

FREE GUIDE

# Your Complete Guide to Getting a Service Dog in Nevada

Everything you need to know about service dog rights, training, timelines, and finding the right path forward.

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**Nose For Success**

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DOG TRAINING ACADEMY

[noseforsuccess.com](https://noseforsuccess.com)

# What's Inside

A practical roadmap from first questions to your trained service dog partner.

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### WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

Whether you're a person with a disability exploring service dog options, a veteran looking into psychiatric service dogs, a parent researching for a child, or simply curious about the process — this guide was written for you. No jargon, no sales pitch. Just honest, practical information.

## CHAPTER 01

# Service Dog, ESA, or Therapy Dog?

*These three terms are often confused – even by landlords, business owners, and medical professionals. Understanding the differences matters because each has very different legal protections and training requirements.*

## ADA PROTECTED

### Service Dog

- ✓ Trained to perform specific tasks related to a disability
- ✓ Allowed in all public places
- ✓ Protected under ADA, FHA, and ACAA
- ✓ No registration or certification required by law
- ✓ 12–18 months of professional training typical

## HOUSING ONLY

### Emotional Support Animal

- ✓ Provides comfort through companionship
- ✓ No specific task training required
- ✓ Protected under Fair Housing Act only
- ✓ NOT allowed in public places like restaurants/stores
- ✓ Requires letter from licensed mental health provider

## FACILITY DOG

### Therapy Dog

- ✓ Trained to provide comfort to others (not their handler)
- ✓ Works in hospitals, schools, nursing homes
- ✓ No public access rights
- ✓ Handler does not need to have a disability
- ✓ Requires invitation to visit facilities

## IMPORTANT – WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS

There is no legitimate government registry for service dogs. Websites selling "service dog registration," certificates, or ID cards are scams. Under the ADA, no documentation is required. A legitimate service dog is defined by its training and the tasks it performs – not a certificate or vest.

## What Counts as a "Task"?

The ADA defines a service dog as one that has been **individually trained to perform tasks directly related to a person's disability**. The key word is *task* – a specific, trained behavior. Here are some examples:

#### MOBILITY

Bracing, balance support, retrieving dropped items, opening doors, pulling a wheelchair

#### PSYCHIATRIC

Interrupting panic attacks, grounding during dissociation, providing deep pressure therapy, creating personal space in crowds

#### MEDICAL ALERT

Detecting blood sugar changes, alerting before seizures, reminding handler to take medication

Simply providing emotional comfort or calming someone by being present does **not** qualify as a trained task. That's the line between a service dog and an emotional support animal.

## CHAPTER 02

# Is a Service Dog Right for You?

*A service dog can be life-changing, but it's also a major commitment. Being honest with yourself about readiness leads to the best outcomes – for you and the dog.*

## The Questions to Ask Yourself

Before pursuing a service dog, take time to reflect on the following. There are no wrong answers – only honest ones.

- Do I have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity?** – This is the legal threshold under the ADA. Physical, psychiatric, neurological, and chronic health conditions can all qualify.
- Are there specific tasks a dog could perform to help me?** – Think beyond companionship. Can you name 2-3 concrete actions a dog could do that would directly mitigate your disability?
- Can I commit to 12–18 months of training?** – Service dog training isn't a quick process. It requires patience, participation, and consistency throughout the training period.
- Am I physically and emotionally able to care for a dog?** – Service dogs need daily exercise, grooming, vet care, and mental stimulation. Consider whether your health allows this, or if you have support to help.
- Can I handle the public attention?** – Service dog handlers are frequently approached, questioned, and sometimes confronted in public. This is a reality to prepare for.
- Is my living situation stable enough?** – Dogs need a consistent environment. Frequent moves, unstable housing, or restrictive living situations can make service dog partnership difficult.
- Can I afford the ongoing costs?** – Beyond the initial training investment, budget for food (\$50–100/mo), veterinary care (\$500–1,500/year), gear, and occasional grooming.

### A GOOD TRAINER WILL HELP YOU DECIDE

A reputable trainer will never pressure you into starting a program. They'll have an honest conversation about whether a service dog is truly the right fit for your situation – and won't hesitate to suggest alternatives if it's not. If a trainer guarantees results or rushes you to sign up, that's a red flag.

