

## *Service Animals*

Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court prohibits bringing a pet (a domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship) to work or having a pet in the Court-controlled buildings and premises, with the exception of service animals for a person with disabilities.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service animal is defined as “any dog individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” This definition has been interpreted to include, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals to an impending seizure or protecting individuals during one, and alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders, or pulling a wheelchair and fetching dropped items.

A person with a disability uses a service animal as an auxiliary aid. In compliance with the ADA, service animals are welcome in all buildings on the court’s property and may attend any class, meeting, hearing or other event. There may be an exception to certain areas.

Requirements of service animals and their owners include:

- All animals need to be immunized against rabies and other diseases common to that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current.
- Animals must wear a rabies vaccination tag.
- All dogs must be licensed per state law.
- Service animals must wear an owner identification tag (which includes the name and phone number of the owner) at all times.
- Animals must be in good health.
- Animals must be on a leash, harness or other type of restraint at all times, unless the owner/partner is unable to retain an animal on leash due to a disability.
- The owner must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of the owner/partner.
- The owner/partner must provide the HR department with information as to how the animal accommodates for the individual’s disability.

Reasonable behavior is expected from service animals while on court property. The owners of disruptive and aggressive service animals may be asked to remove them from court facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be told not to bring the service animal onto court premises until the owner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. If the owner cannot maintain control of the service animal, or if the service animal proves dangerous or disruptive by its conduct, then the business can expel the animal from the premises.

Cleanliness of the service animal is mandatory. Consideration of others must be taken into account when providing maintenance and hygiene of service animals. The owner/partner is expected to clean and dispose of all animal waste.

While the ADA defines a service animal as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, in certain cases, miniature horses can also be considered a service animal under the ADA. A miniature horse, just like a dog, meets the criteria of a service animal when it has been individually trained to perform work or a specific task for the benefit of an individual with a disability. However, public places can limit their access based on height and weight, unlike service dogs which have no size or breed restrictions. A miniature horse must be between 24” and 34” at the shoulder and between 70 to 100 pounds.

The court will also use the following factors in determining whether it is reasonable to allow a miniature horse into our facilities based on:

- Whether the miniature horse is housebroken;
- If the miniature horse is under the owner’s control;
- Whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse’s type, size, and weight; and,
- Whether the miniature horse’s presence will compromise safety requirements and or operations.

Service animals do not include untrained comfort animals, which are generally animals that provide psychological comfort by their existence. In other words, no rabbit, bird, cat, monkey, or untrained dog can qualify as a service animal under the ADA.

Under the ADA the court is allowed to ask the public upon trying to enter the courthouse: 1) whether the animal is a service animal and, 2) what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Based on the answers to these questions, the animal may or may not be allowed onto the premises.

### ***Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)***

Unlike service animals, Emotion Support Animals (ESAs) are not required to be trained to perform a service for their handlers and are NOT provided the same protections under the ADA. An ESA provides emotional support for their handlers and may be allowed on the premises as long as the animal does not cause a disturbance or undue hardship for the court. However, the Judges have discretion when making this determination.