



ADI Minimum Standards and Ethics

Assistance Dogs International has developed minimum standards and ethics which all member and candidate programs must follow. This is agreed upon when organizations join ADI. These standards and ethics form the basis of the ADI accreditation program.

ADI MINIMUM STANDARDS & ETHICS:

Ethics for Dogs

ADI believes that any dog the member organizations trains to become an Assistance Dog has a right to a quality life. Therefore, the ethical use of an Assistance Dog must incorporate the following criteria:

1. An Assistance Dog must be temperamentally screened for emotional soundness and working ability.
2. An Assistance Dog must be physically screened for the highest degree of good health and physical soundness.
3. An Assistance Dog must be technically and analytically trained for maximum control and for the specialized tasks he/she is asked to perform.
4. An Assistance Dog must be trained using humane training methods providing for the physical and emotional safety of the dog.
5. An Assistance Dog must be permitted to learn at his/her own individual pace and not be placed in service before reaching adequate physical and emotional maturity.
6. An Assistance Dog must be matched to best suit the client's needs, abilities and lifestyle.
7. An Assistance Dog must be placed with a client able to interact with him/her.
8. An Assistance Dog must be placed with a client able to provide for the dog's emotional, physical and financial needs.
9. An Assistance Dog must be placed with a client able to provide a stable and secure living environment.
10. An Assistance Dog must be placed with a client who expresses a desire for increased independence and/or an improvement in the quality of his/her life through the use of an Assistance Dog.
11. An ADI member organization will accept responsibility for its dogs in the event of a graduate's death or incapacity to provide proper care.
12. An ADI member organization will not train, place, or certify dogs with any aggressive behavior. An assistance dog may not be trained in any way for guard or protection duty. Non-aggressive barking as a trained behavior will be acceptable in appropriate situations.

Assistance Dogs in Public

There are guidelines on the public appropriateness, behavior and training expected of a dog working in public places.

These are intended to be minimum standards for all assistance dog programs that are members or candidates of ADI. All programs are encouraged to work at levels above the minimums.

1. Public appropriateness

- Dog is clean, well-groomed and does not have an offensive odor.
- Dog does not urinate or defecate in inappropriate locations.

2. Behavior

- Dog does not solicit attention, visit or annoy any member of the general public.
- Dog does not disrupt the normal course of business.
- Dog does not vocalize unnecessarily, i.e. barking, growling or whining.
- Dog shows no aggression towards people or other animals.
- Dog does not solicit or steal food or other items from the general public.

3. Training

- Dog is specifically trained to perform 3 or more tasks to mitigate aspects of the client's disability.
- Dog works calmly and quietly in harness, on leash or other tether.
- Dog is able to perform its tasks in public.
- Dog must be able to lie quietly beside the handler without blocking aisles, doorways, etc.
- Dog is trained to urinate and defecate on command.
- Dog stays within 24' of its handler at all times unless the nature of a trained task requires it to be working at a greater distance.

Guide Dogs

Training Standards

These are intended to be minimum standards for all assistance dog programs that are members or candidates of ADI. All programs are encouraged to work at levels above the minimums.

1. The guide dog must respond to commands (basic obedience and skilled tasks) from the client 90% of the time on the first ask in all public and home environments.
2. The guide dog should demonstrate basic obedience skills by responding to voice and/or hand signals for sitting, staying in place, lying down, walking in a controlled position near the client and coming to the client when called.
3. The guide dog must meet all of the standards as laid out in the minimum standards for ADI Assistance Dogs in Public. Dogs should be equally well behaved in the home environment.
4. The guide dog will be trained to negotiate obstacles, overhangs, barriers, street crossings, city and country work and public transportation. Trainer-under-blindfold work must be included for each guide dog.
5. The client must be provided with enough instruction to be able to meet the minimum standards for guide dogs and assistance dogs in public. Clients must be able to demonstrate:
 - Negotiating obstacles, overhangs, barriers, street crossings, city and country work and public transportation.
 - Knowledge of acceptable training techniques.
 - An understanding of canine care and health.
 - The ability to continue to train, problem solve, and add new skills with their guide dog.
 - Knowledge of local access laws and appropriate public behavior.
6. The assistance dog program must document monthly follow ups with clients for the first 6 months following placement. Personal contact will be done by qualified staff or program volunteers within 12 months of graduation and annually thereafter.
7. The program will provide a laminated ID card with a photo of the client and dog and names of both. In public the guide dog will wear the program's appropriate guide harness.

