



## Dog Caretaker

### Background

Freedom Service Dogs of America is a nonprofit organization located in Englewood, CO that unleashes the potential of dogs by transforming them into custom-trained, life-changing assistance dogs for people in need. Clients include children, veterans and active duty military, and other adults. Their disabilities include autism, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

### Summary

**Position Title:** Dog Caretaker

**Position Type:** Full time, non-exempt

**Benefits:** Medical, dental, and vision insurance covered in part by employer; 401k plan with company match.

Provide comprehensive care to the dogs that are being trained by the Organization to assist individuals with disabilities. Ensure the physical and mental well-being of dogs by monitoring their behavior and physical condition, interacting with them continuously and constructively, and providing food, water and other items or care as needed. Responsible for maintaining clean kennel environments. Must be able to communicate any problems or issues in caring for the dogs to the appropriate personnel, and recommend any changes in care. Reports to the Animal Health Manager.

### Essential Functions

The essential functions listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed; the omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to be completed by the position:

#### Kennel Care

- Daily cleaning, sanitizing and set up of all indoor and outdoor dog kennels, perimeter kennel areas, and play yards. Includes spot cleaning as needed.
- Daily cleaning of bedding, toys, food and water bowls.
- Daily set up, break down, and maintenance of play yards including cleaning of equipment and waste disposal buckets.
- Maintaining clean kennel kitchen and food storage areas and monitoring food inventory and expiration dates.
- Continuously running of laundry including folding and storing.
- Ensuring a clean kennel area, kennel kitchen, ISO kitchen, exam room, food storage, bathing/laundry areas, and surrounding hallways and areas are clean. Includes cleaning rugs, sweeping, mopping, clearing drains, wiping surfaces, and trash removal.
- Cleaning travel crates, after transports or as needed. Restocking of crates in vans.
- Tracking of all inventory of all items needed to care for dogs including kennel supplies, supplements, and food, and communicating inventory issues to Animal Health Manager.
- Making treats, PB balls, Kongs, and cutting high value treats, and vegetables for use in kennels. Ensuring treat bins are full in kennel area.
- Directing and organizing volunteers and community service workers who are assisting in the kennel care.
- Gathering food, medication, toys, crates, etc. for dogs going to foster homes.

### **Dog Care**

- Providing food and water to dogs on a daily basis.
- Walking dogs to the play yards throughout the day as needed to urinate and defecate.
- Maintaining strict dietary requirements for each dog, ensuring each dog receives appropriate supplements.
- Providing daily exercise for dogs, including play and walks.
- Maintaining consistent appropriate dog handling and kennel training as directed.
- Assessing the overall health and wellbeing of all dogs. Reporting concerns to the Animal Health Manager.
- Engaging in socialization and enrichment with dogs (includes puzzles, massage, play time, etc.).
- Engaging in grooming dogs and other husbandry tasks, includes trimming nails, cleaning ears, bathing, etc.
- Maintaining Dog Walking board and recording and updating dog location and pertinent information. Maintaining and updating Dog Husbandry board.
- Completing, maintaining, and updating dog health and care logs.
- Driving dogs to and from veterinarian appointments and driving to pick up dog food and other supplies as directed by the Animal Health Manager.
- Providing specialized care for dogs that have post-surgery issues or problems.
- Providing specialized care for dogs that need behavior support.
- Administering and logging medications as directed by the Animal Health Manager.

### **Other**

- Working with assigned dogs and trainers to continue training in the kennels.
- Effectively communicating important information about dogs to co-workers and other staff.
- Noting observations and incidents in the Apricot Database.
- Assisting, educating, and communicating effectively with volunteers and work groups.
- Directing, training, and communicating effectively with community service workers.
- Communicating any problems or issues with the Animal Care Coordinator and the Animal Health Manager.
- Participating in staff meetings, events, and continuing education as requested.
- Other duties that may be as assigned.

### **Supervisory Responsibility**

Responsible for training, directing, and monitoring the Organization's volunteers.

## **Work Environment**

This job operates in dog kennels and surrounding areas. The noise level in the work environment can often be loud. The location is a non-smoking environment.

