



**CROWN HILL
CONSULTING, LLC**
Everything begins with people

Rudd Johnson | *Principal*



Making Independence Possible

Chief Executive Officer

May, 2026

The Organization

Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) is a national, award-winning 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that trains and places Assistance Dogs across the United States. Formerly known as Dogs for the Deaf, the organization has been training and placing Assistance dogs in the United States since 1977. It is the oldest provider of Hearing Assistance Dogs in the U.S.

As Dogs for Better Lives, the organization is focused on making a difference in people's lives by providing clients with greater safety, independence, and connection to the world around them that they may have lost due to hearing loss, an autism diagnosis, or other trauma or disability.

To accomplish this, it requires the best dogs for the job, and DBL acquires dogs through partnerships, co-ops, and shelters, and provides them with expert training that helps the people they serve. Dogs for Better Lives is one of the few national Assistance Dog organizations that trains shelter dogs to become Service Dogs, in addition to utilizing purpose-bred dogs.

The organization's values are clear and stated as follows:

“Care for the dogs by keeping their well-being (physical, emotional, and mental) at the root of all decisions made on their behalf. Care for clients by providing our services with kindness, compassion, and patience. Care for our donors by being responsible stewards through mindful and conscientious use of company time and money.”

Underpinning DBL's success is exceptional training and placement of dogs. Certified professional staff, who are passionate about DBL's mission, train and place Service Dogs with individuals. Unlike many other Service Dog organizations, they go directly to the client and spend a week with them in their surroundings, learning about their routines, workplace, and unique community settings. Following training and placement, DBL maintains contact with clients, ensuring the success of placements and fulfilling a lifelong obligation to the welfare of the dogs placed.

A very important aspect of DBL is that there is zero cost to clients. DBL helps people without creating a financial burden for them. Thanks to outstanding donors who support their mission, they can offer amazing dogs at no cost to individuals or families. 100% of donations directly support programs. The average value of a Dogs for Better Lives Assistance Dog is \$54,000. Administrative and fundraising costs are fully funded by interest earned from DBL's long-standing endowment and legacy estate giving directed to the endowment by generous donors who believe in the mission.

DBL has campuses both in Central Point, Oregon, where it was founded and serves as its headquarters, and Falmouth, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. Shelter partnerships exist in Dallas, Texas, and Atlanta, Georgia.

Dogs for Better Lives is an outstanding, growing, financially stable service organization supported by excellent staff, a committed and expanding donor base, and a national Board of Directors dedicated to advancing the organization's mission.

DBL is accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and has earned a 100% rating from Charity Navigator, a distinction earned by only a small percentage of nonprofits nationwide – reflecting DBL's strong governance, financial health, transparency, and ethical practices.

Our Campuses

Dogs for Better Lives headquarters campus, where the organization was founded, is near Central Point, Oregon, in the heart of beautiful Southern Oregon. Located on the I-5 corridor approximately twenty-five miles north of the California border and seventy-five miles from the Pacific Ocean, Central Point and a variety of nearby communities, including Medford, Eagle Point, Ashland, Jacksonville, and Grants Pass, comprise the commercial and tourist hub of Southern Oregon and far Northern California. Portland is readily accessible to the north, as are Sacramento and San Francisco to the south. With a local population of 200,000 and a service area population of almost 500,000, the area is home to a robust business and regional medical community as well as a series of highly regarded nonprofit organizations. The Rogue Valley offers a variety of excellent family communities offering outstanding public and private education alternatives and an abundance of youth activities. Nearby Ashland is home to Southern Oregon University. The Rogue Valley's temperate climate and spectacular terrain offer world-class outdoor recreational opportunities, including fishing, boating and river rafting, skiing, road and mountain biking, hiking, and camping. Crater Lake, one of the deepest and most spectacular freshwater lakes in the world, is a short ninety-minute drive away. The region also supports an abundance of arts and cultural venues, including Britt Music Festivals, one of the best outdoor performance settings in the Northwest, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the largest repertory theatre company in the nation.

An additional campus was acquired in the Northeast, on Cape Cod, outside the beautiful town of Falmouth, Massachusetts, which is a bit over an hour from Boston and is a primary ferry gateway to Martha's Vineyard. It is a premier destination known for its 68 miles of coastline and as the home of the renowned Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The campus, originally built as a boarding facility for dogs, has been converted into DBL's Northeast Dog Training Center. A future capital campaign will create additional, more flexible training and classroom space.

The Position

Dogs for Better Lives is seeking a Chief Executive Officer. The position reports directly to the Board of Directors, which comprises 22 individuals living across the U.S., with professional

backgrounds and expertise in a variety of fields. All share a passion for Dogs for Better Lives' mission.

Reporting to the CEO is an accomplished leadership team, including the Vice President of Operations, Vice President of Finance, Vice President of Programs, Vice President of Marketing, Vice President of Development, Executive Directors of the Northeast Region, and the Director of Human Resources.

The CEO serves as the visionary and operational leader for DBL and has responsibility for strategic leadership, mission delivery, organizational sustainability, and national reputation. The CEO assures excellence across programs, fundraising, finance, operations, compliance, and stakeholder engagement while fostering a strong values-driven organizational culture.

Key responsibilities include:

Strategic Leadership and Governance

- Partner with the Board of Directors to develop and execute the organization's long-term strategic plan.
- Provide transparent, accurate, and timely reporting to the Board on performance, risks, and opportunities.
- Assure adherence to the organization's mission, values, bylaws, and ethical standards.
- Serve as the primary advisor to the Board and support effective governance practices.

Mission and Program Excellence

- Ensure the delivery of high-quality, ethical, and outcomes-driven service dog programs nationwide.
- Oversee program innovation, growth, and continuous improvement to meet evolving community needs.
- Uphold the highest standards of animal welfare, client safety, and program integrity.
- Maintain compliance with accreditation bodies, regulations, and best practices related to service animals.

Financial Stewardship and Sustainability

- Provide overall fiscal leadership, ensuring financial stability and long-term sustainability.
- Oversee budgeting, financial planning, audits, and risk management.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of donor funds and organizational assets.
- Identify and pursue diversified revenue strategies to support mission expansion.

Fundraising and External Relations

- Serve as the organization's chief ambassador and spokesperson at the national level.
- Lead and actively participate in fundraising efforts, including major donors, foundations, corporate partners, and government stakeholders.
- Build and sustain strong relationships with donors, volunteers, partners, and the broader disability and service dog communities.
- Enhance the organization's brand visibility and reputation through strategic communications and advocacy.

Operational Leadership and Organizational Culture

- Lead, mentor, and support the executive leadership team and staff.
- Foster a high-performance, inclusive, and mission-centered organizational culture.
- Ensure effective national operations, including human resources, facilities, and technology.
- Promote collaboration, accountability, and professional development across the organization.

Qualifications and Experience

The successful candidate will have proven executive leadership experience, preferably as a CEO or senior leader in a non-profit organization, including:

- Demonstrated success in strategic planning, fundraising, and financial management.
- Experience leading a complex, multi-site, or national organization is strongly preferred
- Knowledge of service dog programs, disability services, animal welfare, or related fields is highly desirable.
- Strong board relations experience and understanding of non-profit governance.
- Exceptional communication, relationship-building, and public speaking skills
- Demonstrates confidence without arrogance; uses diplomacy and tact; has humility.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership.

Job Location and Travel

This position is preferably based at our national headquarters in Oregon or at one of our existing campus locations, depending on organizational need.

Regular travel is required for board meetings, program sites, fundraising events, and national engagements.

Contact Information to Apply for this Position

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