

Guide Dogs.

Position Title: Assistance Dog Trainer / Instructor

Department: Guide & Assistance Dog Services

Reports to: Team Leader- Guide & Assistance Dog Services

Direct Reports: 0

About Us

For nearly 70 years, Guide Dogs Victoria has been breaking down barriers so people can live life without limits. We place our clients at the centre of everything we do, ensuring their goals, preferences and lived experience shape every stage of the service journey.

Our highly trained dogs and specialist services support people living with low vision, blindness, disability, PTSD and other complex needs to build independence, capability, and confidence.

About The Role

We are seeking an experienced and passionate Assistance Dog Instructor to join our Guide and Assistance Dogs team.

This full-time role will support the delivery and continued development of our Assistance Dog Program, which incorporates a variety of assistance dog roles, including dogs trained to support people living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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About You

You are an experienced and thoughtful dog trainer who can balance the needs of the dog, the client and the partnership. You use sound professional judgement, communicate with empathy and adapt your approach to suit different people, dogs and environments.

You are comfortable working with complexity and understand that successful assistance dog partnerships require technical training expertise, strong relationship-building skills and a genuine commitment to animal welfare. You will bring curiosity, accountability and a collaborative approach to a growing and evolving program.

Key Responsibilities

- Train and develop dogs for a variety of assistance roles, including PTSD assistance work.
- Assess each dog's temperament, behaviour, suitability and progression throughout training.
- Develop and implement individualised training plans based on the needs of each dog and prospective client.
- Support the assessment and matching of assistance dogs with suitable clients.
- Deliver individualised client instruction and partnership training.
- Teach clients how to safely and effectively work with, handle and care for their assistance dog.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of assistance dog and client partnerships.
- Provide ongoing follow-up support and respond appropriately to emerging training or partnership needs.
- Promote high standards of dog welfare, ethical training and client safety.
- Contribute to the development and continuous improvement of the Assistance Dog Program.
- Undertake travel and work outside standard hours when required to support dogs and clients.

Qualifications & Experience

Essential

- A minimum Certificate III qualification, or higher, in a relevant field, such as Animal Care Services, Companion Animal Services or Dog Behaviour and Training.
- Demonstrated professional experience in dog training, behaviour and handling.
- Experience developing and implementing structured training plans.
- An understanding of canine learning theory, behaviour, welfare and positive reinforcement-based training.
- Experience assessing and responding to individual dog behaviour and training needs.
- Ability to meet relevant pre-employment screening requirements, including a National Police Check and Working with Children Check.

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Desirable

- Experience training assistance or service dogs.
- Experience supporting clients with disability, mental health conditions or trauma-related needs.
- Knowledge of trauma-informed and person-centred practice.
- Experience delivering client instruction in home and community environments.
- An understanding of Assistance Dogs International standards and accreditation requirements.

What We Offer

- Opportunity to work in an organisation that has been established for over 70 years and has its own breeding, raising and training program.
- The opportunity to contribute to a developing Assistance Dog Program.
- Meaningful work supporting clients to achieve greater independence, confidence and participation.
- A collaborative and supportive team environment.
- Ongoing learning and professional-development opportunities.
- The opportunity to work across a variety of assistance dog roles.

Important

We are an equal opportunity employer committed to providing a work environment that embraces and values diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. We encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities including low vision or blindness, people from CALD and LGBTQIA+ communities, and people of all ages.

We are committed to making reasonable workplace adjustments and supporting candidates through the recruitment and selection process. Please contact our team at hr@guidedogsvictoria.com.au if you require any adjustments.

We recognise and celebrate the diversity of our employees and volunteers and the benefits this brings to our organisation.

Our people enjoy an inclusive and culturally safe work environment free from all forms of discrimination.

Guide Dogs Victoria is a Child Safe organisation.