



# Patriot Assistance Dogs

## Welcome to Patriot Assistance Dogs

If you feel you may need assistance with any portion of this application, please call 218-850-2425. This number is monitored Monday through Friday from 9am – 3pm Central Time. Do not hesitate to leave a message and a volunteer will return your call and assist you.

This packet will give you a basic understanding of what Patriot Assistance Dogs is, how and why it began, and what the process of receiving a service dog entails from now through completion of the training. Once you have finished filling out the application and collecting all required supporting documents please send by US Mail or other delivery service, your completed packet back to us for processing. We do require the original document of all letters submitted. Sending documents individually will slow processing and **will not** secure an interview date or class assignment date more quickly.

*Thank you for your service.*

Patriot Assistance Dogs does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender expression, age, national origin, marital status or sexual orientation in any of its activities or operations. These activities include but are not limited to hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and staff, and provision of services.

## **What is Patriot Assistance Dogs, the organization?**

Patriot Assistance Dogs (PAD) is a not for profit, charitable organization located within the Lucky Dog Complex at 1478 Mallard Street, Detroit Lakes MN 56501. This organization was founded in 2011 by a retired Detroit Lakes Police Officer and dog trainer. PAD's vision is to provide help to Military Veterans with psychological impairments. Patriot Assistance Dogs trains and provides Veterans with service dogs at no out-of-pocket cost for the dog, necessary equipment, or training.

## **What is a Patriot Assistance Dog?**

The dogs trained by Patriot Assistance Dogs are **service dogs** specifically trained to mitigate symptoms associated with mental impairments and/or disabilities for Veterans of the United States Military.

## **Why are there organizations like Patriot Assistance Dogs?**

According to [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov) (last updated July 2016), anywhere from 11 to 30% of our Military Veterans are experiencing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, varying by service era and deployment. Sadly, Veteransandptsd.com maintains that only 50% of Military Veterans with PTSD seek help, and out of that, only half of those receive minimally adequate treatment (RAND study). To illustrate this in numbers, between 2002 and January of 2014 (only a 12 year span), over 118 thousand soldiers returning from Iraq or Afghanistan were diagnosed with PTSD. If only 25% received even minimally adequate treatment, there is still an enormous need for resources to aid our Veterans. Services such as Patriot Assistance Dogs are essential for the development of coping skills that will allow Veterans to remain participating members of society (Sayer, et al., 2009).

## **What qualifies me to be a part of Patriot Assistance Dogs?**

The requirements for participation in PAD are:

- Be a U.S. Military Veteran discharged under honorable conditions. We may consider other conditions with an explanation.
- Be undergoing treatment for mental health impairments. (PTSD, Anxiety, Depression etc.) The impairment does not have to be service connected. You must agree to continue mental health care after you receive a service dog.
- Provide a letter from a licensed mental health care provider (Social Worker, Psychologist, Counselor, Psychiatrist, etc.) listing your basic diagnosis and recommending the use of a **service dog** as a portion of your treatment program. This person can be a civilian or a VA provider.
- Be physically and financially capable of providing a safe and secure home for a service dog.
- Provide two letters of reference from people you know who will support you receiving a service dog, and who will verify your ability to care for and provide a safe home for a service dog.

- Upon receipt of a PAD dog you will be required to have a sponsor who will be able to care for your service dog in emergency situations.
- One of these references should be the individual who agrees to act as your sponsor. The sponsor functions similar to an AA sponsor, not a financial sponsor.
- Provide a letter from the licensed veterinarian of your choice, acknowledging that you will be using their clinic for the medical care of your service dog. You will be required to sign a release of information so we can maintain contact with your veterinary clinic concerning the health of your service dog.
- Attend a five-day class in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. Six weeks (minimum) to six months (maximum) after receiving your dog, you are required to return to Detroit Lakes to complete Public Access and Skills testing.
- Complete a two-year probationary period demonstrating the ability to maintain the health of the dog and to use it properly as a service dog.

