Service, Therapy, and Emotional Support Animals

Dogs and other animals are great aids and supports to people for a variety of reasons. Service dogs, therapy animals, working dogs, and emotional support animals assist their owners in daily tasks while helping maintain their health and safety. While each of these animals provides critical support, they are not the same, and the terms are not interchangeable. Each role is specifically defined by the tasks performed and the legal protections offered.

Working Dog

detection dogs.

Therapy Animals

A working dog is a trained dog that

works to perform tasks for a specific

limited to Search and Rescue dogs,

Therapy animals are not trained to

an animal that works in a clinical

setting, like a hospital, to provide

comfort and support to individuals.

live with a specific handler but rather

purpose. This includes but is not

allergy alert dogs, or explosive

Service Dog
A service dog is individually
trained to perform tasks and
assist individuals with disabilities.
This includes physical, sensory,
psychiatric, intellectual, or other
mental disability.

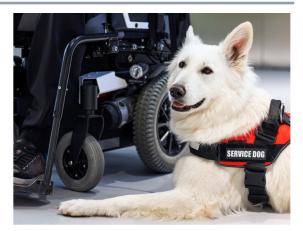
Emotional Support Animals

An emotional support animal, or an ESA is any animal that provides emotional support to one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disabilities. Emotional Support Animals are not limited to dogs.

More Resources:

- Washington State Human Rights Commission: Guide to Service Animals and The Washington State Law Against Discrimination: https://www.hum.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/publications/ Service%20Animals%20and%20the%20Washington%20Law%20 Against%20Discrimination-032019.pdf
- Frequently Asked Question about Services Animals and the ADA: <u>https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-faqs/</u>
- Northwest ADA Center: Service Animal Comparison Sheet: <u>https://nwadacenter.org/factsheet/service-animals-comparison-sheet</u>
- ADA National Network Service Animals or Emotional Support
 Animal: <u>https://adata.org/service-animal-resource-hub/differences</u>
- ADA National Network Service Animal Basics: <u>https://adata.org/</u> <u>service-animal-resource-hub/basics</u>

Where to Begin? To get started with getting a service dog, research organizations that train and place the animal with individuals. Reach out to learn about their process, requirements, and the types of service dogs they work with.



Do all these titles have legal rights*?

Yes, but each title has different mandates and laws. For example, the ADA mandates that all service dogs have full public access rights. Under ADA business' can not ask for documentation for your service animal. ADA also does not require by law that the animal has to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness. Establishments may ask you if it is a service animal and/or the task it performs. The service animal must be under the control of handlers. Service dogs are covered under the Washington State Law Against Discrimination as well, which prohibits landlords from discriminating against individuals with disabilities who use service animals.

While ESA is not considered a service animal under ADA laws. ESA requires a letter of diagnosis from the owner's doctor. They do not have unlimited access to public spaces but are included in Fair Housing Act under "reasonable accommodations".

Therapy animals are not considered service animals under ADA as well. There are no official uniform or national rules for therapy animals. Therapy animals are not considered service animals under ADA as well. There are no official uniform or national rules for therapy animals.

*This information is intended to give an overview of the legal rights of service animals in Washington State. It is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice.