



PTSD/ Trauma program

Applicant information – September 2025

As we move into our 30th year, we're incredibly proud to launch our new **PTSD/Trauma Service Dog program**. Under the expert guidance of our specialized therapy team and trained staff, we believe this program will empower individuals to achieve their goals and assist in achieving emotional well-being and a greater sense of independence.

We're the first ADI Accredited school in Canada to open applications to the public for this program, and we expect a high volume of interest. While there are basic criteria, we strongly encourage you to clearly articulate **why** a PTSD/Trauma Service Dog from DWW is the right fit for you and how it will transform your daily life. Let us hear your story!

We understand the application process can feel extensive, even invasive at times. This thoroughness is crucial because our dogs' well-being is paramount. We've dedicated ourselves to breeding, training, and supporting them to ensure they're perfectly matched with the right client in the right situation. We also deeply care about your journey, recognizing how overwhelming PTSD/Trauma is. You deserve the best possible Service Dog to support you.

What you share with DWW is confidential. However, your therapists' and (select limited DWW staff) participation is a vital part of this process. We'll require your written and informed consent to collaborate with them, ensuring the best possible rapport and fit for you and a future Service Dog.

If you're placed on a waiting list, we'll keep you updated on your status in the queue. We know waiting is difficult, but training and placing these incredible dogs is significant work, and good things often take time. While you wait, we encourage you to stay positive and focus on your well-being in preparation for the day we may call you with great news and a perfect fit! (Please note, applying does not guarantee acceptance.)

From all of us at DWW, thank you for your interest. Be well.

-Dogs with Wings



Application criteria

To be eligible for our PTSD/Trauma Service Dog program, we require that you:

- Have a profound love of dogs, backed by a **wholesome understanding** of dog behavior, needs, and communication.
- Have a **diagnosis of PTSD or CPTSD**, confirmed by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.
- Are **actively engaged in therapy** with a licensed professional, attending sessions at least 1-2 times per month. Your therapist must be available for our team training week and for consultations in a timely manner throughout your partnership with DWW.
- Have an **evolving treatment plan** made available confidentially to key DWW staff to develop a custom Service Dog training program focused on your personal, community, and social well-being, remaining committed to your progress throughout your partnership with DWW.
- Are dedicated to **ongoing personal development and skill-building**.
- Have a **strong support system**, including at least one other trusted adult in your home or available for regular visits
- Are able to **fully care for a Service Dog**, including providing food, vet care, enrichment, and all necessary supplies.
- Pay an **annual fee of \$1500.00 to DWW (or \$125.00 per month)**. If this fee is a barrier, please ask us for our financial planning materials; we're here to help you plan for this cost!
- Are committed to maintaining a **positive and respectful working relationship with DWW**. Please note that the dogs we breed, train, and place remain the property of DWW for the duration of the Service Dog agreement. A strong partnership is vital for everyone's success. It's important that DWW employees, volunteers, and partners receive respectful communication from you and your support team on a regular and timely basis. Hostile, aggressive, disrespectful behavior and attitudes may result in a Service Dog being removed from your care at any time. Removal is at the sole discretion of DWW CEO and/or COO.
- Have a safe home **visited and approved** by DWW staff.
- There will be no more than 2 additional pets/animals in the home. **No other dogs are permitted.**
- DWW staff must have access to the Service Dog for monitoring and supervision, and Public Access Tests.
- Public Access Tests must be passed (yearly) by the client and Service Dog.

Application process

- Application submitted for review. Should you meet the requirements:
- A discussion with a trusted Registered Psychologist contracted by DWW



- A Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check – completed within 3 months of application and completed yearly thereafter at applicant expense.
- Support documents to verify application. (Diagnostic files, treatment plan summary, support network information)
- A therapist-to-therapist discussion. (External consulting at applicant expense. Typically, \$225/hr.)
- An in-person meeting with the entire team.
- 3 reference checks. Additional details will be provided.
- A home visit to ensure safety, security, and proper placement.
- Attend Team Training—our in-person training where you learn to care for and partner with a Service Dog which may last up to 7 days. *It is mandatory that a support person (such as a spouse, partner, or someone who lives with you) attend and be present for the **entire** duration of the training.
- Year one payment and contract signing to make it official.
- Ongoing check-ins and home visits as needed / yearly.
- Signed documents and an ongoing up to date client file.

Preventative considerations

- You have a history of drug and alcohol use that is not supported by a minimum of 2 years of sobriety
- You have a history of aggression and violence
- You plan to smoke around the dog (specifically in confined closed spaces)
- You have a criminal record and are not able to pass a vulnerable sector check
- You don't view this as a partnership with DWW
- You cannot pay for the dog's living costs
- You do not have a robust support team or therapeutic supports
- You are not committed to healing and well-being
- You demonstrate disrespectful behavior, utter threats, or have an avoidant or aggressive nature that causes concern or non-compliance.
- Your references disclose details that are not in alignment with DWW policies and procedures.

How to apply

- Send us your application to psych@dogswithwings.ca and we will follow-up



DWW PTSD/Trauma Service Dog Application

A successful application includes the following:

- Name
- Birthdate
- Address
- Copies of your ID
- Diagnosis confirmation and details of how it affects you in your day-to-day life
- A summary of your situation (Up to 2 pages max.)
- Do you work? If so, please provide details of your position and how a Service Dog may assist you day to day
- How will a Service Dog support you?
- Do you have the permission of your landlord/employer for a large breed Service Dog?
- Preventative concerns or worries, if you are approved
- Are you able and willing to obtain personal insurance (if needed) for the Service Dog?
- A signed release form (provided to you if your application advances)
- Do you have any other animals in the home?
- Who lives with you?
- Is there a history of violence in your home or have you experienced violent tendencies?
- Do you take medication? If so, what do you take? Are there any side effects?
- Are you clean and sober for a minimum of 2 years? Do you attend meetings?
- Name of your therapist and length of tenure
- What do you do in the community? Would the Service Dog accompany you?
- Where would the Service Dog sleep?
- Do you have the financial means to pay the \$1500.00 yearly fee?
- Are you able to provide water, food, vet care and physical activity and enrichment for the Service Dog?
- What are some of your personal goals and how do you plan to achieve them?
- Do you have a robust support system?
- Are there any home safety concerns?
- Details on how you will communicate with DWW if there are issues or concerns with the Service Dog or transitional worries. Please outline steps you will take to rectify any concerns.
- **Please explain how your goals tie into greater future independence.**



Please submit your completed application to psych@dogswithwings.ca

Please keep in mind **this process will take time**. DWW is not able to answer specific application questions or provide timeline information. This is due to ensuring we create the right client to Service Dog matches. If you apply, we will verify we received your application and will be in touch when and if we are able to move forward with your application. If you are not successful in your application, we encourage you to continue in your wellness journey and apply to our partner schools as their application process allows. For urgent concerns or to remove your application please send an email to psych@dogswithwings.ca.

We wish you all the best and thank you for considering DWW in your health and wellbeing journey.