

## **Service Dogs With Us**

### 1. Motivation behind Research Paper

Service dogs are defined to promote the independence and social participation of persons with physical disabilities by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. There are three kinds of service dogs that provide aid for those who are blind, deaf, and physically disabled. Now, the number of service dogs, access rights, and laws vary by country. For my research, I have decided to compare the United States and Japan's current stance on the matter. Next, I would like to explore two questions:

- Why is there a small number of assistance dogs in Japan?
- Why are they refusing to accompany them even though a law already exists?

### 2. Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to raise awareness about service dogs' present condition. First, this paper will address the question: "Why is there a small number of assistance dogs in Japan?". A study conducted by Mina Mizukoshi at Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University states that currently, in the United States, which is said to be an advanced country when it comes to assistance dogs, there are about 10,000 guide dogs, 3,000 service dogs, and 4,000 hearing dogs. In comparison, Japan has 848 guide dogs, 63 hearing dogs, and 58 service dogs (as of

April 1, 2022). According to the Japan Assistance Dog Association, some people want to utilize approximately 7,800 guide dogs and 10,000 hearing and service dogs. In other words, only about 1 in 9 people with guide dogs and about 1 in 81 people with hearing dogs and service dogs does not come true. Second, "Why are they refusing to accompany them even though there is a law?" In 2003, 19 years ago, a law called the Assistance Dog Law for Physically Disabled Persons was enacted that allowed assistance dogs to accompany people in facilities used by several people. Nonetheless, according to a survey asking whether or not they had experienced refusal to accept guide dogs over the year from January to December 2019, more than 50% of the respondents answered that they had experienced refusal to accept guide dogs. There is a result (From the National Federation of Guide Dog Facilities).

### Sources and data collection

The data collected for this study will include online sources.

### 3. Results and Analysis

Then, "Why is there a small number of assistance dogs in Japan?" The reason for this is that training assistance dogs requires three things: "cost", "people", and "time". It takes about 8 million yen and about two years to raise one assistance dog. However, 90% of the cost depends on donations from citizens and it's shortage of trainers. Next, "Why are they refusing to accompany them even though there is a law?". When I look into the reasons for this, I could see that understanding and acceptance of assistance dog users is not progressing, because of "Animals are no good" and "There is no experience for their acceptance." Also, I discovered the research on the awareness survey on the acceptance of assistance dogs for service

industry workers (Fig.1). It has been 19 years since the law was enforced, but the number of people who "I do not know the name or contents of the assistance dog law" are increasing every year. In other words, awareness is declining.

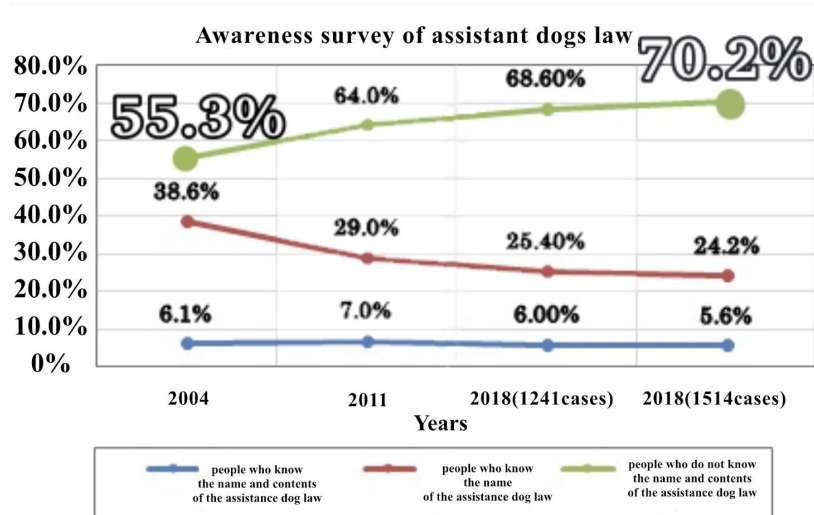


Figure 1. Awareness survey of assistant dogs laws

According to this survey, I understand that the reason for the question of "Why is refusal to accompany assistance dogs though there is a law" is that the understanding and acceptance of assistance dog users is not progressing, and the awareness is decreasing. And I think this also leads to the question "Why are there so few assistance dogs in Japan?" As mentioned earlier, training assistance dogs requires three things: "money", "people" and "time". You can work with subsidies provided by private organizations, and you can hire people if there are no donations. In terms of "people", the employment system will increase awareness, attracting interested people and improving the shortage of trainers, so it will be possible to shorten the "time" that takes about two years. Therefore, I think that the current situation and problems can be solved by awareness.

#### 4. Conclusion and Future Problems

Japan is currently facing a shortage of assistance dogs. For example, only 1 in 9 people who want to get blind dogs pass their request. And it became clear that the reason for this is that training assistance dogs requires three things: "cost", "people" and "time". As a future task, I think the best solution is to raise society's awareness and understanding of assistance dogs. By doing so, I think people who are related to assistance dogs can live more comfortably.

## 5. Reflection

Before I worked on research, I thought that high school students like me can't do anything even if I research. Of course, we can't make easy efforts that are directly effective in solving problems like donation. But, through this research, by knowing to confront the current situation I began to try to seek things I can do. If I can't do anything that is directly effective to solve this problem, I hope to widen the right knowledge to as many people as possible and I can indirectly contribute to solve this problem.

## 6. Work Cited

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