## **Physical Demands**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, which primarily includes taking care of dogs and their kennels, the employee is regularly required to be very physically active. The employee is frequently required to stand, bend, stoop, kneel, crouch, crawl and perform a variety of physical motions with his or her hands, arms, shoulders and legs in order to properly clean kennels and care for dogs. The employee is often on her or his feet, and is often required to walk, escort visitors or volunteers in or around the kennel areas, and climb or balance. The employee is to communicate regularly with others, though it is also possible that the employee will often have to work alone for long stretches of time.

The employee must be able to manipulate and use all equipment and tools necessary to care for dogs, including leashes, medicines, locking mechanisms, and dog toys. Employee must be able to open packages, measure, and use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls; reach with hands and arms; and talk or hear. Employee must be able to use a writing instrument to record information related to dog care and must be able to use a computer keyboard.

The employee must regularly lift and move up to 50 pounds and frequently lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. This includes the ability to retrieve and distribute dog food and other supplies and ability to retrieve and replace objects from shelves of up to 7 feet high. This job requires handling multiple dogs in training every day of up to 100 pounds on and off leash. The employee will work in proximity to cleaning agents and disinfectants and must be able to follow instructions for the use and storage of these chemicals.

Work occasionally requires more than 40 hours per week to perform the essential duties of the position; may require irregular hours to accommodate unforeseen dog care demands outside of regular hours. During work, the employee is expected to be physically present at the kennels. On occasion, employee must be able to drive a company vehicle.

## **Position Type and Expected Hours of Work**

Full time and part time positions available. Non-exempt. Hours of work are variable Sunday - Saturday from 6:00am- 8:00pm. This position may require working weekends, holidays, and being open to working additional shifts on an as needed basis.

## **Travel**

Generally, only local travel is expected.

## **Required Education, Experience and Competencies**

- Two (2) years experience working with animals in a shelter, animal hospital, or related environment

## **Preferred Education, Experience and Competencies**

- Associates or Bachelors Degree
- Nonprofit work/volunteer experience

## **Required Skills and Competencies**

**Dog Interaction and Training Skills:**

- Must have an affinity for dogs.
- Must be able to adapt to requirements of dog care, which change on a daily basis.
- Immediately after hire, must complete a dog handling class offered by Freedom Service Dogs and consistently implement training techniques.
- Must be able to work in a fast paced environment.
- Must be able to work cooperatively in a team environment.
- Must be able to stay focused despite numerous distractions and multiple tasks.

**Language and Communication Skills:**

- Ability to communicate effectively with peers, direct reports, management, clients, partners, donors, vendors and stakeholders.
- Approaches others in a tactful manner; reacts well under pressure; treats others with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position; accepts responsibility for own actions; follows through on commitments.
- Routinely utilize advanced English language skills to edit documents and to prepare reports and correspondence, including spelling, sentence structure, syntax, grammar, usage, and the chief aspects of style, such as punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, plurals and possessives, and compound words.
- Interpersonal skills necessary to communicate and follow instructions effectively with a diverse group of staff and provide information with ordinary courtesy, patience and tact.

**Reasoning Ability:**

- Ability to solve practical problems and deal in a variety of situations using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Ability to interpret and to apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral, or diagram form.

**Office Skills**

- Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook and typing proficiency.
- Proficiency in using a database system.
- Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions, and procedure manuals.

**Additional Eligibility Qualifications**

Must have a valid driver's license and maintain current vehicle insurance.

**Work Authorization/Security Clearance (if applicable)**

Must be authorized to work in the United States.

**Other Duties**

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Essential and marginal job duties, responsibilities and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

**Equal Opportunity Employment**

Freedom Service Dogs is dedicated to the principles of equal employment opportunity in any term, condition, or privilege of employment. We do not discriminate against applicants, clients, graduates or employees on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, physical or mental disability, or any other status protected by state or local law.

**To Apply**

To apply, please send your resume and cover letter to Stephanie Guild, Animal Health Manager, at [SGuild@freedomsvicedogs.org](mailto:SGuild@freedomsvicedogs.org).