



SoundCommunityServices

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Effective Date: 11/26/2024

Policy #: 1202

Policy Name: 1202 Service Animals

Policy: Sound Community Services, Inc. (SCSI) is committed to making reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures to permit the use of service animals by persons with disabilities. Service animals help ensure the independence of persons with disabilities, and it is therefore our policy to welcome into our facilities and programs any animal that is individually trained to assist a person with a disability.

Procedure:

What is a Service Animal?

Service animals include any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Service animals do not always have a harness, a sign, or a symbol indicating that they are service animals. A service animal is not a pet. A service animal is also not an emotional support animal. Service animals assist people with disabilities in many ways, such as:

- Guiding people who are blind or have low vision and retrieving dropped objects for them;
- Alerting people who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds and the presence of others;
- Carrying and picking up items, opening doors, or flipping switches for people with disabilities who have limited use of hands or arms, limited use of their legs, or limited ability to bend or stoop;
- Pulling wheelchairs;
- Alerting people with disabilities to the onset of medical conditions such as seizures, protecting them and cushioning them if they fall, reviving them, and performing other tasks that reduce the risk of disability-related injury;
- Doing work or performing tasks for persons with traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities, such as reminding a person with depression to take medication or waking him up, alerting a person with anxiety to the onset of panic attacks, orienting people with schizophrenia to reality, and helping people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities to locate misplaced items, find places, or follow daily routines; and
- Providing physical support and assisting people with physical disabilities with stability and balance.

Requirements for Service Animals:

It is no longer our policy to require proof of vaccination and a license for service animals. Instead, staff will need to make the assessment of whether an animal is a service animal in accordance with this policy and the ADA.

Most of the time, people with disabilities who use service animals may be easily identified without

any need for questioning. If we can tell by looking, it is our policy not to make an individual feel unwelcome by asking questions.

If we are unsure whether an animal meets the definition of a service animal, it is our policy to ask the individual only two questions when the individual enters the facility:

- Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

If the individual says yes to the first question and explains the work or tasks that the animal is trained to perform, we will welcome the person and service animal into our facilities and services without asking any other questions. We will not ask an individual questions about his or her disability. We will not ask an individual to show a license, certification, or special ID card as proof of their animal's training. We will not ask for proof of vaccination for a service animal. We must permit service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities to all activities, services, and areas normally used by members of the public and we will treat individuals with service animals with the same courtesy and respect that we afford to any other person we work with. We will also make the same efforts to provide or arrange transportation for someone with a service animal that we would for any other person we work with.

SCSI has the right to exclude a service animal from our facilities or services if the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if the dog is not housebroken. However, please note that some service animals do not need to be on a leash to be under their handler's control. We will not exclude a particular service animal based on past experience with other animals or based on fear unrelated to an individual service animal's actual behavior. Each situation will be considered individually. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.