



Facility Dog Information Package

About Dogs with Wings (DWW)

Our mission is to foster integration and independence for people with disabilities by providing them with highly trained assistance dogs and aftercare.

Our goal is simple: to change lives for the better.

Dogs with Wings has been providing highly-trained Guide and Assistance Dogs to Albertans since 1996. Our school is accredited by both *Assistance Dogs International* (ADI) and the *International Guide Dog Federation* (IGDF), which sets and maintains standards for organizations like ours around the world. We re-certify every five years to ensure we continue to offer best practices to our clients and produce the very best assistance dogs possible.

We have developed our own Breeding Program to give us a steady supply of dogs of known health and temperament. We exclusively use Labrador Retrievers and some Labrador X Golden Retrievers. These breeds are chosen due to their even temperament, willingness to please and adaptability. Their size and strength also make them suitable as assistance dogs.

Right from birth, our dogs live with volunteer families who provide them with caring homes in which to grow and learn. Our adult dogs in training work with highly-qualified Instructors to learn the skills they will need to work with and for our clients. Our dogs are in school for approximately two years before they are ready to be qualified as a “dog with wings”. More information about our Fostering Program and other Volunteer Programs, may be found on our website: www.dogswithwings.ca

For more information on Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and the importance of accredited dogs please visit: <http://www.assistancedogsinternational.org/>

For more information on other ADI certified service dog schools in Canada please visit: Canadian Association of Guide and Assistance Dog Schools <http://www.cagads.com/>



Overview of Our Facility Dog Program

Facility Dogs are part of a specially trained dog/handler team that provides goal directed interventions which promote improvement in physical, social, emotional or cognitive abilities. A Facility Dog is directed by a professional with specialized expertise and within the scope of practice of their profession. These dogs may work in a variety of settings, groups or individual in nature. When not at work, the dog lives with their primary handler as part of their family.

Facility dogs are trained for:

- stress and anxiety reduction for children and adults
- companionship
- relationship building
- learning opportunities
- canine-assisted education
- canine-assisted intervention

Application Process

Dogs with Wings has developed a detailed application process for our Facility Dog Program to ensure the success of each team. Applicants must first meet the following criteria:

- Applicants are assessed on a case by case basis.
- Facilities must demonstrate that the future workload and responsibilities of the Facility Dog requires a trained Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Facility Dog (i.e., they cannot utilize a therapy or pet dog at their facility to fulfil their purpose in applying).
- Both the facility and the Primary Handler must apply for the Facility Dog.
- Facilities must have a budget in place of a minimum of \$5,000 for the Facility Dog.

Follow These Steps:

- Read through relevant information in this handout and on the website, to make sure a Facility Dog is right for your facility.
- Download and fill out a letter of intent.
- If you meet the necessary criteria, our Client Services Coordinator will invite you to fill out an application.
- Using the checklist in the application form, make sure application is complete, and submit all forms to DWW.
- **Once the application is complete and all forms have been submitted**, DWW will review information and contact references.
- You will then be contacted and may be invited to take part in a preliminary interview at your facility.



- DWW will determine whether you and your facility would benefit from one of our dogs, and will contact you with our decision.
- If we approve you for a Facility Dog, the application will move forward and we will welcome you to our wait list. This approval is conditional: this means we will continue to assess your needs while you are in line for a Facility Dog, as your needs or situation may change, or our ability to satisfy your needs may change.

A **Conditional Approval** is granted after the interview and dog session are completed. DWW meets as a team to discuss whether your facility will be conditionally approved. This indicates we will continue to assess the facility's needs while on our waiting list for a Facility Dog. Situations, needs and circumstances continually change, as well as our ability to satisfy your needs may also change. We ask that you stay in contact with our office to provide any updates, news and relevant information. Please note a conditional approval does not guarantee a Facility Dog will be placed with your facility. DWW reserves the right to close an application at any time.

*Please note: Due to a high volume of applications, DWW is unable to approve all interested applicants and is also unable to disclose reasons or information pertaining to an applicant that is declined. We work towards providing you with a dog that matches you and your organization's needs, activity level, and personalities. Please be aware this can be a lengthy process, with our goal being to make the best match possible.

Unfortunately, **it could take up to two or three years before we have a Facility Dog for you.** Please keep us informed if anything changes during this time that may affect your application. This includes:

- keeping contact information up to date
- alerting our office of a move or change in work or living arrangements
- alerting our office to a job change or change in school or facility
- advising our office any pets are added to your family
- advising our office of any changing family dynamics
- advising our office if your needs have changed

We'd also like to know if you have applied to any other Facility Dog providers. Applying to other providers won't affect your application with us, but if you receive a dog from another provider, we need to know as you would then be removed from our waiting list.

Team Training

Once a match is made, DWW will give you 4-6 weeks' notice to prepare. We require the primary handler attends the initial team training of one week in Edmonton (Sunday through Saturday). A secondary handler will be considered six months post placement of the Facility Dog.

DWW works directly with a local hotel that provides discounted accommodations for the duration of Team Training. Applicants are responsible for paying for their own food and accommodations during Team Training, as well as a \$250 team training fee that covers the costs of all of the dog's equipment.



Team Training will include:

- bonding with your new family member, learning their cues, and working together as a team
- education regarding health and veterinary care of the dog
- education regarding taking a dog out in public (Public Access) and how to respond to attention
- learning about legislation and your rights
- connecting with a graduate family who currently uses one of our Facility Dogs

At the end of Team Training, the handler/dog team will undergo the Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Public Access Test. During the Public Access Test, we will assess your dog handling and problem solving skills, and your ability to safely use a Facility Dog in public. These skills will be developed during Team Training, and we will work with you and the dog throughout this process to help you be successful.

