Helpful Guidelines about Service Animals

Beginning on March 15, 2011, only dogs are recognized as service animals under titles II and III of the ADA. A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Generally, title II and title III entities must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go.

DEFINITION OF A SERVICE DOG

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. **Examples of such work or tasks include** guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support **do not** qualify as service animals under the ADA.

WHAT CAN I ASK SOMEONE WITH A SERVICE DOG?

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. **Staff may ask two 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 cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

www.ADA.gov