



Patriot Assistance Dogs

Welcome to Patriot Assistance Dogs

If you feel that you may need assistance with any portion of this process or packet please do not hesitate to call 218-847-4100.

A volunteer will return your call and assist you.

This Packet will give you an understanding of what Patriot Assistance Dogs is, how and why it was started, and what the process of receiving a service dog entails from now through completion of the training.



What is Patriot Assistance Dogs (the organization)?

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

What are Patriot Assistance Dogs (the animals)?

Patriot Assistance Dogs are service dogs specifically trained to mitigate symptoms of mental health impairments for Veterans of the United States Military.

Why are there organizations like PAD?

Currently in the United States there are up to 25% of Military Veterans experiencing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. With this number far exceeding a civilian percentage of 4%, services are essential for the development of coping skills that will allow Veterans to participate in society (Sayer, et al., 2009).

What qualifies me to be a part of PAD?

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 references 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.

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 to the program will typically be given the same day as the interview and orientation.
 - b. Should information require further 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 block 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 the Veteran and dog)
- 3) After the initial training block, the Veteran takes a dog home on a six to twelve week 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 dog. Training during this period prepares the Veteran/dog team to pass the final Public Access Test which grants the team certification.

Please attach the following with your completed application:

- a. Proof of military service and discharge under honorable conditions. This can be the Veterans DD214, VA ratings letter, VA certificate of eligibility, etc.
- b. A letter from your 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 to writing your letter.)

Application to participate in the Patriot Assistance Dogs program

Name:

DOB:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Service dates:

Discharge Type:

Living Arrangements:

Special Accommodations requested:

Two References: (During the program you will be required to name someone who will be able to be an emergency point of contact /sponsor for you and your dog. This person should be listed as a reference).

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:



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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 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
- "Clearing" a stairway or room
- 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 has 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 dogs (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 visits with scheduled access by invitation only). Please include in your letter a brief diagnosis (PTSD, depression, etc.) and your support of the Veteran receiving a **service dog**. Please have the Veteran sign your standard release of medical privileges form and include a copy with your letter. Thank you for supporting this Veteran in obtaining a service dog.

Sincerely,

Linda K. Wiedewitsch

Trainer