

Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc.

Pre-Application for an Assistance Dog

Type of Assistance Dog requested – (check all that apply)

Service or Mobility Assist Dog

Seizure Response Dog

Therapeutic Dog (residential) (personal)

Hearing Dog

Specialty / Other

Therapeutic Dog

Today's Date _____
Month/ Date/ Year

Applicants Full Legal Name

P.O. Box or Street Address

City State ZIP+4

Phone (Home) Phone (Work) Email address

Age (applicant) M or F sex Date or Birth

Name of parent or legal guardian (if applicant is <18)

*Below: Give name and address of parent or legal guardian if different than above

City State ZIP+4

Phone (Home) Phone (Work) Email address

Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc.

Pre-Application

Is an Assistance Dog right for you?

Working with an assistance dog very well could be one of the most rewarding and liberating experiences of your life. However, it can also prove to be a frustrating and burdensome endeavor. The difference regarding benefit vs. burden lies within you. The purpose of this pre-application is to assist you in determining whether or not you really want an assistance dog as an intervention for your particular disability or illness.

You've probably heard the stories of Seizure Alert Dogs warning their owners of oncoming seizures and Service Dogs delivering out of reach objects. You know about the success and it all sounds wonderful. However the truth is that these stories were possible due to an enormous amount of hard work and dedication. An assistance dog's devotion to its master is due to one key factor. That is the thousands of hours of time spent by trainers and students in shaping and reinforcing the dog's tasks and skills.

Please read the pre-application information thoroughly and carefully. We will pose several questions and intend this to be thought provoking. In order for us to do our job well we need you to seriously consider the questions that follow.

No trained dogs here!

It is important for you to understand that [technically] there is no such thing as a trained dog. There are dogs that have been educated to perform certain skills and tasks. Their education has been presented to them in the form of conditioned behaviors and reinforced using positive reinforcement techniques. Exposing dogs to negative reinforcement curbs unwanted behaviors. The training used is similar to operant conditioning however falls short of the technical definition.

As the recipient of an assistance dog it will become your responsibility to follow through with the training that started here at the Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc. training center. At this point you must ask yourself, ***“Am I prepared to rehearse skills and reinforce behaviors with a dog [everyday] for the next 8 to 10 years”?*** If you have answered no to that that question you really need not read any further. If you have answered no... an assistance dog is not the appropriate intervention for you.

Would you consider adopting a toddler?

Perhaps one of the best analogies is to consider the above question. For the first six-months to one-year having a new assistance dog can be much like having toddler. The new assistance dog requires input and supervision. You are responsible to give that input and supervision.

Timing the receipt of your new assistance is crucial. If you have just started college, recently moved or started a new job it is best to wait before obtaining an assistance dog. The first year with a new assistance dog is a critical period. It is best if you can give 100% of your time and attention to the new assistance dog.

Ready for Boot Camp?

The period of time that you spend here at Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc. training center is referred to as “the placement period” or “team training”. Those that actually have gone through that period refers to it as “Boot Camp”. The 2-3 week period at the training center is intense, stressful and exhausting. You must ask yourself, “Can I afford [time, money, energy] for three weeks at the Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc. training center?”

Great Plains does provide housing and transportation during team training. However travel to the training center, meals and personal items are your responsibility. You are responsible for a personal care attendant should you require one. Great Plains will provide the facilities, dog(s) and trainers for all training sessions.

The theme around Great Plains is focused around your abilities. Once we are passed the application process we are not interested in or concerned with “disability”. We don’t intend to sound cold-hearted. However what you can’t do doesn’t help us in your relationship with the dog. We are much more interested in what you can do!

Dollars and Cents?

The cost to Great Plains of training, placing and providing follow-up services for one assistance dog is \$15,000. That is not to say that an assistance dog will cost you that amount. The cost to you will depend on you ability to pay. Our assistance dog scholarship fund is maintained for the purpose of assisting individuals who cannot afford a \$15,000 assistance dog. More than 90% of those people acquiring an assistance dog through Great Plains have received some financial assistance through the scholarship fund.

