

Facility Dog Program with NSD



A Bit About National Service Dogs (NSD)



- Since 1996, NSD has been placing Service and Facility Dogs free of charge (to qualifying organizations) across Canada
 - First service dog organization to place an Autism Service Dog
 - Placed the first Courthouse Facility Dog in Ontario in 2016
 - Currently has three programs:
 - Service Dogs for Children with Autism
 - Service Dogs for veterans and first responders living with PTSD
 - Canine Assisted Intervention (Facility Dogs)
 - Accredited by Assistance Dogs International
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Facility Dogs

NSD has placed Facility Dogs successfully in a number of settings:

- Child Victim/Witness Programs (Providing support to young victims and witnesses providing evidence in court)
- Child and Youth Advocacy Centres
- Police and Community Based Victim Services
- Schools
- Police/EMS/Fire (Providing peer support to both sworn and civilian members)
- Private practice (Fee for service)



Pet Therapy dog vs. Facility Dog

Facility dogs are not pets



Pet vs. Facility Dog

Pet Dog

Any Dog (from breeder, rescue etc).

No standardized testing or training

Not selected specifically for role

No trained handler

No job related testing

No accreditation

Facility Dog

Purpose breed from an accredited service dog school (bred for temperament and physicality)

Training, assessment and testing standards (trained from 8 weeks to 2-2.5 years)

Dog chooses role based on skills and ability. **40-50% of dogs DO NOT go on to graduate**

Specifically trained handler to deploy the dog

Tested with comfort handling extreme emotion, loud noises, people dressed in uniforms, emergency vehicles, interview rooms etc.

Accredited by Assistance Dogs International



A Facility Dog's Journey



- Merel was bred for service
- At approx. 8 weeks, Merel went to a puppy raiser
- Merel attended weekly puppy classes with NSD trainers to learn basic obedience and skills
- Merel's puppy raiser introduced her to every potential environment possible (Merel went everywhere with her puppy raiser)
- Merel entered NSD University at approx. 18 months of age and attended daily training with advanced trainers for 6 months. Merel was assessed on an ongoing basis and ultimately chose her career as a CAI dog
- Merel's handlers attended NSD for three days to learn how to appropriately handle NSD Merel. At the time of placement, NSD trainers attended the workplace to provide support, and they continued to attend on an yearly basis for the duration of Merel's career

So you want to get a Facility Dog?

Step 1: Organizational/Leadership Engagement

Step 2: Connect with NSD to assess fit with the program, planning next steps and review NSD's contract

Step 3: Complete NSD's application process

- Develop a job description specific to the role of Facility Dog handler(s)
- complete handler interviews with support from NSD (including home visits)

Step 4: Organizational planning - financial support, policies, assessing physical space for the Facility dog

Step 5: Final review with NSD and approval to be on the Waitlist



Application Cost Considerations

- \$50 Application Fee
- \$300 Equipment Fee
- Staff cost for team training
 - 3.5 days staff/travel time
 - Accomodations
 - Food



Timelines

- Application → Approval: Time varies based on organization
- Approval → Placement: NSD strives to place dogs within 12-18 months of approval
- Placement → Retirement: Typical career length is 8-9 years



Placement

- Placements/Team Training happens twice per year (Spring/Fall)
- Notified 6-8 weeks prior to Team Training that there is a match
- Primary and Secondary handler required to attend National Service Dogs for 3.5 day training
- Weekly online check-ins required until NSD Staff attend for in-person follow up (typically 4 weeks post placement)*Public Access Test
- Monthly online check-ins for the first 6 months
- Yearly check-ins/recertification for duration of Facility Dogs career