



*** SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE YOU WILL RECEIVE A SERVICE DOG ***

Preliminary Application Procedure

- The first step in applying for a service dog from Service Dogs for America (SDA) is to fill out and submit the preliminary application. If you are unable to complete the online application, please contact SDA and a paper copy can be sent to you. Before submitting a preliminary application, please review the following eligibility requirements:
 - Applicants must present a verifiable medical need for a service dog and understand SDA may not be able to train a dog specific to their needs.
 - Applicants must be compliant with all medical and mental health recommendations.
 - Age /location requirements are as follows:
 - Applicants must be 18 years of age or older and possess the physical and developmental capacity to handle a service dog independently.
 - Applicants must reside within the lower 48 states of the United States and be able to travel to the SDA campus in Jud, North Dakota, for training. Applicants must also be legal, permanent U.S. residents.
 - If applying for a PTSD service dog, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:
 - Must be at least 18 years old.
 - Must possess the physical and developmental capacity to handle a service dog.
 - Must have an official PTSD diagnosis from a qualified and licensed mental health professional.
 - Must demonstrate current, continuous, and active engagement in mental health therapy for a minimum of two (2) years immediately preceding application. Applicant must also provide documentation demonstrating compliance with all medical and mental health treatment recommendations.
 - Applicants with a diagnosis of alcohol and/or substance use disorder must demonstrate current and continuous sobriety for a minimum of two (2) years outside of a controlled environment. Applicants must also provide appropriate documentation verifying compliance with this requirement.
 - Applicants and Clients must not possess a medical marijuana card issued by any state and must not obtain or maintain such a card. Applicants and Clients must not use marijuana or other illicit substances for medical or recreational purposes.
 - Applicants must be available and willing to communicate with SDA staff throughout the application and placement process.
 - Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in handling a service dog at home and in a variety of public environments, while managing the dog's safety, behavior and working skills.
 - Applicants will be required to supply proof of financial resources sufficient for the care of a service dog, including veterinarian care.
- Preliminary applications are reviewed in a timely manner. If the applicant meets SDA's selection criteria, an approval letter will be sent out along with a full application packet.
- Incomplete preliminary applications will not be processed.

Full Application Procedure – APPLICANTS ARE ONLY ELIGIBLE FOR THIS NEXT STEP IF THEIR PRELIMINARY APPLICATION IS APPROVED.

- The second step in applying for a service dog is to return a full application to SDA – including all necessary signatures and a **non-refundable \$100.00 application fee**. Applications returned without the \$100 fee will not be processed.



- Once all supporting documentation for the full application has been received, an independent Medical Review Board (MRB) evaluates the application and determines final eligibility. The MRB bases their decision regarding service dog placement per the following criteria:
 - is a service dog necessary for the applicant so as to mitigate the applicant's disability
 - can a service dog perform enough specific tasks so as benefit the applicant
 - can the applicant properly care for and handle a service dog

Notification, Travel and Training Procedures

- Following the MRB's review of the full application, the applicant will be notified, by mail, as to whether their request for a service dog has been approved or denied or if the MRB needs additional information before making their decision. **Approval of the application by the MRB does not guarantee the applicant will receive a service dog. SDA reserves the right to terminate the application and placement process at any time.**
- If approved for a service dog, SDA's Executive Director will schedule the applicant for their Team Training at SDA's Jud, North Dakota, campus. SDA's Client Services Coordinator will also send out a welcome packet detailing all aspects of Team Training and the placement process. NOTE: "Team" denotes the pairing of an applicant with a service dog.
- Team Training is a minimum, mandatory three (3) weeks. Applicants must successfully complete their Team Training Course before leaving campus with their service dog. It is highly recommended to purchase travel insurance in conjunction with any airline or train tickets, in the event Team Training needs to be extended or cancelled.
Arrival to campus and participation in Team Training does not guarantee an applicant will leave campus with a service dog. SDA reserves the right to stop placement at any time.
- All applicants traveling to the SDA campus are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including ground transportation and attendant care (if necessary). There are two (2) fully-furnished guest cabins on campus that are available to applicants for Team Training. This lodging is included in the cost of the service dog, however while on campus applicants are responsible for their own groceries, toiletries, etc. If applicants prefer not to stay on campus, off-campus accommodations will need to be approved by SDA prior to arrival and will be the sole financial responsibility of the applicant.
- Prior to the applicant's arrival on campus, SDA will conduct either an in-home visit or a video tour of the applicant's home.
- Each applicant must be prepared to meet his/her own financial needs during Team Training, including outings and any equipment needs or modifications. Applicants with electric wheelchairs must plan on bringing or arranging for a manual wheelchair in the event of an electric wheelchair malfunction.
- Any individuals or family members accompanying the applicant in a supportive role are the responsibility of the applicant and are welcome to stay on campus with the applicant; their attendance during Team Training is at the discretion of the SDA training department.



