



Job Title: Apprentice Assistance Dog Trainer

Job Status: Full-Time, Non-Exempt

Reports to: National Program Director

Location: Falmouth, MA

To Apply: Send resume to jon@dogsforbetterlives.org

About Us: Are you passionate about making a positive impact on people's lives and having a soft spot for dogs? Look no further than Dogs for Better Lives (DBL)! As a nationally recognized nonprofit organization, DBL is dedicated to professionally training dogs to help people with disabilities and enhance their lives. Our mission is to create a lifelong commitment to all dogs rescued or bred and all people served, which is supported by our nationwide donor base. DBL is nationally recognized by Guidestar, Great Nonprofits, Charity Navigator (9 years with a continues four-star rating), Best of the Upper Cape 2022, Oregon Business' 2021 "Oregon Top 100 Best Nonprofits to Work For," and we are accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). At DBL, we believe in empowering our employees to achieve our goals and serve our clients, dogs, and donors while embracing a work-life balance. As we continue to expand our organization and build upon our past successes, we provide ample opportunities for growth and continued learning. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer, and we welcome employees from diverse backgrounds who share our values. Join us and be part of an employee-driven team that strives to serve more clients while upholding our unwavering commitment to our clients, dogs, and donors.

Benefits:

The position is full time/exempt. We believe in taking good care of our employees and offer an excellent employer-paid benefits package which includes the following: medical, dental, vision, STD/LTD, basic life insurance, generous time off (flex/sick days, vacation, 10 paid holidays) while promoting mental health with our EAP plan.

Job Summary:

The Apprentice Assistance Dog Trainer works with Certified Assistance Dog Trainers and Kennel Technicians during a three-year apprenticeship to master the dog care/training methods of Dogs for Better Lives. The ideal apprentice will also be proficient in public relations, American Sign Language, and people skills necessary to successfully train and place Hearing Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Program Assistance Dogs, and perform follow-up on teams, and be a benefit to the company.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

(1-6 months expectation):

- Receives a basic introduction to American Sign Language.
- Learn all Kennel Tech duties.
- Learn and implement proper procedures for medications, inoculations, and maintenance of dogs' general health.
- Learn and implement proper procedures for grooming and general care of dogs.
- Works in the development and maintenance of the dog training facility, including regular cleaning and feeding.
- Learning foundational dog training skills, progressing a string of dogs
- .

(6-36th month expectation):

- Continues improving American Sign Language skills.
- Learn and implement proper obedience, tasks, and auditory training methods, with the goal of training Assistance Dogs.
- Is responsible for preparing dogs for placement under the guidance of the NTM / TM
- Learn to evaluate Assistance Dog applicants.

- Participates in client/Assistance Dog placement/follow-up (minimum of 5).
- Learns how to provide training to clients during placement/follow-up visits, with continued assistance to client and Assistance Dog for the life of their “team.”
- Learn how to demonstrate Assistance Dog techniques in public settings and professionally represent Dogs for Better Lives through public speaking. Learns and implements people’s skills needed to train clients and help clients and families work through the changes brought about by having an Assistance Dog.
- Learn how to effectively work with the media to present a positive DBL image.
- Perform other duties as required by the organization and the Training Director.

Essential Qualifications:

- High School Diploma or GED required.
- A minimum of one (1) years’ experience working with animals and/or dogs.
- Knowledge of, and experience using, operant conditioning techniques.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite.
- Must pass a criminal background check.
- Have a valid Driver’s License and excellent driving record.
- Must be willing to travel. Travel may involve flying or driving. The length and frequency of travel varies.
- Desire to complete DBL’s three-year Apprentice Training Program and become a Certified Assistance Dog Trainer.
- Excellent written/oral communication and interpersonal skills. Ability to prioritize while working multiple tasks. People and animal oriented. Experienced and comfortable with public speaking.
- For the safety of the employee, other employees, and the dogs, an employee must have hearing within normal limits (for an adult, hearing thresholds no greater than 25 dB HL from 500 Hz through 4000 Hz, for both ears, with or without hearing aids, implants, or other devices. Employees must be able to hear the wide variety of sounds at different levels and pitches from a variety of directions and distances that dogs make while interacting with people and each other. This includes:
 - Detect barking at all levels and tones.
 - Determine direction barking is coming from.
 - Detect change in type of bark, tone, volume.
 - Detect low growl, direction.
 - Hear a dog running behind them.
 - Hear talking in a normal range.
 - When training a dog, the trainer must be able to hear all the sounds and tones that he/she is training the dog to hear to reward behavior and ensure successful outcomes.
- Physically capable of lifting dogs up to 65 pounds, the ability to move quickly, climb stairs, operate office equipment and computers with ease, and the ability to get up and down easily while working and playing with the dogs.
- Ability to communicate using American Sign Language is desirable.

Essential Requirements:

- Enjoy building and maintaining relationships with staff.
- Successfully able to lead self and others through a process and adhere to timelines.
- Shares the passion for the mission of Dogs for Better Lives.
- Self-starter and independent but work collaboratively.
- Highly skilled in interpersonal and written communication.
- Respect and maintain privileged confidential information.
- Values continuous learning and seek ongoing training and development.

Note: This is a job description, not an employment contract. This job description does not state or imply that these are the only duties to be performed by the employee occupying this position. Employees will be required to follow any other job-related duties required by management.