



Patriot Assistance Dogs

Welcome to Patriot Assistance Dogs

If you feel you may need assistance with any portion of this application, please call 218-850-2425. This number is monitored Monday through Friday from 9am – 3pm Central Time. Do not hesitate to leave a message and a volunteer will return your call and assist you.

This packet will give you a basic understanding of what Patriot Assistance Dogs is, how and why it began, and what the process of receiving a service dog entails from now through completion of the training. Once you have finished filling out the application and collecting all required supporting documents, please send, email, or fax your complete packet back to us for processing.

Thank you for your service.

What is Patriot Assistance Dogs?

Patriot Assistance dogs is a not for profit, charitable organization located within the Lucky Dog Boarding & Training Center, LLC at 1478 Mallard Street, Detroit Lakes MN 56501. This organization was founded in 2011 by a retired Detroit Lakes Police Officer and dog trainer. Our vision is to provide help to Military Veterans with psychological impairments. Patriot Assistance Dogs trains and provides Veterans with service dogs at no out-of-pocket cost for the dog, necessary equipment, or training.

What are Patriot Assistance Dogs?

Patriot Assistance Dogs are service dogs specifically trained to mitigate symptoms associated with mental impairments and/or disabilities for Veterans of the United States Military.

Why are there organizations like Patriot Assistance Dogs?

According to www.ptsd.va.gov (last updated July 2016), anywhere from 11 to 30% of our Military Veterans are experiencing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, varying by service era and deployment. Sadly, Veteransandptsd.com maintains that only 50% of Military Veterans with PTSD seek help, and out of that, only half of those receive minimally adequate treatment (RAND study). To illustrate this in numbers, between 2002 and January of 2014 (only a 12 year span), over 118 thousand soldiers returning from Iraq or Afghanistan were diagnosed with PTSD. If only 25% received even minimally adequate treatment, there is still an enormous need for resources to aid our Veterans. Services such as Patriot Assistance Dogs are essential for the development of coping skills that will allow Veterans to remain participating members of society (Sayer, et al., 2009).

What qualifies me to be a part of Patriot Assistance Dogs?

The requirements for participation in PAD are:

1. Be a U.S. Military Veteran discharged under honorable conditions. We may consider other conditions with an explanation.
2. Be undergoing treatment for mental health impairments. (PTSD, Anxiety, Depression etc.)
The impairment does not have to be service connected.
3. Provide a letter from a licensed mental health care provider recommending the use of a service dog. (Social Worker, Psychologist, Counselor, Psychiatrist, etc.) This person can be a civilian or a VA provider.
4. Be physically and financially capable of providing a safe and secure home for a service dog.
5. Provide two letters of reference from people you know that can verify your ability to care for and provide a safe home for a service dog.
 - a. Upon receipt of a PAD dog you will be required to have a sponsor who will be able to care for your service dog in emergency situations.

b. One of these references should be the individual who agrees to act as your sponsor. The sponsor functions similar to an AA sponsor, not a financial sponsor.

6. Provide a letter from the licensed veterinarian of your choice, acknowledging that you will be using them for the medical care of your service dog. You will be required to sign a release of information so we can maintain contact with your veterinary clinic concerning the health of your service animal.

7. The Veteran must be able to attend a five day class in Detroit Lakes Minnesota, attend training pertinent to your public access test, and be able to attend Public Access testing in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

What can I expect to encounter during this process?

Upon completion of the attached application you can expect to participate in the following steps:

1. Interview and Orientation Board. This board will serve to verify the information provided on the application as well as answer any questions you may have about the program that have not already been addressed. During the interview and orientation process, information will be gathered to help develop an appropriate training plan.

a. Notification of acceptance into the program will typically be given the same day as the interview and orientation.

b. Should information require further evaluation or verification, approval can take up to two weeks.

2. Meeting the trainers and dogs:

a. Typically there will be an initial five day training block. You will be introduced to, and start working with, trained dogs in the program. You will learn about changes that can be expected once you start using a service dog. During this week, topics covered will include:

i. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations

ii. Public Access rights to and accommodations required of public businesses.

There will be several field trips to local vendors with the dogs.

iii. Basic obedience

iv. Care and protection

v. Grooming

vi. Comfort Skills

vii. Team Pictures (a Team refers to the Veteran and dog) for Identification cards

3. After the initial training block, the Veteran takes a dog home on a six week to six month foster contract. During this foster period, the Veteran/dog team is required to complete a mutually agreed upon training schedule. This period allows the bond and work ethic to develop between the Veteran and the dog. Training during this period prepares the Veteran/dog team to pass the final Public Access test which grants the team certification.

Application to participate in the Patriot Assistance Dogs program

Please complete each section by printing legibly

Full Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Cell Phone _____ Land Line _____

E-mail _____

Branch of Service _____ Service Dates _____

Nature of Discharge (honorable, dishonorable, other) _____

Additional Military Service (if any) _____ Service Dates _____

Nature of Discharge (honorable, dishonorable, other) _____

Living Arrangements (own/rent, house/apartment) _____

Please list three symptoms you would like a dog trained to alleviate:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Other information you would like us to consider (personal medical equipment/ other animals in the house/ anything pertinent to bringing a service animal into your life) _____

Please attach the following documents with your completed application:

1. Proof of military service and discharge conditions. This needs to include branch of service and all dates of service. This can be the DD-214, VA certificate of eligibility, etc.

2. One letter from a licensed mental health care provider recommending the use of a **Service Animal**. (An informational letter, "Dear Mental Health Care Provider" follows the application page. Please give this to your mental health care provider to use as a guide.)

3. **Two** letters of reference from individuals you know well that can verify your ability to care for and provide a safe home for a service dog. Please be sure to include contact information (Full name, phone number, address) for each reference if they did not do so.

4. Letter from your Veterinarian of choice, stating they will care for your service animal.

Signature _____ Date _____

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Patriot Assistance Dogs

Mental Health Care Provider,

The Veteran who provided you with this letter is applying to receive a service dog from Patriot Assistance Dogs (PAD). Our dogs are trained specifically to work with military Veterans who suffer from PTSD, TBI, depression, anxiety, and/or other psychiatric challenges. Tasks our dogs may perform may include but are not limited to:

- Waking the Veteran from night sweats and night terrors
- Interrupting panic attacks and road rage
- Guiding the Veteran out of anxiety inducing environments
- Creating a physical (non-aggressive) barrier to protect the Veteran's personal space
- Reminding the Veteran to take medications on schedule

The dogs receive general training to a preset qualification standard; then are matched with Veterans and receive additional training to mitigate each individual's specific conditions. There is no financial cost to the Veteran for the dog, equipment, or training that we provide.

PAD's protocol requires that each Veteran have a letter issued by his or her mental health care provider endorsing the use of a service dog as a portion of their individual treatment program. Our dogs are certified service dogs with full public access rights as opposed to companion animal or emotional support dog (having access only to restricted rental or public housing units) or therapy dogs (owned by one person and trained to bring comfort to many i.e. hospital or nursing home with scheduled visits with scheduled access by invitation only). Please include in your letter a brief diagnosis (PTSD, depression, etc.) and your support/recommendation of the Veteran receiving a service dog. Please have the Veteran sign your standard release of medical privileges/information form and include a copy with your letter. Thank you for supporting this Veteran in obtaining a service dog.

Sincerely,

Susan Pizarro

Administration

Patriot Assistance Dogs

1478 Mallard Street

Detroit Lakes MN 56501

(218) 847-4100