Great Plains requires a minimum of \$100 down payment and \$10 per month throughout the working life of the assistance dog. Additionally you are responsible for your travel to and from team training. Once the assistance dog is in your custody [post- team training] you will be responsible for the costs associated with feeding, veterinary care, grooming, treats, toys and some equipment. These costs can easily average \$500 annually. At this point you should be asking yourself could I afford \$500 or more annually to spend on an assistance dog? If you cannot you may want to reconsider or secure funding before proceeding.

Living arrangements, family and friends?

Where you live and what type of housing you live in is an important consideration as well. A small studio apartment in downtown Manhattan is not exactly conducive to life with a seventy-five pound Golden Retriever. Indoor space for the dog as well as an outdoor area for exercise should be considered.

Who shares a residence with you? Spouse, parents, children and roommates must be a consideration. How do they feel about sharing a residence with a dog? How do they feel about you gaining increased self-autonomy and independence? How will this affect them and their roll in your life? Individuals who are not supportive of this endeavor will most likely prove to be problematic. Be sure to talk this over with all those who will be affected directly and indirectly.

What about employers, schools and places of public accommodation. Chances are someone within these categories will challenge your legal right to be accompanied by an assistance dog. Are you prepared to be a self-advocate for your public access rights? Are you prepared for the frustration of being denied access because of our assistance dog? You do have the legal right to be accompanied by an assistance dog, however that doesn't mean that that right will not be challenged. At some point in time it most likely will be challenged. Do you care to deal with that?

Hidden Disability? Not incognito any longer!

A serious consideration for those living with seizure disorders, deafness, mental or emotional disability is anonymity. Without an assistance dog you blend into society quite well. Once you have an assistance dog with you that stealth is gone. The general public has been educated and they know that if you have an assistance dog you must also have a disability. You will be stopped, questioned and watched.

Many Americans love dogs and many have dogs of their own. Be forewarned your assistance dog will draw the attention of every dog owner in the mall, on the street and in the workplace. They will stop to visit, to ask questions and to share stories of their dogs. If you are introverted this may prove to be quite annoying and in some cases even stressful. Think this through... your assistance dog will accompany you everywhere you go for the next 8 years or more.

Do you really love dogs? ... REALLY??

Dog hair, dog slobber and drool, feces and urine are all a part of dog ownership. As an assistance dog owner you are responsible for the care of the dog. This means daily grooming, picking up behind them and tolerating hair and saliva on your clothes. Chances are that if you are meticulous in cleaning and being clean an assistance dog will drive you crazy. Through

care, dogs can be kept relatively clean and tidy. But they are dogs and with that must come tolerance for a certain amount of filth.

Through the course of the working life of an assistance dog he will [most likely] have a toileting accident indoors. He will become ill and vomit at some point in time as well. He may get a hold of your new dress shoes or a prized possession and use them as a chew toy. You will go through the next six to eight years with dog hair as a permanent accessory to your wardrobe.

An assistance dog is an educated animal that has been conditioned to live in a human society. However he remains a dog... *an animal!* If the thought of the above items disgusts you we would strongly suggest reconsidering an assistance dog as an intervention for your disability.

High Hopes and Great Expectations!

Please take a moment to contemplate and to answer this question. What task(s) or skill(s) will an assistance dog perform that will provide positive intervention for my disability? How will an assistance dog make my life better than it is now? Give these questions a moment's time. Should you choose to move further into the application process you will see these questions again and will be asked to answer them in writing.

Often people call and inquire into services without having given this aspect a single moment's thought. A Seizure Response Dog does not change the fact that you are living with a seizure condition; a Service Dog does not change your physical abilities... a Hearing Dog does not restore your ability to hear for yourself. We do not mean to offend. However we really want for you to consider what is real and what is factual. Much of what you may have seen in newspapers, magazines and on television has been "fluffed" and glorified. The media does not report reality... the media reports what sells.

Burden vs. Benefit



This is the final entry to this section and it all boils down to this. With the placement of each and every assistance dog there exist specific burdens and certain benefits to the human partner of the dog. Please ask yourself, "do the projected benefits of an assistance dog outweigh the expected burdens?" If the answer is yes then you may very well be an excellent candidate for an assistance dog. However if the answer is no, you should continue to seek alternative interventions for your disability.

