



required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Partners don't have to disclose their disability or demonstrate work/tasks. ID cards, vests, or certification are not required.



What about allergies or fears?

These are not valid reasons for denying a service dog team. If the allergy or fear is disabling, both people must be accommodated. Usually the two parties stay away from each other.

What if a service dog barks?

First, ask if they need assistance. The dog might be alerting to a medical condition, it might have been stepped on, or it might be a puppy learning manners. If the dog continues to be disruptive or destructive, the business can legally ask for its removal.

Resources

Psychiatric Service Dog Partners

www.psych.dog
info@psych.dog
(805) 876-4256

Department of Justice

ADA FAQ & phone line

[www.ada.gov/regs2010/
service_animal_qa.html](http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html)
(800) 514-0301

Table of state service animal laws

[www.animallaw.info/topic/table-
state-assistance-animal-laws](http://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-assistance-animal-laws)



Psychiatric Service Dog Partners' purpose is to promote the mental health of people using service dogs for psychiatric disabilities by educating, advocating, providing expertise, facilitating peer support, and promoting responsible service dog training and handling.

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Service Dog FAQ

answers to common questions about psychiatric service dogs



What is a service dog?

A dog of any breed or size, trained specifically to do work or tasks to assist with a person's disability, and prepared to behave in public.

What is a disability?

It is a physical or mental condition that severely limits a major life activity—the disability may not be visible!

Who trains service dogs?

They can be trained by the disabled partner, nonprofits, schools, or private trainers. Training takes about 2 years.

What can service dogs do?

They can guide people, pick up items, alert to sounds, assist with balance, seizures, diabetic shock, chemical sensitivities, etc. Psychiatric service dogs can alert to panic attacks, respond to mood swings, help through flashbacks, assist in determining what is a hallucination, provide pressure therapy to relieve anxiety or depression, etc.

Are they allowed in stores?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and many state laws, service dogs are allowed anywhere the public is. This includes restaurants, hospitals, stores, movies, hotels, public transit, and taxis.

What identification is needed?

Two questions can be asked: (1) is the dog a service animal

Can I get a vest for my pet?

Service dogs are not pets! They must be trained to help with the partner's disability, and to behave stably in public. Otherwise, calling a dog a service dog is offensive and illegal. People with *therapy dogs* that are permitted to visit hospitals, help kids read, etc., do not have the same access rights. Neither do those with *emotional support animals* (ESAs), whose mere presence helps with an individual's disability.

Do they get to "just be dogs"?

Yes! When off-duty, service dogs act like regular dogs. Many compete in and enjoy sports and activities like agility, swimming, playing fetch, playing with other dogs, and even chasing squirrels.

What can I do to get a service dog?

Check out the resources on our website for information about how to train your own service dog or get a dog from a program, whether it's a psychiatric service dog or another type. If you're interested in a psychiatric service dog, contact us for a phone chat to join our free online peer guidance group, and to learn our recommended steps to train a service dog.

How can I help?

If a service dog team is denied access, speak up for (or with!) them. Share service dog etiquette with others. Donate to Psychiatric Service Dog Partners if you can, at psych.dog/donate.

Service dog etiquette

- Showing respect takes learning.
- Don't touch the dog.
- Don't distract the dog with noises, food, or attempts to pet.
- Talk to the person, not the dog.
- Don't ask the person what their disability is.
- If you feel you have to say something about the dog, limit it to compliments about the dog.
- Don't be offended if the person doesn't want to chat about their service dog or disability.
- If you have a dog, don't let it approach, play with, or bark at a service dog.
- Tell partners that might be visually impaired where your dog is in relation to them.