Post Placement Expectations

After receiving a DWW Facility Dog, there are certain requirements that must continue to be met. Having a Facility dog can provide many benefits, but it is also a big responsibility and a long-term commitment. Applicants must be prepared to care for and meet the needs of a Facility Dog for the next seven to ten years.

DWW will continue to provide ongoing support after a dog has been placed, for the lifetime of the dog. We encourage clients to contact us if you have any questions or issues you need help with.

Part of your obligation as a recipient of a DWW Facility Dog, is to provide progress reports on a regular basis. DWW will also conduct work environment visits and do check-ins to ensure the dog/handler team is still working well together. After the first year, DWW will connect with clients yearly, either in person, over the phone, or via an internet video call (ex: Skype). There is also the possibility the dog/handler team will repeat the Public Access Test, at the discretion of DWW and a Senior Instructor.

DWW maintains ownership of the dog. If we feel our trained Facility Dog is not being well cared for; if their optimal weight is not being maintained; or they are not being used for their intended purpose, we can decide to remove the dog from the work environment.

Succession Planning: If the Primary Handler is no longer employed, able to fill their employment commitments or changing jobs, it is at the discretion of DWW to decide the future of the dog and the final decision lies with DWW.



Ongoing Responsibilities and Expectations:

Estimated Average Yearly Budget for a Facility Dog

<u>Item</u>	<u>Initial cost</u>	<u>Expected yearly cost</u>
Application to DWW	\$50.00	N/A
Dog Food	\$80.00	\$960.00
Veterinary Care	N/A	\$300.00 – \$500.00
Pet Insurance	N/A	\$300.00 – \$600.00
Replacement Equipment	N/A	\$50.00 – \$200.00
Dog Toys/ Beds/ Treats	N/A	\$250.00
Team Training	Approximate \$1,500 – \$2,000	
*VSU – Start Up	\$5,000.00	
*VSU- Placement	Approximate \$600.00	

- Dog Food — we recommend suitable, high quality foods.
- Regular Veterinary Care — this includes check-ups and regular vaccinations, etc. We estimate the cost of vet care to be around \$300.00 – 500.00 per year for healthy dog maintenance.
- Replacement Equipment — this includes working vests, leashes, and collars. DWW can provide these items for you at cost.
- Pet Insurance — in order that you are able to plan for the dog’s health care needs, **we require you to purchase Pet Insurance**. The cost may vary from \$300.00-\$600.00 per year, depending on your deductible. We are happy to provide you with additional information if desired.
- Victim Service Units must have a minimum start-up fund of \$5,000.00 in place. This will cover necessary items such as beds, specialized items for jump bags, working vests, travel, etc.

Grooming, Health, and Veterinary Care

As recipients of a DWW Facility Dog, you will become ambassadors for our Program within the community. As such, our expectations are that appearance of our dog is maintained, and grooming be conducted on a regular basis.



Having a Facility Dog in the work environment means a little extra work, just like owning a pet dog. Clients need to be prepared to deal with day-to-day actions such as shedding, dog hair in the office, drool, and be comfortable picking up the dog's waste. Grooming and maintaining the Facility Dog's appearance is an important step in caring for a dog, and needs to be done on a daily basis. Daily brushing is a good opportunity to conduct a health check to ensure there is nothing amiss with the dog. This will also help with shedding. Cleaning ears, teeth, bathing, checking eyes and trimming toenails are also important factors our clients need to be prepared for.

Along with maintaining the dog's physical appearance, it is also important to look after the health of the dog. The healthier the Facility Dog, the longer they can work. We expect recipients to adhere to our feeding guidelines and keep the dog within a certain weight range. We require progress reports on a regular basis, and will be checking in to make sure the dog is in optimal health.

It is the responsibility of the primary handler to ensure the dog has a veterinarian checkup at least once a year, and all vaccinations are kept up to date. It is important to have a veterinarian you can trust. We would be happy to make suggestions regarding veterinarian care in your area.

Continued Practice of Skills

In order that your Facility Dog continues to work effectively, we expect recipients to continue practicing skills the dog has learned in training. Unlike a human assistant or mechanical assistive device, the effectiveness of a Facility Dog depends greatly on the handler; a willingness to be firm, full of praise and consistency is essential. A Facility dog cannot be "turned off" and tucked away when not needed. They require daily care, training, exercise and affection. This helps keep their skills fluent and sharp so they can continue to meet the organization's needs.

The life of a Facility Dog isn't all work and no play. It is important to ensure the dog receives adequate "time off" as well, including play time to maintain balance and a healthy lifestyle for the dog.

Traveling with a Facility Dog

Traveling with a Facility Dog requires some extra effort and research beforehand. This includes:

- ensuring appropriate vaccines are up to date
- acquiring preventative medication for internal and external parasites for the specific region you are visiting
- having an International Health Certificate if travelling outside of Canada
- researching what the different airline requirements may be

In the event that you cannot travel with the Facility Dog, we would prefer they were left with a trusted friend or family member while you are gone. **Our Facility dogs are never to be left in a boarding kennel.**



Fundraising

DWW relies solely on the fundraising efforts of our Staff, Volunteers, Clients and the General Public in order to continue providing quality trained Facility dogs at almost no cost to families. The cost to breed, raise, train, place and provide follow up care for each dog is approximately \$40,000. If you are able to assist us in this important work, we would be happy to discuss fundraising opportunities with you. DWW Staff are available to assist in planning and executing your fundraising efforts. However, it is important to understand you are not required to raise money for DWW, and your inability to assist in this regard will not play a part whatsoever in assessing your application, or in the decision to place a Facility Dog with you.