Throughout the application process Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc. will attempt to answer that question based on our experience and knowledge. You can help us in this process by addressing this question from your point of view.

In part the answer is dependent on what you personally consider a benefit and what you define as a burden. An assistance dog picks up an out of reach item... benefit. An assistance dog requires \$50 or more in expenses monthly... [Financial] burden. How do you view someone in the mall stopping you to ask you about your dog? Benefit or burden? We ask that you use the following page to complete this exercise. Attach additional pages if necessary.

The following chart is provided in an effort to assist you in realistically looking at assistance dog as an intervention for your disability. Please take the time to fill in this form. Return this form along with other requested materials to Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc.

Expected Burdens

Perceived Benefits

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The following book may be helpful to you by making you more knowledgeable about life with an assistance dog.

Partners In Independence

A book written by: Ed and Toni Eames

Published by: Howell Book House

Ed and Tone Eames are active members of the world they describe. With their guide dogs, they have traveled the world, found inspiration as popular writers and met numerous others whose priorities match their own. They present the challenge, the humor, the determination and the pathos familiar to disabled people everywhere who confidently go through doors opened with the help of their canine partners.

What is an assistance dog going to cost me?

It costs Great Plains Foundation no less than \$15,000 to produce just one assistance dog. Training, housing, veterinary care and dog food make up the majority of the costs involved. Training equipment, toys and grooming needs add to the costs. This cost is our cost and not necessarily the cost to the applicant.

Here at Great Plains we maintain the ***Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund*** as well as the ***Assistance Dog Payment Schedule***. Following is a detailed listing of options that may be available to you. In short, it will cost you no less than \$100 [down payment] and \$10/ month through the working life of your dog. The most an assistance dog would cost anyone would be \$15,000.

Additionally you must consider that an assistance dog will cost upwards of \$500 annually to maintain. Dog food, toys, treats, and veterinary care are your responsibility following placement. Please keep in mind that an assistance dog could add as much as \$50 per month to your monthly expenses.

Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund

This fund is maintained by Great Plains in order to make assistance dogs available and affordable to individuals in all financial circumstances. Scholarships are awarded based on financial need and available funds. Everyone applying for assistance dog services has the right to apply for a scholarship. When considering scholarships Great Plains reviews such factors as total income, housing and all medical related expenses.

FULL SCHOLARSHIP A full scholarship is valued at \$14,000. A full scholarship requires that the individual pay a \$100 down payment at the time of placement. Following placement the individual takes part in a monthly payment of \$10/ month. Full scholarships are usually issued to those whose only source of income is an SSI Disability payment.

PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIP These scholarships range in value from slightly less than \$14,000 to several hundred dollars. In most situations an individual awarded a partial scholarship will also take part in our Assistance Dog Payment Schedule as well. In example someone may make a \$500 down payment and obligate to a monthly payment [eight years] of \$75. In this case a partial scholarship of \$7,300 would be granted.

NO SCHOLARSHIP GRANTED In circumstances when it is determined that the individual applying has the financial ability to pay the full cost of an assistance dog, no scholarship is granted. Individuals who are denied a scholarship are still welcome to participate in our [no interest] monthly payment schedule.

Assistance Dog Payment Schedule

Great Plains Foundation's Assistance Dog Payment Schedule was established in 1996. It provides an affordable method for people to participate financially in the training of their own assistance dog. This is an absolutely interest free payment schedule. Duration of this financial commitment is 8 years. Someone financing the entire cost of their assistance dog would obligate **Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc.**

Application for an Assistance Dog

Type of Assistance Dog requested – (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service or Mobility Assist Dog | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Dog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seizure Response Dog | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialty / Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic Dog (residential) (personal) | <input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic Dog |

Today's Date _____
Month/ Date/ Year

Applicants Full Legal Name

P.O. Box or Street Address

City State ZIP+4

Phone (Home) Phone (Work) Email address

Age (applicant) M or F sex Date or Birth

Name of parent or legal guardian (if applicant is <18)

*Below: Give name and address of parent or legal guardian if different than above

City State ZIP+4

Phone (Home) Phone (Work) Email address
 to a monthly payment of of \$150 along with their \$100 down payment.