8. The program staff must demonstrate the knowledge of blindness and working with the visually impaired and/or blind clients. The program shall make available to staff and volunteers educational material on different disabilities.
9. The client must abide by the ADI Minimum Standards of Assistance Dog Partners.
10. Prior to placement every guide dog must meet the ADI Standards and Ethics Regarding Dogs, be spayed/neutered and have current vaccination certificates as determined by their veterinarian and applicable laws. It is the program's responsibility to inform the client of any special health or maintenance care requirements for each dog.

Hearing Dogs

Training Standards

These are intended to be minimum standards for all assistance dog programs that are members or candidates of ADI. All programs are encouraged to work at levels above the minimums.

1. The hearing dog must respond to basic obedience commands from the handler 90% of the time on the first ask in all public and home environments. The dog must respond to the trained sound with an alerting behavior within 15 seconds from the beginning of the sound.
2. The hearing dog should demonstrate basic obedience skills by responding to voice and/or hand signals for sitting, staying in place, lying down, walking in a controlled position near the client and coming to the client when called.
3. The hearing dog must meet all of the standards as laid out in the ADI Minimum Standards for Dogs in Public and should be equally well behaved in the home environment.
4. Sound Awareness Skills. Upon hearing a sound, the hearing dog should alert the client by making physical contact or by some other behavior, so the client is aware when a trained sound occurs. The dog should then specifically indicate or lead the person to the source of the sound. All dogs must be trained to alert the handler to at least three (3) sounds.
5. The client must be provided with enough instruction to be able to meet the ADI Minimum Standards for Assistance Dogs in Public. Clients must be able to demonstrate:
 - That their dog can alert to three (3) different sounds.
 - Knowledge of acceptable training techniques.
 - An understanding of canine care and health.
 - The ability to continue to train, problem solve, and add new skills with their hearing dog.
 - Knowledge of local access laws and appropriate public behavior.
6. The program must document monthly follow ups with clients for the first 6 months following placement. Personal contact will be done by qualified staff or program volunteers within 12 months of graduation and annually thereafter.
7. Identification of the hearing dog will be accomplished with the laminated ID card with a photo and names of the dog and partner. In public the dog must wear a cape, harness, backpack, or other similar piece of equipment or clothing with a logo that is clear and easy to read and identifiable as an assistance dog.
8. The program staff must demonstrate the knowledge of deafness, deaf culture and hearing impairment. A staff member or agent must know basic sign language. The program shall

make available to staff and volunteers educational material on deafness, deaf culture and hearing impairment.

9. The client must abide by the ADI Minimum Standards of Assistance Dog Partners.
10. Prior to placement the hearing dog must meet the ADI Standards and Ethics Regarding Dogs, be spayed/neutered and have current vaccination certificates as determined by their veterinarian and applicable laws. It is the program's responsibility to inform the client of any special health or maintenance care requirements for each dog.

Service Dogs

Training Standards

These are intended to be minimum standards for all assistance dog programs that are members or candidates of ADI. All programs are encouraged to work at levels above the minimums.

