



Job Description: Service Dog Trainer, Full-Time, Temporary Contract

Position Title & Type: Service Dog Trainer, Full-Time, Temporary Contract (Leave coverage until April 1, 2026, with potential to extend)

Location: Dogs with Wings Assistance Dog Society, Edmonton, AB

Reports To: Director, Canine Operations

Position Overview:

Dogs with Wings operates on five core organizational values: **well-being, compassion, harmony, connection, and hope**. These values are essential to fostering teamwork, respect, and collaboration within our organization. By living these values in a meaningful way, we create an environment that supports positive enrichment for everyone—our staff, volunteers, clients, and the dogs we train.

Dogs with Wings is also guided by a clearly defined **training philosophy**, grounded in **positive reinforcement** and the **Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) approach**. We follow the **humane hierarchy** and take these principles seriously. All trainers must be committed to upholding this philosophy; violations may result in consequences to maintain the integrity and welfare of the dogs in our program.

The **Service Dog Trainer** plays a vital hands-on role in the development of our Service Dogs in training. This role involves working independently to implement training plans, problem-solve behavior concerns, and prepare dogs for eventual placement with individuals with disabilities or in facility settings. While support and collaboration from our training team are available, trainers are expected to be proactive, self-motivated, and capable of working with minimal supervision.

Key Responsibilities:

Canine Training and Development:

- Deliver daily training sessions to assigned dogs following Dogs with Wings' protocols, ensuring the consistent development of skills related to obedience, task work, and public access readiness.
- Problem-solve behavior challenges independently, while consulting with the broader team as needed.
- Document progress and challenges for each dog, adjusting plans to meet individual needs.
- Participate in training field trips to reinforce real-world skills and assess readiness.



- Apply positive reinforcement methods and adhere strictly to LIMA principles.

Canine Health and Welfare:

- Monitor each dog's physical and mental well-being on an ongoing basis.
- Maintain exercise, enrichment, and nutrition routines tailored to each dog's needs.
- Collaborate with the veterinary team Dogs with Wings works to ensure proactive and responsive health care for all dogs.
- Keep accurate health and behavior records and report any concerns promptly.

Client and Program Support:

- Support client training during pre-placement, team training, and post-placement phases.
- Conduct client check-ins and follow-ups, including home or public access visits when necessary.
- **Willingness to travel regionally for client support** (access to a vehicle and valid driver's license required).
- Work collaboratively with fellow trainers, volunteers, and foster homes to ensure continuity in training and care.
- Mentor volunteers and temporary caregivers in applying consistent handling and training techniques.
- Participate in team meetings and contribute to the collective development of training strategies and protocols.

Qualifications:

- Minimum 2 years of hands-on experience in dog training, preferably working with or Service Dogs.
- Strong understanding of canine learning theory, behavior, and humane training practices.
- Ability to work independently with minimal direction while maintaining high standards.
- Willingness and ability to learn Dogs with Wings' training protocols and adapt accordingly.
- Strong problem-solving, observational, and communication skills.
- Ability to manage multiple dogs, tasks, and timelines in a fast-paced environment.
- Comfortable with physical aspects of the job (e.g., lifting dogs, walking long distances, working in various environments).
- **Must have a valid driver's license and access to a reliable vehicle for work-related travel.**



- High school diploma required; additional education or certifications in animal behavior or training is an asset but not required.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience in a Service Dog, Assistance Dog, or Working Dog program.
- Experience working with individuals with disabilities or in human services is an asset.
- Formal education or coursework in animal training, ethology, or related fields is a plus.

Compensation:

Dogs with Wings offers a competitive salary based on experience. This position includes a **three-month probationary period** to ensure a good fit for both the employee and the organization. As this is a full-time **temporary contract position**, it is **not eligible for employee benefits**. In lieu of paid vacation, employees receive **4% vacation pay** on each pay period and sick time will be prorated to align with the term.

We value work-life balance and offer flexibility for appointments and personal needs, along with a supportive, dog-friendly, and collaborative work environment. Team members are encouraged to pursue **professional development** through ongoing training and learning opportunities.

Dogs with Wings is an **equal opportunity employer** and welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds to apply.

How to Apply:

If you are passionate about working with dogs, enjoy seeing the impact of your training on the lives of others, and are ready to take initiative and grow within a mission-driven organization—**we want to hear from you**.

Please submit your resume and cover letter to Piera Angotti, Chief Operating Officer at piera@dogswithwings.ca

Application Deadline:

Applications will be accepted until a suitable candidate is found.

Please note: Interviews may be scheduled throughout the posting period, so we encourage interested applicants to apply early.