

Service Animals and Therapy Animals – Key Differences

Category	Definitions/Descriptions	Person(s) receiving Assistance	Covered under the ADA?	Assistance Provided (examples)
Service Animal	<p>"The ADA defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability."⁽¹⁾</p> <p>Some, but not all, service animals are certified.⁽¹⁾</p>	<p>Services animals serve the handler's specific needs related to a disability.^(1,2)</p>	<p>Yes. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities can bring service animals into certain businesses, such as hotels or restaurants.⁽¹⁾</p>	<p>"Alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds.</p> <p>Pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up things for persons with mobility impairments.</p> <p>Assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance."⁽¹⁾</p>
Therapy Animal	<p>"Therapy animals and their handlers are trained to provide specific human populations with appropriate contact with animals. They are usually the personal pets of the handlers and accompany their handlers to the sites they visit, but therapy animals may also reside at a facility."⁽²⁾</p> <p>"Therapy dogs are personal pets which meet certain requirements of good manners and good health, and pass testing and evaluations."⁽³⁾</p>	<p>Therapy animals provide assistance to individuals other than their handlers.⁽²⁾</p>	<p>No. Federal laws applying to service animals do not apply to therapy animals. Businesses are not required to accommodate therapy animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act.^(2, 3)</p>	<p>Acting as attentive listeners for children reading aloud at a library.⁽³⁾</p> <p>Motivating a stroke patient during treatment to increase ambulatory skills.⁽²⁾</p> <p>Visiting and playing with residents at a long-term care facility.⁽²⁾</p>

1 ADA

2 Pet Partners Website

3 Therapy Dogs Inc. Website