

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009

Fact Sheet: Becoming an Approved Trainer or Training Organisation

Who can apply to become an approved trainer?

Under the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (the Act) there are two types of training services:

1. **individual trainers** approved to select and train guide, hearing or assistance dogs for the individual needs of a person with disability; or
2. **training organisations** that are corporations approved to select and train guide, hearing or assistance dogs for the individual needs of a person with disability.

Individuals employed by approved training organisations to train and certify guide, hearing or assistance dogs are referred to as employee trainers and unlike volunteers, assistants, or puppy carers they must undergo a criminal history screening check.

You must apply using the approved form (*Form GHA-4: Application to become an Approved Trainer or Training Organisation*) available on the department's [website](#).

The application must be supported by any evidence you want the department to consider when it assesses your application.

Process of assessing applications

Stage 1 – Document assessment

After receiving your completed application, the department will assess the:

- (a) application; and
- (b) additional materials, documents or information you have provided.

The Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (the Department) may ask you to provide more information, materials, documents or evidence.

Depending on the evidence you submit, the department may ask you to clarify or explain specific details in your application.

An application cannot progress to the next stage until it has successfully completed stage 1.

Stage 2 - Technical Assessment

This stage involves a combination of practical assessment and document review.

A technical assessor will:

- (a) conduct a practical assessment (usually a simulated Public Access Test) on a *handler and dog team* trained by you or your organisation;
- (b) review some of your previously submitted evidence, such as dog training manuals/programs;
- (c) complete a *Technical Capability Assessment* for the department.

Stage 3 – Final review and decision

The department will review all the evidence you have submitted, and the outcome of the Technical Capability Assessment before it makes the decision.

In considering and deciding an application, the department may consult with any entity it considers appropriate when reaching its decision.

Department's decision and requesting a review

You will receive written notification from the department about the outcome of your application.

At any time during the assessment of your application, the department may decide to refuse your application. The department will provide you with the reasons for its decision.

If you are not satisfied with the department's decision, you can ask for a review.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#), the department has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights.

Timeframes for a decision to made about your application

Timeframes for your application to be assessed and a decision to be made depend on several factors, such as:

- (1) the quality of the application and evidence submitted; and
- (2) the outcome of criminal history screening; and
- (3) the availability of technical assessors; and
- (4) any other factors, (such as, COVID-19 lockdown directives or border restrictions) that prevent technical assessments being carried out.

Before making an application

Ensuring that you understand the roles, rights and responsibilities of approved dog trainers will help you complete your application.

Applicants are encouraged to read all information about becoming a guide, hearing or assistance dog trainer available at:

- [The Department's website](#)
- [The Qld Government's website](#)

Understanding the legislation that approved trainers need to comply with will also help you to decide what to include in your application.

- [The Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009](#)
- [The Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Regulation 2019](#)

Suitability to become an approved trainer or training organisation

Under the Act, an applicant is suitable to become an approved trainer if they can show they can:

- (a) train reliable guide, hearing or assistance dogs that are—
 - (i) able to perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours for the benefit of a person with a disability; and
 - (ii) safe and effective in public places and public passenger vehicles; and
- (b) select dogs that are able to meet the individual needs of a person with disability; and
- (c) provide ongoing and regular support to the handlers of the guide, hearing or assistance dogs trained by the person.

Any criminal history of an applicant will also be considered to the extent that it may affect their suitability to work with animals or people with disability.

In determining an application, the Act also sets out other factors the department needs to consider, including an applicant's:

- public liability insurance certificate;
- qualifications, knowledge and experience in dog training;
- processes and ability to train reliable dogs,
- processes for selecting dogs for people with disability;
- qualifications, knowledge and experience working with people with disability;
- membership of an organisation that promotes standards of dog training;
- policy for the management of personal information, privacy and confidentiality;
- policy for complaints management (handling);
- record management of dog *training* and *certification* and Handler Identity Cards.



Preparing an application

Your application should include evidence of your suitability to become an approved trainer. It is your opportunity to present how you intend to train guide, hearing or assistance dogs to support people with disability.

It is important to include all steps of the dog training process you intend to follow – from the initial dog selection and handler suitability assessment to the final ongoing and regular support that you will provide after a dog has been certified.

Some examples of the types of evidence include, (but not strictly limited to):

- Course certificates or degrees (if available).
- References from employers and/or community members.
- Prior experience in dog obedience training.
- Experience supporting people with disability.
- Documentary information to support a handler's diagnosed disability, as defined by [s5 Act](#) (e.g. eligibility criteria).
- Service agreement between handlers and trainers.
- Assessment manual/intake list of handler requirements and any other documentary information about the specific disabilities, or diagnoses you intend to train dogs to support.
- Dog selection manual/checklist that references temperament, breed, health and training/learning potential of dogs.
- Handler and dog suitability manual or guideline practices.
- Program or training schedule (including significant milestones and approximate length of time for the certification of a dog).

- Program of training methodology:
 - for a dog to perform specific tasks for its handler;
 - for a dog to be safe and reliable in public places and passenger vehicles.
- Certification processes for trained dogs.
- Copy of membership of any international or national organisations or peak bodies that promote standards of dog training [e.g. Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) and Assistance Dogs International (ADI)].
- Processes and systems for recording, managing and retaining:
 - dog training and certification records (see [regulation 5](#) for the types of records required to be kept),
 - handler records including certificates or medical evidence provided by Handlers regarding any disabilities (see [s45A](#) of the Act),
 - other required documents outlined in [regulation 5](#).
- Policies for complaints handling, and the management of personal information, privacy and confidentiality.
- Program or schedule for providing ongoing and regular support to a handler and their dog.
- If using puppy carers, any guidelines around the responsibilities and role of the carers.
- Sample logo for identifying dog coats, harnesses and badges.

Training organisation applicants are encouraged to provide additional information such as:

- employee trainer induction programs, and
- employee trainer employment records, and
- employee trainer manuals or guidelines.



Submitting an application

A properly made application should include:

- *Form GHA-4: Application to become an Approved Trainer or Training Organisation;*
- *Form GHA-1: Consent to criminal history Screening Application* for all people covered in the application; and
- *Form GHA-2: Criminal History Disclosure/Change Application* for all people covered in the application; and
- Any evidence to support your application.

Applications can be submitted:

By post:

Department of Seniors, Disability Services
and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Partnerships

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Team

GPO Box 806

Brisbane QLD 4001

By email:

ghad@communities.qld.gov.au

For further information

Contact the **Guide, Hearing and Assistance
Dog Team**

Phone: 07 3097 8752 or 13QGOV (13 74 68)

TTY: 133 677

Email: ghad@communities.qld.gov.au

Postal: GPO Box 806, Brisbane QLD 4001

