

Dogs Who Help: Who They Help & an Overview of Access Law in the U.S.



Don't Pet & Don't Distract

You may hear me called an Assistance Dog, or by whatever type of task work I do. If you've heard SDiT, that means I'm in training.

Quick Facts About Service Dogs:

1. My handler/owner must be disabled & need task work to partner with me.
2. I help them do things their disability either prevents them from doing or that are very difficult to do because of how their disability impacts them
3. There are many different kinds of us depending on what kind of help our person needs: *Mobility, Hearing, Guide, Autism, Psychiatric, & Alert*. Sometimes I'm cross trained in various types of tasks if that's what my person needs.
4. It took me 1-2 years of very intense, upper level training to become a Service Dog. It's a lot more than simple commands, good manners, & tasks.
5. Under the ADA, neither ID or Certification is required for access. But - different laws may have different requirements, such as for adventures like flying. There is no Service Dog Registry required by federal law.
6. **I can be with my handler in all public spaces (exceptions for ICU, burn unit, select zoo spaces, & a few others).** Select states let in-training service dogs train in public, but that's determined by the state.
7. A business can ask 2 questions: *Is it a service dog required because of a disability? What work or tasks has it been trained to do?*
8. In the U.S., I can be trained by my owner, a private trainer, or a Service Dog program/charity.



Please Pet Me!

Quick Facts About Therapy Dogs:

1. Typically our owners are not disabled, but they might be.
2. My job isn't to help my owner. Instead, I offer comfort & motivation to people, those recovering a tragedy, & other situations.
3. We are typically dogs, but can be other animals.
4. It took me about 1 year, possibly more, of moderate to intense training to learn how to be a Therapy Dog. I have to pass a special test before I can start working.
5. Select venues may require a Therapy Dog have an ID or Certificate from their training facility or an organization.
6. **I can only go to certain public spaces when I'm working.** Select states may have different rules, though.



Quick Facts About Emotional Support Animals:

1. My owner may or may not be disabled, but they may have a medical condition that benefits from my presence.
2. Being with my owner brings them comfort & relaxes them with my presence.
3. We are typically dogs, but can be other animals, like cats, pigs, birds, etc.
4. I don't need specialized training; being me & being near them is all they need. My help is valuable to them, but the way I help doesn't make me a working dog.
5. I'm not recognized as a service dog under the ADA. Other federal laws might call me an assistance animal (*which is confusing*), and allow me to be with my owner for non-pet housing & other limited scenarios, but my owner may need to file a special form.
6. Under the ADA, which covers working animals in public who help people, **my owner doesn't have public access rights with me, because I am not a working dog. I can only go to pet-friendly stores.** Wearing a vest doesn't give me & my owner access.

Other Types of Dogs Include: Search & Rescue, Police K9, Detection, Military Working Dog, Facility Dog, and others. Each of these has their own set of requirements, training, and public access permissions. They may have the word "service" in their name, but they are not the Service Dogs/ Assistance Dogs who help disabled individuals. These are working dogs, but their jobs are vital in a different way.

*Laws for dogs in public are vast, complex, & inter-woven. This fact sheet is an overview only. For a more in-depth understanding, book a service dog education session with Disabled Advantage Dog Training & Consulting on our website, listed below.