



Guide Dog Development Program – Boarding & Puppy Development Centre (PDC) Volunteer Roles

Guide Dogs SA/NT is a premium service provider in the disability sector. We use our expertise with dogs and in sensory service provision to enhance the quality of life of individuals living with disability and their families.

The Guide Dog Services department provides Guide Dogs to people who are blind or vision impaired, Autism Assistance Dogs to families of children with autism, and Pets as Therapy Dogs as companions to individuals living with disability or a disorder.

To achieve this, we rely heavily on the generous support and commitment of volunteers to care for, nurture and assist in the development of our pups and dogs. Our volunteers are one of the most important parts of our organisation. It takes a lot of dedication and patience to provide care for a puppy, or to look after a mature dog in training, or to assist with a litter of puppies for the first weeks of their lives. But for our volunteers, it is very rewarding to see the final outcome and the joy, independence and safety they can give a person with a disability.

Volunteers can assist in one of the following ways:

Puppy Raising

See separate information sheet.

Home Boarding

The primary role of Home Boarders is to provide day-to-day care of adult dogs during the evening and on weekends for a period of 4-6 months whilst they are being assessed and trained. Please note that dogs cannot be left alone for more than 4 hours at a time.

Dogs are collected by a trainer/instructor between approx. 8.00-9.00am and delivered back to the home at approx. 4.30-5.00pm each weekday so it is necessary for Home Boarders to be located in specific suburbs. These suburbs may change from time to time, depending on business needs. Please contact Guide Dogs Services for current locations.

Short-term Boarding

On occasions our puppies and dogs need short-term care in different home environments across various metropolitan areas. Short-term boarders care for a puppy or adult dog in their homes, on a needs basis, ranging from one week to a few months. This is a 24/7 role for volunteers who are required to be flexible and available at short notice. They are also required to attend regular training sessions (approx. 1 per week). Applicants must not work full time or have any on-going commitments that may require them to leave the puppy/dog unattended for more than 4 hours per day.

Puppy Development Centre (PDC)

The PDC is a quarantined area where breeding stock give birth to pups - only authorised volunteers/personnel are allowed access. The mother and pups live in the centre at our city office for approximately 8-10 weeks before the pups are placed in puppy raising homes.

PDC Volunteers will be responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of the puppy raising/breeding environment whilst the pups and their mother are in the Centre. Some of the tasks include: change and wash bedding, sweep and mop floors, feed, groom and administer medication as required. Each volunteer is provided training and support from staff.

You need to be willing to commit to 3 rostered shifts of 2-3 hours per week (on week days and weekends) over a minimum 8 week period. It is extremely important for the brood bitch and pups to have consistency for the duration of their time in our centre. Their early development is vital and consistency is the key to their success. Volunteer applications will not be accepted if you are unable to commit to volunteering for the minimum 8 week period.

Please find following more detailed information about volunteering.

Physical fitness:

It is extremely important that all volunteers working with dogs are physically fit and strong enough to control a large dog. Labradors grow quickly. They can weigh up to 20kg at 6 months of age and some will mature to 30kg by 12 months. At times, they will be boisterous and may pull strongly on the lead. Some activities will involve regular lifting of puppies/dogs into vehicles etc.

Indoors:

Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Pets as Therapy dogs are “inside dogs”. Puppies/dogs must sleep inside the house and spend time inside during the day. You will be provided with a puppy crate or dog bedding and instructions regarding any relevant training requirements.

Fenced Yard:

Volunteers must have a securely fenced yard for the puppy/dog to play, toilet and be safely left from time to time. Swimming pools, spas and ponds must be securely fenced. Fences must be at least 1.5 metres high.

Transport:

Volunteers need to have access to a car and hold a current drivers licence, for transportation to the vet and to training sessions, including at the Adelaide office when required.

Where do I Take the Puppy/Dog to the Vet?

Guide Dogs SA/NT has its own Breeding & Veterinary Care Manager on site who will undertake general procedures, vaccinations and health checks etc.

For advice on health problems volunteers should initially contact their relevant Advisor at Guide Dogs, except for a life-threatening emergency when the puppy/dog should be taken to the 24 hour Adelaide Emergency Vet situated at 119 Anzac Highway, Kurralta Park Phone: (08) 8371 0333.

