

Service Animals

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General Information

What is a service animal?

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog or 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 dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

What does “do work” or “perform tasks” mean?

The animal must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. For example, a person with diabetes may have a dog that is trained to alert him when his blood sugar reaches high or low levels, 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 during the seizure.

Do they have to register with AAS?

Registration is not required, but students are required to notify AAS and University Housing if they will be living on campus with a service animal.

Does the ADA require service animals to be professionally trained?

No. People with disabilities have the right to train the animal themselves and are not required to use a professional training program.

Is an in-training service animal allowed in public places?

Yes. Under Arkansas law, service animals-in-training are granted the same access as service animals.

What can A-State Faculty/Staff ask to determine if an animal is a service animal?

In situations where it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, faculty/staff may ask only two specific questions: (1) is the animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform? Faculty/staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the animal, require that the animal demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

Do service animals have to wear special equipment (patch, vest, harness, etc.) identifying them as service animals?

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

Does a service animal have to be on a leash?

Not necessarily. Service animals must be under their handler's control. This usually means harnessed, leashed, or tethered. In cases where the device interferes with the animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using the device, the individual must maintain control through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

FAQs

When can service animals be excluded?

If admitting service animals would fundamentally alter the nature of the service or program, or if there is a legitimate safety requirement, service animals may be prohibited.

Service animals may be excluded from certain areas, such as operating rooms where the animal's presence may compromise a sterile environment, or in teaching labs where hazardous materials may harm a service animal.

If you are concerned about a service animal's presence, please contact AAS for assistance.

In the event an animal is excluded, the individual with a disability must be given the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

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

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.

Does the ADA require that service animals be certified as service animals?

No. University faculty/staff may not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, as a condition for entry.

There are individuals and organizations that sell service animal certification or registration documents online. These documents do not convey any rights under the ADA, and the Department of Justice does not recognize them as proof that the dog is a service animal.

Jonesboro requires all dogs to be vaccinated. Does this apply to my service animal?

Yes. Individuals who have service animals are not exempt from local animal control or public health requirements.

Can service animals be any breed of dog?

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

What can faculty/staff do when a service animal is being disruptive?

If a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, faculty/staff may request that the animal be removed from the premises. Faculty/staff may also

request the animal be removed if it is not housebroken.