



Service Animals in the Workplace
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From the desk of Linda (*with the Job Accommodation Network*)

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Traditionally, the term "service animal" referred to seeing-eye dogs for people with vision impairments. However, today there are many other types of "service animals." For example, there are hearing dogs for people who are deaf, seizure dogs for people who have seizure disorders, assist animals for people with motor impairments, and companion animals for people with psychiatric impairments. Because more people are using service animals, JAN has been getting more calls about service animals in the workplace.

Unlike Title III (public access) of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),

Title I of the ADA (employment) does not specifically address service animal access. Therefore, JAN contacted a representative of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to find out whether employers are required to allow employees with disabilities to use their service animals at work. The EEOC representative indicated that Title I does not require automatic access for service animals. Instead, allowing a service animal into the workplace is a form of reasonable accommodation, meaning that an employer must consider allowing an employee with a disability to use a service animal at work unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

If you would like to call and talk to a JAN consultant about a specific accommodation situation, call 1-800-526-7234 (V/TTY).

For additional information on service animals visit the Delta Society, whose mission it is to improve human health through service and therapy animals. Delta Society's goals are to: (1) Expand awareness of the positive effect animals can have on human health and development; (2) Remove barriers that prevent involvement of animals in everyday life; and (3) Expand the therapeutic and service role of animals in human health, service, and education.

For additional information on reasonable accommodation and undue hardship, see EEOC's Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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