1. The service dog must respond to commands (basic obedience and skilled tasks) from the client 90% of the time on the first ask in all public and home environments.
2. The service dog should demonstrate basic obedience skills by responding to voice and/or hand signals for sitting, staying in place, lying down, walking in a controlled position near the client and coming to the client when called.
3. The service dog must meet all of the standards as laid out in the minimum standards for Assistance Dogs in Public and should be equally well behaved in the home.
4. The service dog must be trained to perform at least 3 tasks to mitigate the client's disability.
5. The client must be provided with enough instruction to be able to meet the ADI Minimum Standards for Assistance Dogs in Public. The client must be able to demonstrate:
 - That their dog can perform at least 3 tasks.
 - Knowledge of acceptable training techniques.
 - An understanding of canine care and health.
 - The ability to maintain training, problem solve, and continue to train/add new skills (as required) with their service dog.
 - Knowledge of local access laws and appropriate public behavior.
6. The assistance dog program must document monthly follow ups with clients for the first 6 months following placement. Personal contact will be done by qualified staff or program volunteer within 12 months of graduation and annually thereafter.
7. Identification of the service dog will be accomplished with the laminated ID card with a photo(s) and names of the dog and partner. In public the dog must wear a cape, harness, backpack, or other similar piece of equipment or clothing with a logo that is clear and easy to read and identifiable as assistance dogs.
8. The program staff must demonstrate knowledge of the client's disabilities in relation to the services they provide. The program shall make available to staff and volunteers educational material on different disabilities.
9. The client must abide by the ADI Minimum Standards of Assistance Dog Partners.
10. Prior to placement every service dog must meet the ADI Standards and Ethics Regarding Dogs, be spayed/neutered and have current vaccination certificates as determined by their

veterinarian and applicable laws. It is the program's responsibility to inform the client of any special health or maintenance care requirements for each dog.

Facility Dogs

Training Standards

1. The facility dog must respond to commands (basic obedience and skilled tasks) from the facilitator 90% of the time on the first ask in all public and home environments.
2. The facility dog should demonstrate basic obedience skills by responding to voice and/or hand signals for sitting, staying in place, lying down, walking in a controlled position near the facilitator and coming to the facilitator when called.
3. The facility dog must meet all of the standards as laid out in the minimum standards for Assistance Dogs in Public and should be equally well behaved in the home.
4. The facility dog must be partnered with a working professional facilitator and skilled at maintaining a calm manner and good social behavior in a variety of environments. They must also be accustomed to interacting with different types of people including those with physical and/or developmental disabilities.
5. The facilitator must be provided with enough instruction to be able to meet the ADI Minimum Standards for Assistance Dogs in Public. The facilitator must be able to demonstrate:
 - That their dog can remain calm and display good social behavior while interacting with a variety of people in different environments.
 - Knowledge of acceptable training techniques.
 - An understanding of canine care and health.
 - The ability to maintain training, problem solve, and continue to train/add new skills (as required) with their facility dog.
 - An understanding of how to use the dog in canine assisted interventions.
 - Knowledge of local access laws and appropriate public behavior.
6. The assistance dog program must document monthly follow ups with facilitators for the first 6 months following placement. Personal contact will be done by qualified staff or program volunteer within 12 months of graduation and annually thereafter.
7. Identification of the facility dog will be accomplished with the laminated ID card with a photo(s) and names of the dog and partner. In public the dog must wear a cape, harness, backpack, or other similar piece of equipment or clothing with a logo that is clear and easy to read and identifiable as assistance dogs.

8. The program staff must demonstrate knowledge of the clients needs in the facility in relation to the services they provide. The program shall make available to staff and volunteers educational material on the needs of the clients in the facility.
9. The facilitator must abide by the ADI Minimum Standards of Assistance Dog Partners.
10. Prior to placement every facility dog must meet the ADI Standards and Ethics Regarding Dogs, be spayed/neutered and have current vaccination certificates as determined by their veterinarian and applicable laws. It is the program's responsibility to inform the facilitator of any special health or maintenance care requirements for each dog.

Program Staff and trained professional program volunteers can use program dogs in facilities to participate in canine assisted interventions. These dogs may be dogs in advanced training, breeding dogs (when not in estrous) and younger pups.

