skills, Background:
- Minimum of one (1) year working experience as a service dog trainer or equivalent pet or animal training experience.
- Completion of a service dog training program of no less than 6-12 months, or a combination of education and work experience in the field of service dog training for a minimum of 18 months.
- Demonstrated experience working with individuals with mental health and/or TBI symptoms, understand symptomology related to TBI and PTS/PTSD, and experience working in a healthcare environment.
- Comfort in leading one-to-one or group training sessions.
- Detail oriented and demonstrably strong work ethic – this can be demanding work.
- Friendly, calm, mature, patient, and professional demeanor with excellent communication skills.
- Desire to work with Veterans and the knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively interact and work with Veterans who have experienced combat trauma and/or psychological health or physical injuries.
- The ability to work independently with minimal supervision – you must learn quickly.
- Ability to prioritize work tasks - organization skills and time management are critical.
- Ability to instruct people with a variety of backgrounds and skill levels in the WCC training methodology and best practices for service dog training.
- Knowledge of, and ability to implement, effective training methods, problem solving and instruction for all phases of training (puppy through graduate training).
- Ability to learn and manage a variety of administrative processes.
- Basic computer skills and competency in Microsoft Office applications in order to maintain dog records, training charts, puppy evaluations, etc. Salesforce experience is a plus.
- Ability to pass background check for clearance to work on Federal property (livescan finger printing, TB tests, no felony convictions, etc.).
- Possess a valid driver's license, working vehicle and insurance.
- This is a full-time position with occasional weekend/evening hours.

Desired Background and Experience

- Bachelor's degree.
- Previous experience working with Veterans affected by combat trauma.
- Comfort and experience in public speaking, giving presentations, and engaging with community members, sponsors, and public relations partners.
- Background in one or more of the following: Volunteer Management, Community Outreach, Nonprofit Development, Veteran Services, Social Work, Behavioral Health, Counseling, Rehabilitation Services, or Therapy Dog Handling.

Compensation and Benefits:

Exceptional compensation package including salary, PTO, medical, dental, and retirement benefits for full-time employees.
Job Type: Full-time
Salary: $44,000-50,000 annually; commensurate with experience.

To Apply:

To apply for this position, please provide a cover letter and resume addressed to the Hiring Manager. Emails should be sent to HR@warriorcanineconnection.org, and the subject line should read *"Service Dog Training Instructor – NOVA."*

Warrior Canine Connection is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.