

A Veteran's Best Friend Business Plan

Strategic Plan

Since our founding in 2012, A Veteran's Best Friend (AVBF) has professionally trained, provided and supported service dogs for Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Order as well as those with physical and cognitive disabilities. Our small but highly-skilled and dedicated staff, along with a large and enthusiastic community of volunteers, has earned us recognition and respect as a growing PTSD service dog organization.

AVBF Board of Directors, staff and volunteers have identified several key strategic initiatives to explore and/or implement within the next three years 2021-2024.

Goal 1:

We will continue to provide and train in accordance with national industry standards' high quality service dogs to best meet the individual needs of each recipient at no cost to the Veteran.

We plan to achieve this goal by supporting the continued growth of our program. It is our intention to achieve membership with the Assistance Dogs International. Our training is extensive for our Veteran teams: in addition to classroom training, we require the dog to receive and have

documented 120 hours of obedience training, 120 hours of socialization and 240 hours of public access training prior to certification.

We have increased from three service dog teams our first year to 24 teams in 2020. We will continue to expand the training of our PTSD service dogs to include specialized advanced skills. We will strengthen our support effort and improve outreach to all AVBF graduates as well as their families. Along with these key objectives, we are continually collecting and analyzing data to identify areas in need of improvement.

Goal 2: AVBF will have human, financial, and physical resources it needs to continue its role among service dog organizations in the community.

We plan to achieve this goal by establishing new relationships with individuals, organizations, and the community at large. We will also increase our outreach to a more diverse audience, identify and implement new fundraising methods, and secure the funds to construct a new training center.

Goal 3: Increase marketing efforts, community awareness, stakeholder engagement and education opportunities relating to our program and the PTSD service dog industry.

Our client area includes the entire state of Arkansas. As many as 500,000 who have served in the past 13 years have been diagnosed with PTSD. An average of 22 Veterans a day commit suicide at a rate more than double that of the general population. Our dogs provide hope and allow Veterans to lead a more normal life.

Most of our Veterans are referred by the VA. We will continue to reach out through our ties within the community, presence at local events and publicly on social media. We will also utilize traditional means of communication to include television, radio and print media.

Our dogs are rescued from local animal shelters or are donated by the public. These dogs allow the Veteran to take part in normal activities and lessen their often self-imposed isolation common to PTSD.

We are proud of our mission and will continue to strive to improve the lives of our Veterans. It is worth noting that most of our trainers are Veterans themselves who have received a service dog from our program. In order to work as a trainer with our program, one must successfully train and certify a service dog. We want to share with others the life changing opportunities that we ourselves have experienced.