



Assistance Dog Training Manager

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. Freedom Service Dogs is an accredited member of Assistance Dogs International.

Position Summary

- Position Title:** Assistance Dog Training Manager
- Position Type:** Full-time, exempt position consisting of approximately 40 hours of work per week. Occasional evenings and/or weekends required to assist with dog and client needs.
- Compensation:** Commensurate with experience
- Benefits:** Medical, dental, and vision insurance covered in part by employer; 401k plan with company match.

Under the direction and guidance of the Director of Dog Operations, this position will cultivate a productive and cohesive assistance dog training team by implementing strategies for both human and canine participants aimed at meeting or exceeding Freedom Service Dogs (FSD) client placement goals. The Assistance Dog Training Manager will manage, lead and provide direct supervision to assistance dog trainers who provide advanced dog training, including the design of programs aimed at meeting FSD's placement goals consistent with Assistance Dogs International standards (ADI).

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:

Assistance Dog Training

- Provide leadership and coaching to service dog trainers relative to the performance of initiatives aimed at meeting FSD's training and client placement goals.
- Provide one-on-one and group training support in the form of timely assessment observations, evaluations, skill demonstration, and public outings aimed at achieving FSD's training and client placement goals.
- Assess service dog trainer's skills to create consistency of training.
- Provide training strategies including custom task training.
- Monitor progress of adult dogs in training from arrival to campus through matching and client placement.
- Develop and implement measures designed to improve processes and efficiencies in the dog training program.
- Expand and formalize training curriculum that identifies obedience and program milestones within a logical progression to ensure quality control for training team and dogs in training aimed at client placement in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Work with Client Services Director to identify custom tasks needed to ensure training is meeting client needs.

- Monitor and coach trainers in objective reporting of their dogs' behaviors utilizing collected data.
- Collaborate productively with peer Dog Operations managers to plan for in for training (IFT) recall to campus following puppy raising, health care exams and tests in a timely manner to determine program eligibility and make trainer team assignments.
- Perform Guide Dog Behavior Assessment Test (GDBArT) and Behavior Checklist (BCL) scoring on each adult dog recalled to campus IFT following puppy raising to determine a dog's behavioral suitability for continuing in FSD's service dog training program.
- Ensure appropriate equipment is ordered and available for adult dogs-in-training.
- Manage and monitor play group schedules as needed.
- Identify and provide continuing education opportunities to ensure trainers are informed of professional and industry trends in a consistently evolving field.
- Participate in continuing education related to dog training, dog behavior, and innovative training/teaching methods.

Client Services

- Provide Client Services Team with comprehensive dog profiles to assist in the matching of clients and dogs in accordance with FSD and ADI standards.
- Make recommendations for appropriate client placement based on Manager's own observations and experience in handling each dog in various settings.
- Assist Director of Client Services in scheduling a minimum of four (4) two-week placement classes per year.
- Ensure Dog Trainers schedule additional one (1) week in-home training for each client in placement class.
- Assist Director of Client Services in scheduling Operation Full Circle and Discos Dogs placement classes as needed pending clients' ability to participate.
- Plan and implement Dog Trainers' participation in placement classes, Operation Full Circle classes, and Discos Dogs classes. Participate in continuing education related to mental health, disabilities, animal assisted therapy, veterans, children with disabilities, and related client needs.

Data Collection & Reporting

- Ensure training team enters all required data and documentation into Apricot database in a timely manner.
- Review trainer entered data on dog progress and proactively manage a trainer's progress with dogs in FSD training program.
- Create and administer yearly assistance dog training budgets.
- Consistent reporting of data aimed at providing the Director of Dog Operations and peer managers with the necessary information in support of all programmatic goals.

Volunteers

- Co-supervise the Client and Volunteer Trainer to provide timely training support to program graduates and volunteers assisting in dog socialization, walking and training.
- Direct and support trainers engaged with various volunteer training activities.
- Direct and support trainers engaged in providing Volunteer mentorship support opportunities to volunteers as needed.

Other

- Represent FSD at community events, participate in presentations and conduct demonstrations as requested.
- Assist with kennel care and cleaning as needed.
- Drive company vehicle to transport dogs or other needs of the Organization.
- Other duties that may be assigned.

Supervisory Responsibility

This position supervises Dog Trainers and must carry out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include: interviewing, hiring and training dog trainers; planning and directing work; approving and

tracking employee hours and paid time off; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining; addressing complaints and resolving problems.