Where Can I Take the Puppy/Dog?

Our puppies and trainee dogs have legal access to public places, just like working Guide Dogs or Autism Assistance Dogs. Puppies are not allowed in animal sanctuaries (including the zoo), and certain hospital environments (such as the burns and intensive care units).

Our puppies/dogs are identified by a yellow coat and an identity card is provided to volunteers to carry with them. This card demonstrates that the puppy/dog is recognised under relevant laws which enable access to different environments. Guide Dog staff will advise you about suitable locations for socialisation at the various stages of development of the puppy/dog.

What Happens to Dogs that are not accepted for Guide Dog or Autism Assistance Dog Training?

The qualities required in a Guide Dog or Autism Assistance Dog are so specific that only about half of our specially bred and raised dogs will be accepted for training on these programs.

Those dogs not accepted for training on these programs may be re-classified as a Pets as Therapy dog for a child or adult with autism or another disorder or disability. Dogs not suitable for placement as Pets as Therapy Dogs may be offered for sale to the public.

What if I Have Other Pets?

Any other pets in the home need to be compatible with one of our dogs and will be assessed on an individual basis. Generally, households that have more than one dog will not be deemed suitable to volunteer.

Pet dogs that are approximately 12-18 months of age or older, de-sexed, immunised and of a quiet, gentle, placid nature can be a good influence on the puppy/dog.

The puppy/dog will need to be socialised and walked separately from your own dog, so that the puppy/dog learns to be self-confident and does not rely on the other dog for security and support.

Children and Teenagers be in Volunteer Households

It is beneficial for puppies to be exposed to children. Older children & teenagers can assist with the puppy/dog at home by grooming, toileting and feeding providing the primary caregiver of the puppy/dog is an adult, aged 18 years or over. However due to the level of care and training required, Guide Dogs do not recommend families with children under school age volunteer for a Short Term Boarding or Puppy Raising role.

Children and teenagers should not walk the puppy/dog. They cannot be expected to react appropriately in all situations they are likely to encounter with a puppy/dog, nor should they be given such a significant responsibility. Young children should always be supervised when with the puppy/dog.

Does Boarding cost anything?

Guide Dogs SA/NT provides for all the dog's needs, including lead, collar, bed, blankets, brush, food bowls, toys, food, veterinary costs, and worming and flea control products.

Do I Need to Register the Dog With My Local Council?

Guide Dog trainer/advisor will advise you if the dog needs be registered with your local council, and will provide you with a letter to present to them if required. A Guide Dog/Autism Assistance Dog in training does not incur registration charges.

What about Holidays?

We ask that volunteers provide us with as much notice as possible should they be going on holidays so that we may arrange alternative Short Term Boarding.

Applying to become a volunteer

Our volunteers know and understand that they are helping to give our clients the freedom of mobility and that they carry a large responsibility to prepare the pup or dog for its intended role.

To ensure that we find the right volunteers for our puppies and dogs we go through an important application process. You will need to obtain and complete relevant paperwork including a medical declaration stating you are fit and healthy for the role and a National Police Check Application. When you decide that you would like to apply please contact Guide Dog Services, Administration staff on (08) 8203 8372 or email hr.volunteer@guidedogs.org.au

Completed documentation can be delivered or posted to:

Guide Dog Services Administration
Guide Dogs SA/NT
251 Morphett St
Adelaide SA 5000

Suitability will be determined in accordance with the listed criteria.

Next Steps

Interview/Information Session

Once you have returned paperwork to apply for a volunteer role, one of our staff members will contact you by phone to arrange an interview time and/or a group information session.

For volunteer boarding roles, an interview will be conducted by Guide Dog Services staff to ensure that you meet the criteria and understand the role you have applied for. This will also provide you with an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

House Inspection/Practical Session

Guide Dog staff will also contact volunteer boarding applicants to arrange a time to visit at your home and also undertake a practical session. This allows our staff to ensure there is a suitable home/living environment and that you have an appropriately fenced area. The practical session is undertaken to view your current skill level relevant to the volunteering role, and to identify areas in which you may require further training and assistance.

PDC Applicants only

Once you have returned all paperwork applying for a volunteer role in PDC your details will be recorded and you will be contacted after the next whelping and invited to indicate your availability for the next PDC roster.