

GDUWS

We are a consumer based organization of guide dog handlers and others who share a common interest in issues and situations surrounding living and working with guide dogs.

We provide peer support and are an advocate for guide dog handlers, to educate the public, to promote acceptance of guide dogs and to protect and advance the access rights of working teams.

GDUWS is supported by member dues and sales of products at its regular meetings. We do not seek Federal or State dollars to maintain our programs.

Guide Dog Users of Washington State offers an informational web site where you can keep up-to-date with current medical issues pertaining to dogs, locate relevant laws pertaining to the rights of the guide dog/handler team and even go shopping for that favorite dog in your life.

Guide Dog Users of Washington State is dedicated to advocacy, peer support, public education and all aspects of training working and living with dogs specially trained to guide individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Guide Team Etiquette

Please don't pet, call out to, or otherwise distract a working Guide Dog. Allow the dog to be able to concentrate and perform for the safety of its blind partner. A Guide Dog in harness is "on duty", even when sitting or lying down.

If you are in a car, please don't honk the horn or call out directions. Handlers listen to traffic flow and other environmental sounds to decide when it is safe to cross a street.

Guide Dogs can't read traffic lights. Don't forget, Guide Dog teams have the right of way!

Please don't feed a Guide Dog. Diet and feeding times are strictly monitored to maintain good health and reliable relieving schedules.

Never grab the harness or leash from the handler. You can disorient and confuse the team. If the handler looks like he needs help, offer your assistance and take your cue from his response.

If you believe someone is in a dangerous situation voice your concern in a calm manner, but do not push, pull or grab the person.

Speak to the person, not the dog. Some Guide Dog handlers may allow petting, but always ask first. Many folks enjoy introducing their dogs, but if they decline, please respect their wishes.

Sometimes a Guide Dog will make a mistake and a correction is necessary to keep up the training. This could be a verbal reprimand or a leash correction. You may not always hear it, but Guide Dogs get loads of praise when they do the right things.

You can expect to see Guide Dog teams just about anywhere. The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and State Laws explicitly grant the right of access everywhere the public is allowed.



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Guide Dog Users of Washington State



Guide Dog Users of Washington State (GDUWS) is an affiliate of The Washington Council of the Blind (WCB), Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI), and The American Council of the Blind (ACB).

For information contact:
www.gduws.net

Our Purpose . . .

A. To work to improve the scope and quality of educational, cultural, and employment opportunities for blind persons in general, and Guide Dog Users in particular in the State of Washington.

B. First and foremost, an advocacy group assisting individual members with advice and useful contact information and advocating at both state and local levels on behalf of the Guide Dog Users in particular in the State of Washington.

C. To work for the enforcement of standardization of, and the expansion of the laws pertaining to the admission of guide dog owners and users to public places, transportation facilities, hotels, housing, restaurants, places of amusement, and to all places to which the general public is invited to do business.

D. To promote the acceptance by Federal, State and all local government agencies, municipalities, employers, educational institutions, those doing business with the general public, and promote acceptance by the general public.

Our purpose is to provide peer support and to advocate for guide dog handlers, to educate the public, to promote acceptance of guide dogs and to protect and advance the access rights of working teams.

Our membership represents those who use guide dogs for increased mobility independence, those who raise puppies for guide dog schools, as well as those interested in the guide dog movement.

GDUWS monitors and reacts to State and Federal legislation which may have an impact on the working team, and has been a strong voice in helping shape such laws in Washington State.

GDUWS serves as a referral network to those wishing to raise guide dog puppies or those wishing to enter into training for a guide dog. While GDUWS does not raise or train guide dogs, we can provide you with the direction you need to get started with either endeavor.

GDUWS provides a supportive environment for the first-time handler as well as the handler who must retire a guide.

We understand that the success of a team goes far deeper than just succeeding at what is taught in training, and we seek to foster and encourage any blind person interested in working with a guide to do so.

GDUWS meets twice yearly, once in the Spring and once in the Fall for its annual convention. While business is conducted at both these meetings, there is a heavy emphasis on innovative program content of interest to dog handlers.

The GDUWS Board of Directors conducts the day-to-day business between our regularly scheduled meetings.

If you are interested in becoming a member of GDUWS, please contact our President, Vivian Conger, at: 509-200-0599 or e-mail her at: blazie.girl@gmail.com.

Contact us at: www.gduws.net or by calling the toll-free number for the Washington Council of the Blind, **(800) 255-1147**. Press "0" and leave a message with the operator and we will call you back.