



## **NORTHWEST BATTLE BUDDIES**

*Serving our Veterans who served us all!*

[www.northwestbattlebuddies.org](http://www.northwestbattlebuddies.org)

### **"Our Mission"**

- ❖ Honor our combat veterans who have been diagnosed with PTSD by providing professionally trained service dogs at no cost to them in order to help restore their independence
  
- ❖ Partnering with state and local community organizations, to not only help fund the program, but to help honor these American heroes

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Northwest Battle Buddies trains and provides service dogs to combat Veterans with wounds that are not always visible, at no cost to the combat Veteran. We as an organization acknowledge that as our nation's Veterans return from combat, that a greater need for service dogs is evident. Our professionally trained service dogs help save lives "One Northwest Battle Buddies team at a time, by providing the special support that is necessary to help our heroes gain their independence in a changing world." These dogs assist the veteran in their daily lives allowing them to navigate life with dignity and self-reliance. While the wounds of PTSD are not readily visible, they are debilitating.

In order for a dog to qualify as a Northwest Battle Buddies candidate for training, it must meet criteria set forth by our Training Directors. All dogs must be healthy, over 40 lbs., good temperament, less than 2 years of age, and meet the training standards of Northwest Battle Buddies.

Northwest Battle Buddies bases their pairing of teams on individual characteristics and needs of the Veteran as was determined during the application and interview process.

Training will take place in a variety of real-life situations, with personalized training provided and monitored by Northwest Battle Buddies training team. All dogs are currently housed and trained at our training facility, "Man's Best Friend", in Battle Ground, Washington.

Upon completion of the Northwest Battle Buddies training program, the teams will be certified and will go home together to begin their lives as a

certified Northwest Battle Buddies team. Annual re-certification will be required to maintain the level of proficiency. You will have mastered the techniques to be a successful team in a partnership of independence.

Complete our application online electronically or print and submit with the other required documents, listed on our website [www.northwestbattlebuddies.org](http://www.northwestbattlebuddies.org). If you have questions or concerns about whether a service dog is right for you, your doctor or therapist may be able to guide you in this decision. If it would benefit you to contact one of our current teams for a first account of the daily rewards and the commitment to your service dog, we can arrange contact. Please call us at 360.601.9744

Your file is considered “active” once Northwest Battle Buddies has received the signed application. Once we have your initial signed application you will have 6 months to submit all required documents. You will receive messages via email, texts, phone calls, or U.S. Postal service (when email is not possible) to apprise you of the status of your application.

Once you are paired with your service dog, training sessions will consist of 6 weeks of training (Monday thru Friday) with some weekends. Times to be determined by the Northwest Battle Buddies training team. Training for the team will continue until certification is complete and you become a Certified Northwest Battle Buddies Team!

In the event that an applicant is not chosen for the Northwest Battle Buddies program, and we cannot provide a service dog for them (i.e.: applicant has not met criteria set forth, living situation etc.). Northwest Battle Buddies will provide a written explanation of denial. The qualification process continues after the application is completed. Continued qualification consists of the applicant’s accountability to the Training process and the Northwest Battle Buddies Service Dog. At any time if treatment of the dog is in question the Applicant will be dismissed from the Northwest Battle Buddies Program.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

- Who is eligible to receive a service dog?
- How much does a service dog cost?
- I have PTSD. What can a Northwest Battle Buddies dog do for me?
- I am still on active duty. Can I get a service dog?
- What kinds of dogs are used?
- What kind of training do the dogs go through to become a companion service dog?
- What is the application process?
- How long does it take to get a dog?
- Where does the training take place?

- What types of follow up services are available once I return home?
- What is the average working life of a service dog?
- How long is the training for my new service dog with me?

### ***Who is eligible to receive a Northwest Battle Buddies Service Dog?***

Any returned **COMBAT VETERAN** who has been **HONORABLY** discharged from the U.S. armed forces, and some active duty military personnel who have been certified by their rehabilitation specialist that they require the assistance of a service dog for help with their **PTSD**.

### ***How much does Northwest Battle Buddies service dog training cost?***

There is no cost to the combat veteran. Once you have been paired with your dog, you will be responsible for all the food and basic medical care. Your dog will become your responsibility.

### ***I have PTSD. What can a Northwest Battle Buddies dog do for me?***

A Northwest Battle Buddies dog can aid you in many areas of your life. The dog can and will be your constant companion in public and/or social situation. The dog provides emotional support and companionship which will aid in your return to independence, creating more of a reason to keep moving forward toward a healthy life. Just to name a few.

### ***I am still on active duty. Can I get a service dog?***

Your commanding officer must approve in writing that your participation will be allowed. We do place service dogs with qualified active duty personnel.

### ***What kinds of dogs are used for Northwest Battle Buddies?***

We are not breed specific, we receive dogs from local shelters or by community donation. The dogs are young and mentally and physically healthy. A local veterinary clinic provides a health exam and certification. The criteria for a Northwest Battle Buddies dog is: sociable, confident and 2 years of age or less. Each service dog is evaluated and paired with the veteran according to the individual's unique requirements.

### ***What sort of training do the Northwest Battle Buddies go through?***

*Each service dog is trained for individuals' particular requirements, including passing the Canine Good Citizen Test and the Public Access Test*

### ***What is the application process?***

You will be required to fill out the application, either online or we can mail it to you. Submit your application to [jona@northwestbattlebuddies.org](mailto:jona@northwestbattlebuddies.org), along with your DD214 and then our Veteran Liaison will contact you and email you the additional forms and let you know about any additional needed information.

***How long does it take to get the Northwest Battle Buddies service dog?***

Northwest Battle Buddies dogs are trained to navigate the outside world and your particular lifestyle, as well as their other special services. Each dog takes 6-8 months to finish. Upon the approval of your application, you will receive a letter of completion. The waiting period is based on availability and order of applicants' waiting list.

***Where does the Northwest Battle Buddies dog receive training?***

Services are available at a variety of locations. Northwest Battle Buddies dogs are specifically trained to navigate everyday life situations. Training will be conducted not only at the Northwest Battle Buddies professional training facility but also in the outside world in places such as: restaurants, public transportation, shopping malls, grocery stores, theaters, airport and anywhere the veterans may frequent.

***What is the average life of the Northwest Battle Buddies service dog?***

The service dog's career depends on how active you are, it is our hope that, you can expect the dog will have eight to ten good working years.

***What sort of follow-up services are available once I return home?***

Once you have completed the training with **Northwest Battle Buddies**, you are eligible for a lifetime of aftercare. Should you require follow-up training, our staff will arrange to work with you on any questions or concerns you might have in a prompt and professional manner, which may include a home site visit.

We recognize the sacrifices that you have made for our nation. We will do our part to see that your **Northwest Battle Buddies** service dog will help you to lead an active, independent life.

***How long is the training for my new service dog with me?***

You will need to plan six weeks of training sessions in various locations with your new service dog. It will be necessary to ensure that you and your dog are working well together, and that you have a full understanding and knowledge of how to work with your service dog while abiding by the guidelines set forth by the ADA and **Northwest Battle Buddies**.

**NORTHWEST BATTLE BUDDIES APPLICATION**

Being paired with a service dog is a life-changing experience. Along with this gift comes much responsibility and challenge. It involves hard work and commitment for

the life of your service dog and can involve frustration since you are working with a live animal that can make mistakes. Before you apply for the **Northwest Battle Buddies** program, read through this application and consider the ways a dog will impact your life.

Some disabilities are apparent; others are not visible to the general public. The presence of a service dog will immediately catch others' attention and make it known that you have a disability. Many people will ask you about what your dog does for you, others might stare.

Many people love dogs and you will find that you are welcomed by them; you may even feel like a celebrity at times. But, on the downside, you can count on being stopped many places you go by people asking questions and making comments about your service dog. You need to strongly consider how you will respond to this level of attention.

You will have an intense training period in which you will accompany **Northwest Battle Buddies** trainers into public areas and social situations as you learn to effectively work with your service dog. This can be stressful and very tiring.

Once you take your **Northwest Battle Buddies** Dog home, you must continue to work every day for the rest of your service dog's life. You will spend 24 hours a day with your dog, and devote much of your time building your working relationship. Do you have the time and patience needed? If you are planning to start a new job, have a baby, start school, or any other long term commitment, you may want to put off the decision to receive your **Northwest Battle Buddies** dog until a later time.

You need to be sure that those you live with or those you come in contact with on a daily basis are accepting and/or supportive of you receiving and caring for a service dog. Talk to those in your home, workplace, etc and get their feedback. Remember this is a lifelong commitment.