What is an assistance dog going to cost me? (con't)

At this time we ask that you would give the following questions your consideration.

1. *What can I afford as a down payment?*
2. *Would I be interested in doing fundraising?*
3. *What could I afford to pay as a monthly payment?*
4. *Will I need help from the Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund?*

*Following are a few examples:

Example [applicant] #1

| | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 1. | <i>What can I afford as a down payment?</i> | \$ 500 |
| 2. | <i>Would I be interested in doing fundraising? (YES)</i> | \$ 1,000 |
| 3. | <i>What could I afford to pay as a monthly payment? (\$25 X 96)</i> | \$ 2,400 |
| 4. | <i>Will I need help from the Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund?</i> | <u>\$11,100</u> |
| | TOTAL | \$15,000 |

Example [applicant] #2

| | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 1. | <i>What can I afford as a down payment?</i> | \$ 100 |
| 2. | <i>Would I be interested in doing fundraising? (NO)</i> | \$ 0 |
| 3. | <i>What could I afford to pay as a monthly payment? (\$10 X 96)</i> | \$ 960 |
| 4. | <i>Will I need help from the Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund?</i> | <u>\$13,940</u> |
| | TOTAL | \$15,000 |

Example [applicant] #3

| | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 1. | <i>What can I afford as a down payment?</i> | \$ 1,080 |
| 2. | <i>Would I be interested in doing fundraising? (NO)</i> | \$ 0 |
| 3. | <i>What could I afford to pay as a monthly payment? (\$145 X 96)</i> | \$ 13,920 |

4. *Will I need help from the Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund?* \$ 0
TOTAL **\$15,000**

WORKSHEET

Now it's your turn! Please fill out the following form. Return it along with other required documents to Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc.

Question #1: Please fill in the dollar amount, which you can afford to pay upon your arrival for team training at the Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc. training center.

1. ***What can I afford as a down payment?*** \$ _____

Question #2: Please circle either "Yes" or "No" immediately following question #2. If you have answered "yes" please indicate on the space that follows your projected fundraising goal. A "No" response to this question will not affect the approval of your application for an assistance dog.

2. ***Would I be interested in doing fundraising? (Yes / No)*** \$ _____

Question #3: Please fill in the dollar amount [per month] that you can afford to pay. Do keep in mind that an assistance dog can cost you as much as \$50/month to maintain. Fill in the monthly payment amount following the question. Multiply that dollar amount by 96 to calculate the total of your payments over the working life of your dog.

3. ***What could I afford to pay as a monthly payment? (\$_____ X 96) = \$_____***

Question #4: Add your answers from question 1 through 3. If this number is less than \$15,000 you will need assistance from the Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund. To figure out how much help you need subtract the sum of lines 1 through 3 from \$15,000. Simply write that number into #4.

\$15,000

Lines 1 through 3. Sub-Total -(minus) \$_____

4. ***Will I need help from the Assistance Dog Scholarship Fund?*** =
 \$ _____

Your answers to items 1 through 4 when added together must total \$15,000. If you have difficulties in filling out this or any other portion of the pre-application please phone **1-877-737-8364** or E-mail: info@greatplainsdogs.com

 Applicants Name

Applicants Signature [Legal Guardian if under 18]

Summary

You have now had an opportunity to read through our Pre-Application package. The decision is now yours. Would you like to move into the application process? If you have answered "yes" please fill out the remaining questions on this page and return all required information to:

Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 513/ 920 Short St.
Jud, North Dakota 58454

Questions? Call 1-877-737-8364

E-mail: info@greatplainsdogs.com

WEBSITE: www.alert-dog.com



YES. I would like to receive the application package from Great Plains Assistance Dogs Foundation.

Full Legal Name of Applicant

(If <18) Full Legal Name of Guardian or Parent

Street Address or P.O. Box.

City

State

ZIP

(Check when completed) I have completed page 6 of this pre-application and am returning it along with this form.

(Check when completed) I have completed page 9 of this pre-application and am returning it along with this form.

(Check when completed) Enclosed \$10.00 fee required in order to receive application.

Applicants Signature / Parent or Guardian if <18.