Required Education, Experience and Competencies

- Advanced degree in animal behavior, animal-assisted therapy, biology, zoology, veterinary technology, animal husbandry, kennel management, education, or closely related field.
- Two (2) years in a supervisory and management position responsible for the performance of five (5) or more employees.
- Three (3) years experience with a member agency of Assistance Dogs International.
- Five (5) to seven (7) years training experience working in a service dog facility.
- Has worked professionally and assisted in training at least 30 service dogs.
- Has participated professionally in at least 20-50 client placements and trainings.
- Experience in evaluating temperament for successful service dog candidates.
- Must have a working understanding of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) accreditation standards and ethics.
- Must be able to produce effective working teams that meet or exceed ADI Standards (i.e., Public Access Test, demonstration of tasks).
- Must be competent in all the tasks assigned to a Kennel Technician and Trainer with an affiliate ADI organization.
- Must possess up to date knowledge of best practices in the areas of learning theory, canine behavior, canine care and safety, and a variety of positive reinforcement training techniques.
- Experience working with people with disabilities.
- Must consent and be able to pass a criminal background check.

Preferred Education, Experience and Competencies

- Dog Obedience certification from an accredited canine training institution.
- Canine Good Citizen Evaluator.

Required Skills and Competencies

Client Interaction and Dog Training Skills:

- Must be customer service focused to meet needs of clients.
- Must be knowledgeable in dog training techniques in accordance to FSD and Assistance Dogs International standards.
- Must be able to learn service dog assessment testing (GDBArT/BCL) and have the ability to refine training based on evaluation of dogs.

Intellectual Skills:

- Ability to collect and analyze dog behavior and training data to make recommendations to management to improve graduation rates of dogs in training.
- Ability to display original thinking and creativity and meet challenges with resourcefulness.
- Ability to speak clearly and persuasively in positive and negative situations, listen and get clarification, and respond well to questions.
- Ability to make presentations comfortably to small and large groups.

Leadership Skills:

- Exhibit confidence in self and others; inspire and motivate others to perform well; effectively influence actions and opinions of others.
- Ability to make decisions with sound and accurate judgment; support and explain reasoning for decisions and include appropriate people in decision-making process; make timely decisions.
- Ability to develop strategies to achieve organizational goals; understand organization's strength and weaknesses and adapt strategy to changing conditions.

- Ability to manage change; develop workable implementation plans; communicate change effectively; build commitment and overcome resistance to change; and support those affected by change.

Language and Communication Skills:

- Ability to communicate effectively with peers, direct reports, management, clients, partners, donors, vendors and stakeholders.
- Approach others in a tactful manner; react well under pressure; treat others with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position; accept responsibility for own actions; follow 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.
- Possess 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.
- Ability to maintain a high level of mental concentration and effort and strain when performing a high volume of analyses and decision making as well as other essential duties.

Office Skills

- Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook and typing proficiency.
- Proficiency in database management.
- 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

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.

Work Environment

This job operates in both a professional office environment and in dog kennels and surrounding areas. The noise level in the office work environment is usually moderate. The noise level in dog kennels 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 includes both taking care of dogs and working in an office environment. When training and taking care of dogs, the employee is regularly required to be very physically active. When working in the office, the employee is regularly required to sit.

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, legs in order to properly test, transport and train 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, play yards and training areas; climb and balance; go up and down stairs; and utilize elevators. The employee must be able to manipulate and use all equipment and tools necessary to care for and transport dogs, including leashes, medicines, locking medicines, balance harnesses, wheelchairs, and clickers used for training.

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 to retrieve and replace objects from shelves. 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.

The employee must be able to open packages, measure, and use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects tools, keyboards or controls; reach with hands and arms; and talk or hear. The employee must have the ability to bend, stretch and lift files and books from drawers and shelves and replace same; rapidly use printers, computer equipment, copy machine, and other general office machines. The employee is expected to communicate frequently with others.

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 and client demands outside of regular hours. During work, the employee is expected to be physically present at the office when not on an outing with a dog in training or with a client/dog team in training.

Travel

Local travel, such as travel to dog and client outings are expected. Occasional out of state or in-state travel may be required due to client or organization needs.

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 email your resume and cover letter to info@freedom servicedogs.org with the subject line "Assistance Dog Training Manager".