Team Sponsor

- Each Team is required to have two sponsors; this is not a financial sponsor but rather a mentor or advocate who will look after the best interest of the dog (and the team) and report back to SDA.
- The sponsors must be individuals, outside the applicant's immediate family, who will agree to periodically check on the status of the Team. The sponsor(s) will also agree to look after the dog should something happen to the applicant.
- The sponsor is not asked to intervene or take action unless an emergency exists or concerns arise that may include:
 - the dog is not being cared for properly, including veterinary care and vaccinations
 - the dog is not being used as per the contract, including established safekeeping practices
 - the applicant is not following training protocols
 - the applicant is experiencing additional medical/mental issues that place the dog at risk
 - the applicant talks of surrendering or abandoning the dog

Placement Interruption Procedure

- SDA is involved with the Team for the life of the dog, therefore SDA reserves the right to deny an applicant or terminate a placement at any time before, during, or after Team Training and graduation. Grounds for termination include, but are not limited to:
 - applicant fails to handle the service dog according to SDA requirements
 - applicant fails the Public Access Test required for the Team's graduation
 - applicant handles his or her service dog in an abusive or negligent manner
 - applicant becomes unable to care for the service dog
 - applicant is not using the service dog as intended
 - placement will jeopardize the dog's health, safety, or well-being
 - applicant fails to meet recertification requirement
 - applicant fails to make payments or pay for the service dog, as agreed in the financial arrangement
 - SDA has grounds to believe the dog will not be able to meet the applicant's needs

Post-Placement Procedure

- After graduation, applicants will be expected to provide on-going information regarding the dog's work habits and public behavior. Applicants will be expected to make themselves available for aftercare calls and are required to meet SDA's criteria for Team certification renewal.
- Applicants will be expected to sign a release for their health provider(s), giving SDA access to contact them quarterly for the purpose of follow-up and to document any improvements in physical, emotional, and social interactions as a result of a service dog. This requirement is for the working life of the service dog.
- Teams are required to return to campus at regular intervals post-graduation for public access recertification and additional training (if necessary). The guest cabins are available to the Team at no charge, however all travel expenses are the responsibility of the applicant. The recertification schedule is as follows:
 - within 12 months following graduation
 - every 24 months after the first year

Failure to be compliant with required follow-up could result in repossession of the service dog or being declined for a successor dog placement.



Disclaimers

- All applicants will be considered regardless of race, gender, religion, creed, sexual orientation, and ethnic origin.
- Approved successor dog applicants have priority over first-time applicants.
- Wait time for training and placement will vary depending on specific needs of applicant and dog availability.

SDA reserves the right to stop the application process, training, and placement process at any time.

Policy Governance

Service Dogs for America's Board of Directors reviews organizational policies and procedures on a rotating basis to ensure they remain current, equitable, operationally effective, and consistent with applicable laws, accreditation standards, and organizational best practices. Policy revisions become effective only upon approval by the Board of Directors unless otherwise specified.