



# SERVICE DOG, THERAPY DOG, AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOG INFORMATION

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It's amazing how domesticated animals have evolved alongside humans and aid us in our everyday lives. Dogs in particular seem to be especially helpful for individuals coping in many different situations, and they help for many different reasons. Some dogs truly help save the lives of individuals that need emotional support or support for a physical disability. That being said, there are some major differences between where these animals are and aren't allowed in the public sphere, the training involved with these animals, and differences in the legal rights for both individuals and their dogs.

**Service Dogs** are highly trained animals that work as a team with their handlers to help mitigate the specific physical disabilities of their handlers. These dogs may help blind individuals, wheelchair-bound individuals, and epileptic or diabetic individuals. These animals are individually trained to provide safety and independence for their handlers that they otherwise wouldn't have. That's why it is so important for members of the public to refrain from going up and petting or interacting with a service dog while they are on duty. Legally, the working team is protected under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and granted access to pretty much any and all public places. Additional acts of law, like the DOT's Air Carrier Access Act, DOJ/HUD Fair Housing Act, and Federal Rehabilitation Act, protect the rights of people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals under a wide variety of circumstances that the ADA may not cover.

**Emotional Support Dogs** are animals that provide companionship and emotional comfort to individuals coping with debilitating mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, or autism. These animals do not need extensive training and are usually quiet and calm in temperament. The unconditional love and emotional support these animals provide help their owners tremendously with potentially debilitating mental diseases. These animals are not allowed in public places like service dogs but are protected by the DOJ/HUD's Fair Housing Act, which allows emotional support animals to reside in housing that has a "No Pets" policy, and the DOT's Air Carrier Access Act also allows those with proof of a disability the accommodation of being accompanied by an emotional support animal on planes.

**Therapy Dogs** are animals that also have specialized training so they can provide psychological and physiological therapy to members of the public, not their handlers. These dogs have stable, laid-back temperaments and typically visit hospitals, nursing homes, and schools that have granted the team access. Unlike service dogs, dogs are encouraged to have friendly, calm interactions with

the individuals they are visiting while they are on duty. It is important to note that, despite thorough training, certification, and the therapeutic benefits therapy dogs provide, they do not have the same jobs or legal designation as service dogs and are not allowed access in public places outside the specific locations that have granted them access.

**Please see the table below for a basic breakdown of the differences between Service Dogs, Therapy Dogs, and Emotional Support Animals ([www.pleasedontpetme.com](http://www.pleasedontpetme.com)):**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Service Dog</b>	<b>Therapy Dog</b>	<b>Emotional Support Animal</b>
Handlers' rights to be accompanied by these dogs in establishments open to the public are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act.	X		
Dogs must be temperamentally sound to tolerate a wide variety of experiences, environments, and people.	X	X	
These dogs may live with their disabled owners in housing with a "no pets" policy in place.	X		X
Dogs visit hospitals, schools, hospices, and other institutions to aid in psychological or physical therapy.		X	
Handlers encourage these dogs to accept petting and socialize with other people while they're on duty.		X	
Dogs are individually trained to perform tasks or do work to mitigate their handlers' disabilities.	X		
Petting, talking to, or otherwise distracting these dogs can interfere with their job and pose a serious danger to the dog and handler.	X		
Dogs' primary functions are to provide emotional support, through companionship, to their disabled owners.			X
Subject to state laws regarding dog licensing and vaccination.	X	X	X
These dogs enjoy plenty of off-duty time, during which they rest, take part in fun activities, and get to act like a regular pet.	X	X	X

**Finding and Training a Dog:** Currently Wayside Waifs does not offer a training program for service dogs, therapy dogs, and emotional support dogs, nor do we have an individual onsite to help with the selection of one of these three types of service animals. We strongly recommend that you work with a professional organization that you have independently researched and that has years of trusted experience aiding individuals in the community with the selection and training of your service animal. Below are some local and regional groups that were found after a quick search online. This is not a comprehensive list, nor does Wayside Waifs endorse the organizations listed below.

## **Service Dog Organizations & Trainers:**

### **Kansas**

Paws For Freedom

Lea Ann Shearer

18700 183rd St.

Tonganoxie, KS 66086

(913) 208-6326

email: pffinfo@gmail.com

Types of dogs trained: Service

Areas Served: Midwest

Kansas Center for Canine Assistance, Inc.

7901 E. 87th St. South

Derby, KS 67037

(316) 789-8870

email: hilltop@feist.com

Canine Companions for Independence- Kansas City Chapter

Head-quartered in California

[http://www.cci.org/site/c.dtJVL8NOJnL6H/b.9225001/k.8BB4/North\\_Central\\_Chapter\\_Home.htm](http://www.cci.org/site/c.dtJVL8NOJnL6H/b.9225001/k.8BB4/North_Central_Chapter_Home.htm)

Kansas Specialty Dog Service

PO Box 216

124 W. 7th St.

Washington, KS 66968

(785) 325-2256

(785) 325-2258 FAX

email: ksds@ksds.org

Types of dogs trained: Service, Guide

Areas Served: National

## **Missouri**

American Service Dog Association  
Rob Schenberg  
1521 Virginia Dr.  
Ellisville, MO 63011  
(314) 607-2361  
Areas served: Greater Saint Louis area

Assistance Dogs for Living  
Marilyn Pona  
4419 Butler Hill Road  
St. Louis, MO 63128  
(314) 892-0574  
email: ADL@mailroom.com

Support Dogs, Inc.  
Andrea Vent, Executive Director  
Janice Brennan, Director of Training  
11645 Lilburn Park Rd.  
Saint Louis, MO 63146  
(314) 997-2325  
(314) 997-7202 FAX  
email: info@supportdogs.org

C.H.A.M.P. Assistance Dogs, Inc.  
Janet Cole  
5 Lombardy Way  
Saint Louis, MO 63138  
(314) 653-9466  
(314) 653-1718 FAX  
email: CHAMPdogs@aol.com  
Types of dogs trained: Service, Social/Therapy  
Areas served: Saint Louis, MO

## **Therapy Dog Organizations & Trainers:**

Pets for Life  
7240 Wornall Rd.  
Kansas City, Missouri 64114  
Phone: 816-363-3665  
Fax: 816-363-9996  
Email: petsforlife@sbcglobal.net

Heartland Positive Dog Trainers Alliance  
[www.trainerswithheart.com](http://www.trainerswithheart.com)

## Emotional Support Organizations/Trainers:

Healing Allies Assistance Dogs

<http://www.mentalhealthdogs.org/Emotional-Support-Dogs.html>

Heartland Positive Dog Trainers Alliance

[www.trainerswithheart.com](http://www.trainerswithheart.com)

***If, after trying these suggestions, you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your dog, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: [www.waysidewaifs.org](http://www.waysidewaifs.org).***

Written by the Wayside Waifs Animal Behavior Team

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