

In-House Assistance Dog Trainer

Full-Time | Eden Prairie, MN

Location Helping Paws Headquarters, Eden Prairie, MN	Employment Type Full-Time
Hours 40 hours/week	Pay \$46,000/year
FLSA Salaried Exempt	Reports To Director of Training & Client Services
Work Model On-Site	Start Date June 1, 2026
Schedule Hours determined within 7:30 AM–7:00 PM range; evenings & weekends as required	Location Helping Paws Headquarters

About Helping Paws

Helping Paws, Inc. is a nationally accredited service dog organization based in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. We train assistance dogs that empower individuals with disabilities, Veterans, and first responders - changing lives, one dog at a time. Our team is mission-driven, collaborative, and united by a love for dogs and a commitment to the people they serve.

The Opportunity

The In-House Assistance Dog Trainer plays a vital role in Helping Paws' mission of furthering people's independence and quality of life through the use of Assistance Dogs. Working closely with BCA staff, this position is responsible for the daily training of puppies and adolescent dogs as well as supporting structured puppy classes for volunteer dog trainers.

This role requires a skilled, compassionate professional grounded in positive reinforcement and relationship-based training methods, comfortable working with a diverse volunteer community, and committed to upholding the values of Helping Paws.

What You'll Do

Daily In-House Training

- Conduct daily individualized training sessions with puppies and adolescent dogs dropped off at the training center, following Helping Paws training methodology. A typical day includes approximately 14 dogs.

- Log all training sessions accurately and in a timely manner in Dog Tracker.
- Monitor each dog's behavioral progress and adjust training plans as needed.
- Identify and report any behavioral or training concerns to the Director of Training and Client Services.

Puppy Class Instruction & Volunteer Support

- Assist with and help facilitate puppy classes for volunteer dog trainers, supporting dogs in training from birth through 14–16 months of age.
- Deliver curriculum covering basic obedience and service dog task training using the updated class schedule.
- Apply positive reinforcement (clicker training) and relationship-based training techniques consistently across all instruction.
- Build effective working relationships with volunteers across a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and experience levels.
- Assess volunteer-handler teams and provide appropriate coaching, feedback, and behavioral intervention when needed.

Public Field Trips & Community Engagement

- Participate in daily group public access training field trips alongside current staff.
- Represent Helping Paws professionally in public settings, modeling appropriate handling and etiquette for service dogs in training.

Communication & Collaboration

- Communicate proactively with staff and the Director of Training and Client Services regarding dog progress, concerns, and class updates.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding client and volunteer information.
- Contribute to a positive, mission-driven team culture.
- Attend team and other meetings as required.

Team and Mission Contribution

At Helping Paws, no job exists in isolation. All staff are expected to approach their role with a mission-first mindset, stepping in wherever needed to support the organization, its dogs, and the people it serves.

What We're Looking For

Required

- Bachelor's degree in animal behavior, psychology, zoology, biology, or a related field; or equivalent combination of education and relevant professional experience.
- Professional certification in positive reinforcement-based training (CPDT-KA/KSA, KPDT, Bergin University, or equivalent), or ability to obtain certification within one (1) year of employment.
- Advanced understanding of canine behavior and learning theory.
- Proficiency in positive reinforcement and clicker training techniques.
- Strong one-on-one and group instruction skills; able to adapt communication style to diverse audiences.
- Ability to assess dog behavior and implement appropriate behavior modification strategies.
- Proficient in Google Workspace (Docs, Slides, Sheets, Classroom) and Salesforce; able to learn internal systems such as Dog Tracker.

- Strong time management and organizational skills; able to manage multiple dogs and volunteers simultaneously.
- Must exercise professionalism and maintain strict confidentiality at all times.
- Valid Minnesota driver's license and personal vehicle required.
- Personal cell phone available for work use.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule, including occasional evenings and weekends.
- Must pass a background check and driver's license check prior to employment.

Preferred

- Experience working with volunteers or in a nonprofit environment.
- Experience working with or supporting individuals with physical disabilities.
- Prior experience working with assistance or service dogs in a professional training capacity.
- Demonstrated sensitivity when working with people of diverse races, cultures, and backgrounds.
- Comfortable delivering presentations and leading group instruction.
- Prior experience logging training data or working with animal management software.

Physical Requirements

- Regularly required to stand and move throughout the training facility and in outdoor settings for extended periods.
- Must be able to work outdoors in varied Minnesota weather conditions.
- Must be able to work within close proximity of, physically handle, and manage dogs of various sizes and temperaments, including during unpredictable behavior.
- Must be able to respond quickly and maintain physical control of dogs in training situations.
- Occasionally required to lift and/or move up to 50 pounds.

Why Helping Paws?

- Be part of a nationally accredited service dog organization making a real difference.
- Do meaningful, hands-on training work every day alongside a team that shares your passion.
- Work in a positive, dog-centered environment with a collaborative, mission-driven staff.
- Join an organization where your expertise directly shapes the next generation of life-changing service dogs.

How to Apply

Please send your resume and cover letter to hr@helpingpaws.org with the subject line "In-House Assistance Dog Trainer." This position is open until filled. We will review applications as they are received.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Helping Paws, Inc. is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer. We value diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color,

religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other status protected under applicable local, state, or federal law.

Helping Paws complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.