



Assistance Dogs International & International Guide Dog Federation – joint position Statement on Client Services and Ethics

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Purpose of Statement:

The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) and Assistance Dogs International (ADI) are the global leaders in the guide and assistance dog industry. Providing services ethically and with integrity is of paramount importance to our organizations. The people* we serve are the reason for our mission.

This statement is intended to guide our relationships and engagement with our members' staff, volunteers and any external consultants as they carry out their day-to-day interactions with the people we serve. This statement has been developed through collaboration with experienced professionals in the guide and assistance dog industry.

This statement is a living document which we expect will evolve over time in line with new evidence and practice.

Statement Principles:

People First

- The people we serve are the driving force behind our mission.
- The people we serve are at the core of our everyday work.

Empowerment and Autonomy

- We support the independence and autonomy of individuals to build a working relationship with their guide or assistance dogs by empowering them to pursue their goals, engage in daily activities, participate in their communities and live the life of their choice.

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

- We listen to the people we serve in the knowledge they are the experts on their needs.
- By understanding their needs, we gain greater insight into how their expectations can be met through a working relationship with an assistance or guide dog.

Advocacy and Access

- We believe that working to eliminate access barriers with and for assistance and guide dog handlers will empower them to go about their daily lives with greater independence, dignity, and safety.
- We stand stronger through collaboration and information sharing as we strive to ensure equal access for guide and assistance dog handlers.

Inclusion and Diversity

- We recognize and respect the unique backgrounds, abilities and perspectives of each person we serve. By prioritizing inclusion and diversity, we foster environments that are welcoming, respectful and responsive to the needs of all people, ultimately promoting equity, social justice and community.
- We respect and welcome diversity in all backgrounds, lived experience, disability, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and other identities.
- We actively seek to remove barriers and promote accessibility to our services for all by ensuring that our communications, digital content and physical spaces are accessible to the people we serve.

Lifetime Support

- We believe that the availability of lifetime follow-up support for the people we serve and their guide or assistance dogs is of paramount importance in the success and well-being of the teams.
- We respect the emotional aspect of the retirement process and create a space to assist the people we serve through this transition.

Responsibilities of Clients and programs

- We are committed to creating successful partnerships between the people we serve and their guide and assistance dogs.
- We commit to being transparent in our communications, policies and practices.

*Throughout this document we use “people-first” language when referencing our clients.

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