

Making Dogs Your Career

Dogs with Wings Assistance Dog Society | July 2014

If your life passion involves dogs, know that there's never been a better time to consider the many dog-related career options available to you, starting just around the corner.

Currently almost every urban core and suburban areas have well-established shelters and dog pounds where abandoned, abused or neglected dogs are surrendered. Many of them need help.

Volunteering is one of the most important initial preparations for a dog oriented career. By volunteering at your local shelter you're allowing yourself to see if your love of dogs goes deep enough to understand their unique needs, appreciate their behaviours and effectively work with their limitations.

The other benefit of volunteering at a dog shelter is the opportunity to be introduced to the many dog breeds and the specific personality traits that come with each.

If you're dealing with a fear of a certain type of breed, volunteering to work with that breed is allowing you some important hours clocked with that breed, not only to confront your own fears, but also to prove to potential clients or employers that your dog experience is well-rounded and thorough.

Within six months of volunteering at a shelter and working directly with a large selection of dog breeds, you'll know whether your dog-loving can turn professional.

If you choose to make a career out of dogs, then your choices are plentiful:

- If **dog health and healing** is the attraction, you'd be wise to study the many options for entering into a canine veterinary career.
- If **behavior and training** is the area that most interests you can consider becoming a professional canine behavior specialist or a dog trainer. In these careers, you'll be working with canines in every field from aviation, armed forces, police and security to the performing arts.
- Perhaps your real interest is in **dog shows**. With increasing popularity, local dog shows that lead to national and international competitions, are popping up everywhere. Each needs producers, breed specialists and of course, dog handlers. These are the special humans who know exactly the very exquisite way that each breed must be 'shown' on the runways. For this career, you'll need a flare for showmanship as it's typically the personality of both the dog and the handler that judges assess.
- Finally, if **how dogs look** is your true calling, then a career as a professional dog groomer is the perfect fit for you. You might also consider becoming a dog photographer since everyone's favorite family member needs a memorable portrait.
- Not interested in a profession or full time work, only keen to do a little **part time work** with dogs? Consider applying to be a dog walker, dog sitter, a part-time dog groomer or working part-time in a pet supply store. Here your knowledge of products to make dogs and dog owners happy will ensure customers keep returning.

Any path you choose to take, know that understanding, appreciating and being able to work well with man's best friend will offer you happiness and the knowledge you are doing good for others.

About Dogs with Wings:

Dogs with Wings is a leader in the international community of assistance dog training schools. The organization exists to serve people with disabilities. They work collaboratively, and in partnership with other organizations that provide assistance dogs to people with disabilities.

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