

What is a Guide Dog?

Guide Dogs are a type of service dog specifically trained to assist a person who is blind or visually impaired. In order to understand a Guide Dog's role, first it is helpful to know more about service dogs. Check out the descriptions below.

Service Dogs:

Service Dogs are task trained to help a person with a disability. This means they perform a specific job or behavior to help mitigate the impacts a disability has on a person's daily life. They are allowed in all public places, including housing and transportation, because of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Guide Dogs are one type of service dog.

Emotional Support Animals:

Emotional Support Animals can be any type of pet. ESA's provide support and comfort to one or more members in their household. While there are not specific criteria for training, ESA's are given protections through the Fair Housing Act. While they cannot go out in public places, they can live in non-pet friendly residences. Documentation from a physician is required.

Therapy Dogs:

Therapy Dogs are dogs that have undergone specific training in order to be out in public places with select populations. Agencies able to provide this training will also provide details regarding certifications, training processes and locations that are appropriate. These dogs are not granted access to locations due to any legislature.

Learn more about the work a Guider Dog is trained to do. These tasks help provide safe and independent travel for blind or visually impaired handlers.

Guide Dogs are a specific type of service animal that has been trained for people who are blind or visually impaired. Guide Dogs are able to help by guiding their handler safely from one point to another. They are able to accompany their handler in public places as outlined in the Americans With Disabilities Act.

This can include moving around obstacles, stopping at changes in elevation, and recognizing other hazards that could create a safety risk. Guide Dogs are also trained in "intelligent disobedience", which is the intentional disobedience of a command that could put the team in an unsafe situation.

A handler and dog work together. The handler is responsible for knowing the directions to travel, and a Guide Dog is responsible for safely executing those directions. Guide Dogs are not a substitute for independent mobility skills; they are a team member to help enhance those skills.