

Service Animals for Persons with Disabilities

New Mexico

What is a service animal?

A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform specific tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. This disability may include physical, medical, and psychiatric diagnoses. The tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Examples of the specific tasks service animals may perform include, but are not limited to:

- A **Guide Dog** or **Seeing Eye Dog** is trained to assist a person who is blind or visually impaired with way-finding.
- A **Hearing Dog** is trained to alert a person who is deaf or hearing impaired when a sound occurs.
- A **Seizure Response Dog** is trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder by alerting them in advance of a seizure or standing guard over the person during a seizure.
- A **Psychiatric Service Dog** is trained to detect the onset of a psychiatric episode and lessen the impact of the attack.
- A **Mobility Dog** is trained to assist a person with a disability to retrieve dropped items, and to provide physical support and assist with balance and stability.

A person using a service animal has the right to have their service animal in most public places and may not be questioned about the nature or extent of their disability when entering a public facility.

Legally, only the following two questions may be asked, and the person cannot be asked to have the service animal demonstrate tasks.

- Is the animal required because of a disability?
- What work or tasks has this animal been trained to perform?

Considerations before getting a service animal

- Individuals and families may want to consider the responsibility of the time, energy and cost involved in obtaining, caring for, supervising, and maintaining the standard of care for the service animal.
- Depending on the organization, a service dog may cost anywhere from \$0 - \$25,000+.
- Service dog programs vary widely in quality, training philosophies, training processes, sources of potential service dogs, and the cost to potential recipients. It is important to consider these points before selecting which program works best for each individual.
- Eligibility for a service dog varies depending on the organization and population served. Potential recipients must complete an application and screening process before being placed on a list. The wait time to get a service dog may be as long as 5 years.

Remember:

- Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), comfort, or companion animals use an animal's natural instincts and companionship to comfort an individual. Support animals do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) because they are not trained to perform specific tasks, and they do not have public access rights.
- For more information, see the links at the right. To apply for a service animal, contact Assistance Dogs of the West.
- It is a misdemeanor to misrepresent a pet or ESA as a service animal in New Mexico.



NM Governor's Commission on Disability- Service Animals

1-877-696-1470

gcd.state.nm.us/service-animals.aspx

Revised ADA Requirements: Service Animals

ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_ga.html

"We Welcome Service Animals" video for businesses

[youtube.com/watch?v=LLVMIO5P5H8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLVMIO5P5H8&feature=youtu.be)

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet

Assistance Dogs of the West

1-866-986-3489

assistancedogsofthewest.org

Questions?

Call the CDD
Information Network

1-800-552-8195

or visit our website at
www.cdd.unm.edu/infonet

Informational Tip
Sheets:

www.cdd.unm.edu/infonet/tip-sheets.html