Ethics for Clients

In keeping with our purpose of helping people with disabilities achieve greater independence and improve the quality of their lives, the member organizations of ADI believe the following ethical criteria are essential to ensure that this mandate is reasonably and responsibly met.

1. Clients have a right to be considered to receive an Assistance Dog regardless of race, sex, religion or creed.
2. Clients have the right to be treated with respect and dignity at all times in their dealings with the member organization's personnel and representatives.
3. The client has a right to receive a sound educational program to learn how to use his or her Assistance Dog most effectively at home and/or in public.
4. The client has a right to receive appropriate education on his or her role as a user of an Assistance Dog in the community.
5. The client has the right to receive regularly scheduled team evaluation and follow-up support.
6. The client has a right to receive information on or ask for assistance in the following matters:
 - Additional training for the dog that is needed due to a change in the client's functional level.
 - A behavioral management problem with the dog.
 - A major veterinary problem.
 - Legal problems pertaining to the use and access of the Assistance Dog as allowed by law.
7. The client has the right to expect that personal files will remain confidential and will not be disclosed unless he or she has given express prior permission.
8. The community has a right to expect an Assistance Dog to be under control at all times and to exhibit no intrusive behavior in public, therefore the client has the right be partnered with an appropriate dog and taught appropriate handling techniques.
9. The community has a right to receive information concerning ADI Program Standards and Ethics.
10. The community has a right to receive education on the benefits received by a person with a disability through the use of an Assistance Dog.
11. No client shall be required to participate in fund raising or public relations activities without their expressed and voluntary permission.

Standards for Assistance Dogs Partners

The assistance dog partners will agree to the following partner responsibilities:

1. Treat the dog with appreciation and respect.
2. Practice obedience regularly.
3. Practice the dog's skills regularly.
4. Maintain the dog's proper behavior in public and at home.
5. Carry proper identification and be aware of all applicable laws pertaining to assistance dogs.
6. Keep the dog well groomed and well cared for.
7. Practice preventative health care for the dog.
8. Obtain annual health checks and vaccinations for the dog.
9. Abide by all leash and license laws.
10. Follow the training program's requirements for progress reports and medical evaluations.
11. Arrange for the prompt clean-up of dog's waste.

Standards for Programs

Member organizations of ADI believe that the following tenets are necessary to ensure that the member organizations will continue to produce a quality product and to protect applicants, students and graduates from feeling exploited or demeaned.

1. Any individual staff member or program volunteer working with dogs and/or clients that requires specialized people/canine skills must have:
 - An affinity for people and excellent communication skills.
 - Canine knowledge and training experience that ensures established training and client standards can be met by the member organization.
2. Policies and procedures are followed to ensure that the member organization will be able to maintain established standards of service to people with disabilities through their application/student/graduate selection, training and team matching methods.
3. All Board members of ADI member organizations must receive orientation and be provided with appropriate educational materials about their respective programs. The materials should include but not be limited to the following:
 - History of Assistance Dogs and the history of their respective programs.
 - ADI's established Standards and Ethics.
 - Board of Director responsibilities such as financial management, resource identification, solicitation and fund-raising.
 - Ongoing Programs and Services and long range planning.
4. Member organizations recognize the community has a right to receive information concerning ADI program Standards and Ethics.
5. Member organizations recognize the community has a right to receive education on the benefits received by a person with a disability through the use of an Assistance Dog.

Standards for Trainers

These are intended to be minimum standards for all assistance dog programs that want to be affiliated with ADI. All Trainers are encouraged to work at levels above the minimum.

1. Trainers must understand and adhere to all ADI Minimum Standards and Ethics.
2. Trainers must be able to produce effective working teams that meet ADI Standards (i.e. Public Access Test, demonstration of tasks) as reviewed at the 1 year anniversary of the team.
3. Trainers must have up to date knowledge of best practices in many areas including:
 - learning theory
 - canine behavior
 - canine care and safety
 - a variety of training techniques, equipment and methods

Trainers must demonstrate effective:

- communication skills
- instruction of groups and individuals
- assessment and problem solving skills
- self-assessment and improvement of performance

Trainers must demonstrate:

- an understanding of the matching process of client with dog
- knowledge of the environment a team will encounter, specifically concerning family, community, school and workplace and the impact these may have on each working team.
- knowledge of and ability to determine when a training process, placement, or certification needs to be discontinued.

Trainers have a responsibility to the public, therefore they must:

- have knowledge of pertinent canine laws (i.e. leash laws and public access laws)
- build rapport and establish effective working relationships with co-workers, clients, volunteers, and the community

- use appropriate behavior in public when working with each dog and or client (i.e. train one dog at a time, be polite, show respect and consideration to people and property, and maintain good personal and canine hygiene), be willing to educate the public about assistance dogs and access rights.

STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION OF OWNER/PRIVATE TRAINER TRAINED ASSISTANCE DOG TEAMS

These are intended to be minimum standards for all assistance dog programs that are Members or Candidates of ADI. All programs are encouraged to work at levels above the minimums.

1. The owner must go through all the program requirements for an assistance dog applicant which includes the programs application process and team training. The owner must sign all consent and release of liability forms provided by the program.
2. The dog must meet all ADI Minimum Standards for dogs and must meet the same program standards as the dogs trained and placed by the program staff.
3. The program should have a minimum of a 6 month period working with the owner and their dog. The owner and dog will be observed in a variety of settings and situations during this time. This will also include any training necessary to complete the program and meet the ADI Minimum Standards.
4. The program will inform the owner prior to acceptance into the program of all financial commitments/fees required by the program. The program will also inform the owner that at any time throughout the process or after certification testing, the program can decide to discharge the dog because of temperament, health or training issues.
5. The program will decide when the team is ready to go through the team training process.
6. After successfully completing the team training process and the program requirements the team will be given program certification. This certification will include a program identification card and harness or other identification used by the program.
7. The team becomes a program team for the working life of the dog. The program will include the team in all requirements and activities in place for teams made up of program trained dogs, including but not limited to follow-up, retesting, and continuity of dogs, health care and veterinary requirements.
8. The service, hearing, or guide dogs must meet the minimum standards for training each type of assistance dog. A facility dog must meet the minimum standards for facility dogs.
9. The assistance dog team must meet all of the standards as laid out in the minimum standards for Assistance Dogs in Public and the dog should be equally well behaved in the home.
10. The assistance dog must be trained to perform at least 3 tasks to mitigate the client's disability.
11. The client must be provided with enough instruction to be able to meet the ADI Minimum Standards for Assistance Dogs in Public. The client must be able to demonstrate:
 - a. that their dog can perform at least 3 tasks
 - b. knowledge of acceptable training techniques
 - c. an understanding of canine care and health
 - d. the ability to maintain training, problem solve, and continue to train/ add new skills (as required) with their assistance dog.
 - e. knowledge of local access laws and appropriate public behavior

12. The assistance dog program must document monthly follow ups with these teams for the first 6 months following placement. Personal contact will be done by qualified staff or program volunteer within 12 months of graduation and annually thereafter.
13. Identification of the assistance dog will be accomplished with the laminated ID card with a photo(s) and names of the dog and partner. In public the dog must wear a cape, harness, backpack, or other similar piece of equipment or clothing with a logo that is clear and easy to read and identifiable as an assistance dog.
14. The program staff must demonstrate knowledge of the owners disabilities in relation to the services they provide. The program shall make available to staff and volunteers educational material on different disabilities.
15. The owner/partner must abide by the ADI Minimum Standards of Assistance Dog Partners.
16. Prior to the completion of training and certification testing, the assistance dog must meet the ADI Standards and Ethics Regarding Dogs, be spayed/neutered and have current vaccination certificates as determined by their veterinarian and applicable laws.