### **What can I expect after PAD receives my Application Packet?**

- Interview and Orientation Board
  - This interview will verify the information provided on the application as well as answer any questions you may have about the program that have not already been addressed. The interview chairman will let you know if you have been accepted into the program or if additional information is needed.
  - If you wish to receive one of PAD's fully trained dogs, you will receive a confirmation letter and be assigned to the **next available** quarterly training class; January, April, July, or October.
  - If you wish to certify your own dog, you will receive a confirmation letter and you will be invited to a one-day qualifying clinic. If your dog qualifies you will be assigned to the **next available** Veteran Owned training class; May or December.
- Training Classes
  - Five-day blocks, Monday through Friday
  - Training on site--in classroom and on training floor
    - Basic Obedience Skills
    - Comfort Skills
    - Health Care and Grooming
    - Public Access Rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
    - Handling the Public's Reactions to Service Dogs
    - Integrating a Service Dog into Your Life
  - Training in Community; Fire Hall, EMS, Restaurants, Retail Stores, etc.
- Return for Skills Test and Public Access test
  - Six-month window, six weeks to six months after completing class
  - Adjustment time to make sure dog fits with lifestyle and performs tasks needed
  - This is the evaluation that provides certification for the team

## Application to participate in the Patriot Assistance Dogs program

Please complete each section by printing legibly

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Land Line \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Service Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Discharge (honorable, dishonorable, other) \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Military Service (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Service Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Discharge (honorable, dishonorable, other) \_\_\_\_\_

Living Arrangements (own/rent, house/apartment) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list three symptoms you would like a dog trained to alleviate:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other information you would like us to consider (personal medical equipment/ other animals in the house/ want to training with your personally owned dog, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### Please attach the following documents with your completed application:

1. Proof of military service and discharge conditions. This needs to include branch of service and all dates of service. This can be the DD-214, VA certificate of eligibility, etc.
2. One dated letter from a licensed mental health care provider recommending the use of a **Service Dog**. (An informational letter, "Dear Mental Health Care Provider" follows the application page. Please give this to your mental health care provider to use as a guide.)
3. **Two** letters of reference from individuals you know well that can verify your ability to care for and provide a safe home for a service dog. Please be sure letter is dated and that it includes contact information (Full name, phone number, address) for each reference.
4. One dated letter from your Veterinarian of choice, stating they will care for your service dog.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Patriot Assistance Dogs

2020

Mental Health Care Provider,

The Veteran who provided you with this letter is applying to receive a **service dog** from Patriot Assistance Dogs (PAD). PAD's dogs are trained specifically to work with Military Veterans who suffer from PTSD, TBI, depression, anxiety, and/or other psychiatric challenges. Tasks PAD's dogs may perform may include but are not limited to:

- Waking the Veteran from night sweats and night terrors
- Interrupting panic attacks and road rage
- Guiding the Veteran out of anxiety inducing environments
- Creating a physical (non-aggressive) barrier to protect the Veteran's personal space
- Reminding the Veteran to take medications on schedule

The dogs receive general training to a preset qualification standard; then are matched with Veterans and receive additional training to mitigate each individual's specific conditions. There is no financial cost to the Veteran for the dog, equipment, or training that PAD provide.

PAD's protocol requires that each Veteran have a letter issued by his or her mental health care provider endorsing the use of a service dog as a **portion** of their individual treatment program. The Veteran must agree to stay in mental health care treatment after receiving a PAD dog. Our dogs are certified **service dogs** with full public access rights. They are not companion animals (having access only to restricted rental or public housing units), therapy animals (owned by one person and trained to bring comfort to many i.e. hospital or nursing home visits with scheduled access by invitation only), or emotional support animals (covered by some state laws but not given public access rights by the Americans with Disabilities Act). **Please include in your letter a brief diagnosis (PTSD, depression, etc.) and your support/recommendation of the Veteran receiving a service dog.** Please have the Veteran sign your standard release of medical privileges/information form and include a copy with your letter. Thank you for supporting this Veteran in obtaining a service dog.

Sincerely,

*Linda Wiedewitsch*

Administrative Director  
Patriot Assistance Dogs  
1478 Mallard Street  
Detroit Lakes MN 56501  
(218) 841-4114