

Background:

Mission Statement: Assistance Dogs of the West (ADW) builds successful working partnerships between clients and dogs that empower people and open doors to new opportunities.



Goals: Assistance Dogs of the West strives to:

- Raise and train dogs with kindness and respect to assist people with disabilities.
- Teach students to help train dogs.
- Educate and advocate for people with visible and invisible disabilities and their right to have service dogs for greater independence in daily living.
- Meeting needs of clients, students, volunteers, dogs, and communities.

Services and Programs:

Client Placement: Placing service dogs with client recipients requiring individual and family support for mobility impairments, autism spectrum disorders, developmental disabilities, seizure disorders, diabetes, and veterans with PTSD. Dogs get to make the final choice on their new owner!

Owner Self-Trainers: Teaching clients to train their own dogs to be their service dog.

Student Trainers: Staff trainers teaching students to train dogs to help people, taking dogs into classrooms where students reinforce behavior and refine cues in public.

Courthouse Facility Dogs: Placing dogs in criminal justice settings to help them foster safer and more comfortable environments.

Eligibility and Waiting List

- Have a qualifying, diagnosed disability impacting quality of life and ability to engage in activities of daily living.
 - Diagnosis-specific requirements.
- 5 years old or older at time of application
- Willing to provide for dog's physical, emotional, and financial needs
- Desire for more independence
- Full list of requirements [here](#).
- Waitlist for dogs of all different ages and in different stages of training. Waitlist depends on individual clients' and dogs' needs.

Disciplines:

Occupational therapy, social work, trainers with a variety of backgrounds who specialize in variety of dog training.

Costs of Services and Funding

Client Placement Services: Cost depends on service required.

- **Judicial System:** Higher fees for on-site visits and trainings
- **Individual Clients:** Average client with mobility needs will pay around \$7,000 throughout application and matching process.
- **Sources of funding for clients:** Department of vocational rehabilitation, Make A Wish, Scholarships/Sponsorships, private foundations.
- Not considered a medical entity, but can accept funding from Mi Via.

Agency Funding: Government grants and contracts at federal and state levels, earned income from programs.

Program Evaluation

Pivot Evaluation: Outside evaluation firm that designs pre-post retrospective surveys of programs, distributed to different participants in each of the programs.

- Measurements of reaching goals in programs.
- Accounting for clients' life skills and quality of life.

Agency Collaborations:

- Warrior Canine Connection National
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- School for the Deaf
- Mariposa Montessori
- After school programs
- Summer camp programs

ADW Application and Accessibility

I interviewed Linda Milanese, who is the CEO and President of ADW. She gave me a great deal of information about the services ADW provides, as well as the process of training puppies and dogs. ADW has a highly navigable and accessible website, which streamlines process of application and learning more about their services.

