

Angelo State University Statement on Service Animals

What is a “service animal?”

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to do must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Where are service animals allowed to go?

Service animals are allowed to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of a facility where the public is normally allowed to go. Some restrictions may be appropriate, however, if the presence of the animal would compromise the integrity of the setting, such as a sterile environment.

Service animals must be under control

Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

Other Provisions

- A. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two 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. Staff cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
- B. 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, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.
- C. A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his 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 goods or services without the animal’s presence.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

Disability Rights Section: “ADA Revised Requirements on Service Animals effective March 15, 2011.”