

Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA

DEFINITION OF SERVICE ANIMAL

Q1: What is a service animal?

A: Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog (or less frequently, a miniature horse) that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person's disability.

Q2: What does "do work or perform tasks" mean?

A: The dog must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability.

For example, a person with depression may have a dog that is trained to remind her to take her medication. Or, a person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe. Other examples include: providing stability for a person who has difficulty walking, picking up items for a person who uses a wheelchair, or alerting a person who has PTSD when someone is approaching from behind.

Q3: Are emotional support, therapy, or comfort animals considered service animals under the ADA?

A: No. These terms are used to describe animals that provide comfort just by being with a person. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. However, ADA makes a distinction between those and psychiatric service animals, who have been trained to perform a specific task. For example, if the dog has been trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, that would qualify as a service animal.

GENERAL RULES

Q1: What questions can employees ask to determine if a dog is a service animal?

A: In situations where it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, faculty/staff may ask only two specific questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Employees should use discretion when approaching students, should attempt to have these conversations in private, and keep in mind that if a student has a disability, this information should be kept confidential. Faculty/Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

Q2: Do service animals have to wear a vest or patch or special harness?

A: No. The ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

Q3: Who is responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal?

A: The handler is responsible for caring for and supervising the service animal, which includes toileting, feeding, and grooming and veterinary care.

Q4: Do service animals have to be on a leash?

A: The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.

Q5: When can a Service Animal be removed from the premises?

A: A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.

Q6: What if a person nearby has an allergy to dogs?

A: Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, for example, in a school classroom, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.

Q7: Can service animals be any breed of dog?

A: Yes. The ADA does not restrict the type of dog breeds that can be service animals.

Q8: Does the college require students to register their service animals?

A: No. Mandatory registration of service animals is not permissible under the ADA.

**This sheet has been modified from the ADA Fact Sheet and FAQ sheet.*

For Further Information

www.ADA.gov

ADA Information Line

800-514-0301 (Voice) and 800-514-0383 (TTY)

Service Animal Fact Sheet

https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

**Lanier Technical College
Coordinator of Disability Services**

Allison Haynes

ahaynes@laniertech.edu