


ADA Service Animal

- Is only a dog
- Trained to perform specific duties to assist person
- Can go anywhere on campus, including residence halls
- Your college staff can only ask you two questions about the dog: 1) Is this a Service Animal required because of a disability? 2) What work or task is this dog trained to perform?

Assistance Animals in Housing

- Covered by [HUD FHA Law](#) 
- Allowed in Residence Halls only
- Includes Emotional Support and Therapy Animals
- Your college staff **can require documentation** of your disability and need for an assistance animal, and **can set limits** on size, expected behavior, care of animals, licensing, veterinary and family contacts for emergencies, and more.

Emotional Support, Therapy & Service Dogs Explained

Emotional Support Animals

An Emotional Support (ES) animal (usually a dog or cat) is a companion animal that provides a therapeutic benefit to their person. The animal requires no special training or testing, but the person must have a **verified disability** and a **physician or mental health professional must write an annual prescription** calling for an ES companion.

Emotional Support animals are allowed to fly in the cabin of all major airlines as long as the traveler brings along a letter from the medical professional who wrote the prescription. An ES animal is also covered under the **Federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988**. A landlord cannot refuse to rent to a person with an emotional support animal even if the unit is considered “no pets allowed.” However, landlords and institutions **can establish limits on size and behavior and require that other restrictions be met**. An ES animal is **not an (ADA) service animal** and **does not have the same public access rights**.

Therapy Dogs

A therapy dog is a household companion **who accompanies their person** to bring comfort and affection to people in hospitals, schools, retirement homes, hospices, or nursing homes. Because

of legal and liability issues, most establishments will not let therapy dogs visit unless they have been certified by one of the national organizations such as Therapy Dogs International.

Not just the dog is certified. The dog and their person are considered a team and must work together in order to meet the legal requirements of the certifying agency.

Therapy dogs are not Service Dogs and do not enjoy any legal protections. They do not have rights to enter restaurants or public transportation.

Service Dogs

An **ADA** service or assistance dog is **not a pet, but a dog that has been trained** to help with a specific documented disability. There is no testing or registration required to have a service dog.

Most people think of guide dogs for the visually impaired when you mention service dogs, but they can be so much more. Dogs have been trained to help the hearing impaired, to pull a wheelchair, and to intercede when someone with PTSD starts to become overwhelmed in public. They can be trained to remind someone to take medication, to push elevator buttons, and to alert when their owner is unresponsive.

They can fetch necessary items such as a phone or a purse. They can brace to help their handler stand or provide stability on stairs or uneven surfaces. They can even alert their handler in advance of a seizure or if blood sugar levels are out of range.

A service dog must be calm, psychologically sound, and have a great temperament. The dog must be in good health and intelligent enough to train to be of assistance to their person. Labs, German Shepherds, and Golden Retrievers have historically been the breeds most used in assistance work, but that is rapidly changing as we discover that different breeds can easily be trained to accomplish amazing things.

In the past, most Service Dogs were raised and trained by specific agencies. However, it is becoming increasingly popular for people to train their own service dogs while working with an agency. There are some excellent reasons to follow this path: the dog is already part of the household and known to the person, training can be customized to be of most benefit to the person in question and working together can strengthen the handler/dog bond.

People with PTSD can sometimes be more comfortable with a dog they are already familiar with, rather than an unknown dog trained by an agency. For others, it is comforting to have an assistance dog who has been completely trained in the traditional manner.

A service dog is **not required to wear a vest, special tags, or a collar**. They do not need a special harness or an ID card. However, most handlers choose to equip their dogs to keep challenges regarding public access to a minimum.

A **service dog is legally able to accompany their handler wherever they goes**. This includes stores, restaurants, and any other building open to the general public. However, a handler can be

asked to remove their dog if they are acting badly or posing a direct threat to someone in the environment.

Service dogs are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and according to that law, staff at establishments can only legally ask two questions about them:

(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? **Staff cannot** ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Summary

An easy recap to help you remember the different types of working dogs:

- An **emotional support dog** is a companion who serves as a therapeutic emotional aide (Prescription required)
- A **therapy dog** brings comfort and affection to others in need (Training and certification are required in many cases)
- A **service dog** is trained to perform specific duties for a person with a disability. (No certification required)

No matter which type of working dog you encounter, never interact with the dog without the handler's express permission. Please do not be offended if the handler asks you not to talk to or pet their dog. Service dogs have a job to do and shouldn't have their attention diverted from their work.