Eligibility Requirements for Applying for an Assistance Dog from Assistance Dogs of the West

To be eligible to apply for an Assistance Dog from ADW, the applicant must satisfy both the General Eligibility Requirements and the specific need requirements stated here and in the program materials. ADW is committed to providing its services and administering its programs in a nondiscriminatory manner, and in accordance with applicable law. All applicants and program participants are treated equally and we do not discriminate on an individual's race, sex, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, gender expression, genetic characteristics, or any other basis prohibited by law.

ADW trains and places Assistance Dogs to assist individuals with the following needs:

- Seizure disorders
- Mobility impairments
- Type I Diabetes
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (for Veterans)

We also train and place Assistance Dogs that work in professional capacities, such as Facility Dogs, Courthouse Facility Dogs and Crisis Response Canines. Each type of placement has specific eligibility criteria, which are further explained below.

Please note that assistance dog training is a specialized field, and while we work with individuals who have a variety of disabilities, our dogs are not specifically trained as Guide Dogs (assist blind and visually impaired individuals), or as Hearing Dogs (assist deaf and hard of hearing individuals). Applicants should be aware that ADW has a very broad profile of the successful assistance dog placement candidate. Occasionally, after acceptance in our program, new information is identified through the interview process that can change client acceptance status if a need is found that ADW dogs cannot meet.

Service Dogs are not intended as a substitute or replacement for medical interventions recommended by your healthcare provider.

**Note: Meeting ADW's eligibility criteria does not guarantee your application will be approved.*

General Eligibility Requirements for Service Dog Applicants:

- Have a qualifying, diagnosed disability that impacts your quality of life, independence and ability to engage in activities of daily living.
- Be under the care of a physician or treatment team specific to your disability.
- Be five years old or older at the time of application.
- Be willing and able to commit to the long-term expense of caring for a dog for its working life. For a detailed list see: https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/know-true-cost-owning-dog/

- Be willing and able to provide for the dog's physical, emotional and financial needs.
- Have a stable home environment for at least six months, the support of all other household and family members, and be comfortable allowing us to help evaluate the suitability of your home environment for safety. ADW will not place dogs with individuals living in a group-living environment, including dormitories.
- Be financially able to maintain the service dog's feeding plan and veterinary care for the life of the dog.
- Be able to attend and participate in the Intake Interview, Interview Process, Client Placement Training and follow-up at ADW's Headquarters in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Be able to cover any airfare, accommodations, and transportation needed to attend the Intake Interview, Interview Process, Client Placement Training, and follow-up re-certifications.
- Be able to be financially able to maintain your functional lifestyle during the Intake Interview, Interview Process and Client Placement Training.
- Be able to identify at least three tasks a dog could perform to mitigate your disability; including at least one task that would be utilized in places of public accommodation.
- If an Applicant requires a third-party handler (such parent handling the dog on behalf of a child with autism), the handler must be able to attend the Client Placement Process and follow-up.
- Be willing to consent to a background check
- Additional Evaluation: Occasionally, ADW may require the support of another professional (such as an Occupational Therapist) in order to determine an applicant's acceptance status. Any such evaluations will be at cost to the client.

Please also see criteria for specific dog placements:

Eligibility Criteria for Applying for a Service Dog for Autism Support:

- We are still assessing our resources for providing service dogs for individuals with autism.
- We recommend reaching out to Assistance Dogs International to locate another accredited organization that may be able to assist you, or checking back with us at a later date.

Eligibility Criteria for Applying for a Seizure Response Dog:

- The applicant must meet the General Eligibility Requirements for Obtaining an Assistance Dog from Assistance Dogs of the West.
- The applicant must reside in New Mexico.
- The individual should have a minimum of three epileptic seizures a month. ADW does not consider Absence Seizures (Petit-Mal) a qualifying seizure as typically there is no physical manifestation to let the dogs know that they need to respond.
- The client should have recorded seizure activity for at least one year.
  *ADW trains assistance dogs for seizure response. We commonly see our trained seizure response dogs begin to alert to seizures once they have been placed with a client, but we do not guarantee any seizure alert.

Eligibility Criteria for Applying for a Mobility Dog:

- The applicant must meet the General Eligibility Requirements for Obtaining an Assistance Dog from Assistance Dogs of the West.
- If the applicant's needs include any balance/stability work, the applicant must contact the ADW office prior to submitting an application to discuss with ADW trainers if one of our dogs can meet those needs.

Eligibility Criteria for Applying for a Diabetic Alert Dog (DAD):

- The applicant must meet the General Eligibility Requirements for Obtaining an Assistance Dog from Assistance Dogs of the West.
- Applicants must live in New Mexico and be able to attend regular training sessions (once per week) at our office in Santa Fe.

- DAD applicants need to have Type 1 diabetes, and have been diagnosed at least 2 years prior to application.
- Applicants need to be under the regular care of a physician and/or diabetes educator for at least two years. Additional information will be required from the medical professional regarding the applicant's diabetes and its management, by way of a form and discussions with ADW staff (if necessary).
- Applicants need to be taking all appropriate measures to monitor and control their diabetes, yet still be experiencing difficulty with blood glucose (BG) control.
- Applicants need to be experiencing a minimum of 3 hypoglycemic events per week.
- Applicants need to regularly monitor their blood glucose (several times per day, or as recommended by healthcare professional), using a glucometer and/or continuous glucose monitor. The applicant should have at least one year of use with the monitor. Note: use of a DAD will probably INCREASE the number of BG tests per day that the Applicant must do.
- At the time of application, applicants need to provide glucometer or CGM data for the 3 prior months. If a significant lapse of time occurs between application and placement with a DAD, an additional month of data may be required.
- Applicants need to agree to provide BG records/graphs/data, including record of DAD alerts, to ADW for a minimum of 6 months after the DAD is placed with them, or as requested by trainers.
- Applicants need to provide samples (saliva collected during low and high BG events) to ADW trainers for the purposes of training the DAD.
- Applicants need to agree to work with ADW trainers on an ongoing basis for several months after placement with a DAD to further optimize the dog's response.
- Applicants need to agree to provide adequate rest periods for the DAD, as prescribed by ADW trainers.
- Applicant MUST accept full responsibility for the management of their diabetes, continuing all prescribed methods of monitoring and treatment after the DAD has been placed. A DAD is to be considered only one tool in disease management, and not relied upon solely.

Eligibility Criteria for Applying for a Service Dog for Military-Related PTSD

- The applicant must meet the General Eligibility Requirements for Obtaining an Assistance Dog from Assistance Dogs of the West.
- Be able to provide proof of service, such as a DD-214. Any service member discharged or released for any of the reasons outlined in 38 U.S. Code § 5303 and 38 CFR § 3.12(d) are ineligible.
- Be able to provide names and contact information for two individuals who have agreed to provide support to the service dog team. These individuals must have access to the assistance dog program 24/7 and agree to provide an immediate and temporary home for the dog should an emergency arise.

- The veteran must sign a consent form that allows the program or its consultant to communicate directly with the veteran's mental health provider or treatment team.
- The veteran must provide written evidence that any adults living in the household are knowledgeable regarding the application for a service dog and that they support the process, the placement of a service dog, and the follow-up of the team.
- Be able to provide written testament from a healthcare provider that you are not currently undergoing inpatient treatment, or are 6 months or more post-successful substance abuse, mental health or suicidal ideation treatment.