

Service Animal Registry - US Service Animals

FAQ and Guides

Emotional Support Animals

An [emotional support animal](#) is an animal that provides comfort just by being with a person. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. However, some state or local governments have laws that allow people to take emotional support animals into public places. You may check with your state and local government agencies to find out about these laws.

[Register Your Emotional Support Animal Now](#)

If you have an emotional or psychological condition and your animal provides comfort and support, then you could qualify to have an emotional support animal.

You must speak with a mental health professional and find out if you qualify. Any animal or breed can qualify as an [emotional support animal](#).

[Emotional support animals](#) can provide comfort and support for people with many different emotional conditions. A few examples are anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder/mood disorder, panic attacks, fear/phobias and other psychological and emotional conditions.

Any animal or breed can qualify as an [emotional support animal](#) as long as it helps support an emotional condition and meets guidelines for legal emotional support animals to have. Please note that if you have an exotic animal you should verify with the appropriate authorities such as Fish and Wildlife that your animal may be legally kept in a home.

While a vest, leash, tag, collar, and other accessories are NOT a requirement for [emotional support animals](#), they can often be helpful in clarifying that your animal is an emotional support animal and reducing questions about your animal.

Under the Fair Housing Act, housing providers are obligated to permit, as a reasonable accommodation, the use of animals that work, provide assistance, or perform tasks that benefit persons with a disabilities, or provide emotional support to alleviate a symptom or effect of a disability.

Once your pet is considered an [emotional support animal](#) he or she can stay with you at your residence even if they do not allow pets. While for some landlords, a registration may be acceptable, they can legally require that you have a Dr. Letter stating your need for an emotional support animal.

If you have a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities then you are entitled to a [service dog](#) that performs tasks for you. No person or business is ever allowed to ask about your disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the service dog, or ask that the service dog demonstrate its

ability to perform the work or task. In addition, you are never required to disclose what your disability is to anyone.

[Register Your Service Animal Now](#)

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a [service animal](#) is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. The ADA does not restrict the type of dog breeds that can be service animals. They only have to be trained, either professionally or by the owner, to perform a specific task relating to the owner's disability.

The ADA requires State and local government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations (covered entities) that provide goods or services to the public to make a "reasonable accommodation" in their policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to accommodate people with disabilities.

The ADA does not require covered entities to modify policies, practices, or procedures if it would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the goods, services, programs, or activities provided to the public. Nor does it overrule legitimate safety requirements. If admitting [service animals](#) would fundamentally alter the nature of a service or program, service animals may be prohibited. In addition, if a particular service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if it is not housebroken, that animal may be excluded.

Yes. If a [service animal](#) is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, staff may request that the animal be removed from the premises.

[Service animals](#) must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices.

In situations where it is not obvious that the dog is a [service animal](#), staff may ask only two specific 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 are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

General Questions

Your ID includes a photo of your animal, the animal's name, your registration number, your animal's date of birth, animal breed, the date of registration, and the owner's name and location. The back of the card includes the legal information about [emotional support](#) and [service animals](#), depending on which registration you have. The certificate includes your animal's name, the date of issuance, and is the official document that your animal is registered in our online database.

The benefits of registering with USSA includes our high quality kits, inclusion in our national database, and our animal ID and Certificate which provide excellent documentation of your registration. The two biggest benefits that truly set us apart from our competitors are our legal assistance and customer support.

For all products except ESA Letters, our return policy is 45 days, no questions asked. Refunds on Dr. Letters need to be processed through our Legal Team.

It typically takes 7 to 10 business days to receive the printed materials in the mail. Vests and any other accessories typically arrive sooner. If you purchase digital copies of your registration, you should have received digital copies of the ID card and Registration Certificate via email almost immediately after you've ordered. You will receive an email within 2-3 business days with a tracking number to follow your order.

Yes, every one of our mental health professionals is licensed in the state he or she practices in.

How do I Know This Isn't a Scam?

There are many online fraudulent websites that are “diagnosing” patients with mental and emotional disabilities with a questionnaire but no personal interaction with a mental health professional. As a result, many states are cracking down on “Service Dog Fraud”. “Service Dog Fraud” includes therapy animals and Emotional Support Animals (ESAs). As of March 2018, there are 22 states with both criminal and civil penalties for “Service Dog Fraud” according to Michigan State University Animal Legal & Historical Center. This includes jail time and hefty fines.

Questions that help you spot a scam:

- Does the company have a physical address? Many slick looking scam websites are actually in China.
- Is the owner of the web site domain name hidden behind a proxy? Just use WHOis.com to find if they are hiding behind a proxy.
- Is there an online questionnaire (sometimes they use words like “exam” to make it sound official) with no live phone interaction with a licensed mental health professional? Scam sites say things like “a mental health professional will review your questionnaire and we will let you know”. Without an interactive experience, the diagnosis from an online form is invalid. Landlords and universities are getting wise to the scammers and will not accept the diagnosis letter.
- Is there a phone number to call and speak with a live person?
- Is the only way to communicate with a mental health professional or the company through an email only?
- Do they offer legal support if things go wrong?

If you think you've been scammed, [report it here](#)

SPODA is dedicated to eradicating online diagnostic abuse by online and telemedicine doctors & mental health care professionals. Their team seeks to help mental health patients and teletherapy businesses understand emotional support animal laws and implement legal and proper diagnoses from fraudulent online questionnaire diagnoses. Their Code of Ethics and Conduct lays out twelve distinct guidelines for telemedicine doctors and mental health care professionals who would like to provide proper and legal services to patients.

USServiceAnimals.org has officially become a certified teletherapy marketing company to implement and pass SPODA's strict [Code of Ethics and Conduct](#). SPODA's Code of Ethics and Conduct contains twelve strict guidelines for teletherapy marketing companies that lead to a legal and proper diagnosis for emotional support animals (ESAs). Certification required a thorough examination of internal and external practices and processes to ensure proper state and federal law adherence. USServiceAnimals.org is subject to semi-annual reviews to ensure adherence.