



Service Dog Training Instructor

Warrior Canine Connection – Pittsburgh, PA

Service dog training instructor needed - train service dogs and help Veterans! Warrior Canine Connection has an immediate opening for an experienced Service Dog Training Instructor at our Pittsburgh program location. If you are a passionate, experienced service dog trainer with great people skills, this just might be your dream job!

Warrior Canine Connection is a nonprofit organization with a unique and highly effective service dog training model we call Mission Based Trauma Recovery (MBTR). In short, active-duty Service Members and Military Veterans with combat related stress are engaged to help us train Golden Retrievers and Labradors to be service dogs. By learning to train service dogs, these “Warrior Trainers” are given a chance to develop practical skills such as patience, positive reinforcement, emotional regulation, and effective communication skills, while simultaneously helping to prepare the dog to assist a fellow injured Veteran in the future. Our service dogs learn up to 90 commands during a comprehensive, two-year training process. After those two years of training, the dogs are professionally matched with a disabled Veteran who has mobility impairments or psychological injuries.

As a Service Dog Training Instructor with Warrior Canine Connection (WCC), you won’t just be training dogs – you’ll be training people. Specifically, you’ll guide our Warrior Trainers through our MBTR program, where they learn to train service dogs for fellow Warriors. Your role is to create a safe, supportive, and structured environment where participants can grow through the process of teaching and bonding with our dogs.

This is a full-time position with occasional weekend/evening hours.

This is a job that will truly make a difference in the world, and in the lives of the individual Veterans and Service Members we work with every day.

What You’ll Do:

Train & Support People

- Recruit, welcome, and orient Veterans, Service Members, and their families into the MBTR program, introducing them to their role as Warrior Trainers.
- Plan and lead weekly one-hour group classes (typically 8 weeks), balancing dog training goals with participant learning, confidence, and engagement.
- Guide participants in positive reinforcement and effective handling skills. You’ll rarely take the leash yourself—instead, you’ll model techniques, provide feedback, and encourage growth in both the Veteran and the dog.
- Build rapport and foster connection, helping Warrior Trainers develop patience, communication, emotional regulation, and confidence through the training process.
- Educate, support, and recognize volunteers — including Puppy Raisers and Puppy Sitters — to ensure they are valued and effective partners in each Service Dog’s training.

Ensure Dog Training & Welfare

- Match Service Dogs in Training to the needs and skill level of each MBTR group.
- Support training progress by coordinating and attending weekly dog training classes, leading monthly puppy sitter classes, and determining when one-on-one sessions are needed.
- Oversee dog health and wellness: conduct and monitor rank evaluations and walk and talks, monthly reports, vaccinations, preventive medications, food, and behavioral concerns.



- Transport and manage dogs during MBTR and coordinate their safe return to Puppy Parents after sessions.

Strengthen the Program & Community

- Attend meetings and events with Duquesne University, Team Foster, and other Veteran Service organizations to inspire engagement, raise awareness, and support fundraising.
- Create a Pittsburgh-specific social media presence and contribute frequent posts to WCC platforms to highlight the mission and inspire community involvement.
- Travel locally within the Pittsburgh area to deliver MBTR, transport dogs, and attend outreach events, occasional travel to headquarters for evaluations, veterinary needs, graduation retreat, and onboarding training.
- Engage in continuing education in areas such as dog training, suicide awareness, CPR, and partner training to deepen your professional practice.

Maintain Records & Reporting

- Document participant attendance, progress, and session notes to support program evaluation and mission reporting.
- Track and report key performance indicators, including the number of Veterans served through MBTR.

What This Role Is (and Isn't):

- It is a people-facing, mission-driven teaching role where you empower Veterans to discover new skills and purpose through dog training.
- It is not a position where you primarily train dogs yourself—your focus is on training the Warrior Trainers.

Why It Matters:

Every session you lead has a double impact: the Veterans gain skills, confidence, and a renewed sense of mission, and the dogs progress in their journey toward becoming life-changing service animals.

Desired Background and Experience

- Bachelor's degree.
- Previous experience working with Veterans affected by combat trauma.
- Comfort and experience in public speaking, giving presentations, and engaging with community members, sponsors, and public relations partners.
- Background in one or more of the following: Volunteer Management, Community Outreach, Nonprofit Development, Veteran Services, Social Work, Behavioral Health, Counseling, Rehabilitation Services, or Therapy Dog Handling.

Required Experience, Skills, and Background

- Minimum of one (1) year of professional experience as a service dog trainer, or equivalent animal training experience.
- Demonstrated experience working with individuals affected by mental health challenges and/or TBI, with an understanding of related symptoms and experience in a healthcare environment.
- Comfortable leading both one-on-one and group training sessions.
- Detail-oriented, with a strong work ethic – this is demanding work.
- Friendly, calm, mature, patient, and professional, with excellent written and verbal communication skills.



- Commitment to serving Veterans, with the ability to effectively support individuals who have experienced combat trauma and/or psychological or physical injuries.
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision, and to learn quickly.
- Strong organizational and time-management skills, with the ability to prioritize multiple tasks.
- Ability to teach individuals from diverse backgrounds and skill levels in WCC's training methodology and best practices for service dog training.
- Knowledge of, and ability to apply, effective training methods, problem-solving, and instruction across all phases of service dog training (from puppy through graduate).
- Willingness to learn and manage a variety of administrative processes.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications (for maintaining dog records, training charts, puppy evaluations, etc.); Salesforce experience is a plus.
- Valid driver's license, reliable vehicle, and proof of insurance.
- **Availability for full-time work Monday-Friday, with occasional evening and weekend hours required.**

Compensation and Benefits

Competitive compensation package including salary, paid time off, medical and dental coverage, and retirement benefits for full-time employees.

Job Type: Full-time

Salary: \$40,000-\$45,000 annually, commensurate with experience.

To Apply:

To apply for this position, please provide a cover letter and resume to HR@warriorcanineconnection.org
Service Dog Training Instructor – Pittsburgh.

Warrior Canine Connection is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.