## Two Paths to a Service Dog

### Path 1: Program-Trained Service Dog

A professional training organization selects, raises, and trains the dog from puppyhood through full task training. You receive a fully trained dog and go through a handler training period to learn how to work together. This path costs more upfront but involves less personal training time.

### Path 2: Owner-Trained Service Dog

You participate actively in your dog's training with professional guidance. This can be done with a puppy or, in some cases, a suitable existing pet. It takes longer and requires more of your time, but many handlers find the bond built through training to be incredibly rewarding. This path is also typically more affordable.

#### NEVADA-SPECIFIC NOTE

Nevada follows federal ADA law — there is no state-specific service dog certification or registration. Nevada law also provides criminal penalties for misrepresenting a pet as a service animal (NRS 426.790), which underscores how seriously the state takes this.

## CHAPTER 03

# What to Expect During Training

*Service dog training is a journey, not an event. Here's what the timeline typically looks like from start to finish so you can plan accordingly.*

1-2MO

## Foundation Phase

Basic obedience and socialization. The dog learns core commands (sit, stay, down, come, heel) and begins exposure to various environments – stores, restaurants, outdoor settings. Bite inhibition, crate training, and house manners are solidified. This is the groundwork everything else builds on.

3-6MO

## Advanced Obedience & Public Access Foundations

Training moves to more demanding environments. The dog learns to remain calm and focused in busy public settings – malls, airports, medical offices. Leash manners become polished. Impulse control and distraction work intensify. This phase separates pet-level obedience from service-dog-level reliability.

6-12 MO

## Task Training

This is where the dog learns the specific tasks that mitigate your disability. Mobility assistance, medical alerts, psychiatric intervention behaviors, or whatever tasks are relevant to your needs. Each task is shaped, proofed, and tested across multiple environments until it's reliable.

12-18 MO

## Public Access Testing & Handler Training

The final phase focuses on you and the dog working together as a seamless team. You learn how to manage the dog in all public situations, handle interruptions from strangers, advocate for your rights, and maintain the dog's training long-term. The dog undergoes a comprehensive public access evaluation.

12-18

MONTHS OF TRAINING

200+

HOURS OF WORK

8-10

YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

### WHAT "FULLY TRAINED" REALLY MEANS

A fully trained service dog isn't just well-behaved – it's a dog that can perform its trained tasks reliably, in any public environment, without being a nuisance or a danger to others. Under the ADA, a service dog must be under control at all times and must be housebroken. A business can legally ask you to remove a service dog that is out of control or not housebroken, even if it is a legitimate service dog.

## CHAPTER 04

# Your Rights Under the ADA

*Understanding your legal rights is essential – not just for your protection, but so you can confidently navigate the world with your service dog partner.*

## The Two Questions Rule

When you enter a business or public place, staff may only ask you **two questions**:

- 1 "Is this a service animal required because of a disability?" – A simple yes or no is sufficient. You do not need to disclose your specific disability.
- 2 "What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?" – You can describe the task briefly (e.g., "She alerts me to oncoming seizures" or "He provides mobility support"). You do not need to demonstrate the task.

Staff **cannot** ask about your disability, require documentation, demand a demonstration, or require your dog to wear a vest or ID tag.

## Where Service Dogs Are Allowed

LOCATION	SERVICE DOG	ESA	THERAPY DOG
Restaurants & stores	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No
Hotels & lodging	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No
Hospitals & medical offices	✓ Yes	✗ No	By invitation
Rental housing	✓ Yes (FHA)	✓ Yes (FHA)	✗ No
Airplanes	✓ Yes (ACAA)	✗ No	✗ No
Workplaces	✓ Yes (ADA)	Case by case	✗ No
Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE DENIED ACCESS

Stay calm and polite. Educate — many denials stem from ignorance, not malice. Ask to speak with a manager. If the issue isn't resolved, document the incident (date, time, location, names of staff) and file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice at [ada.gov](https://www.ada.gov) or by calling **1-800-514-0301**. In Nevada, you can also contact the Nevada Equal Rights Commission at **(702) 486-7161**.

## Nevada-Specific Protections

In addition to federal ADA protections, Nevada offers additional state-level protections for service dog handlers:

- NRS 426.790:** It is a misdemeanor to fraudulently represent an animal as a service animal. Fines up to \$500 for a first offense.

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- NRS 426.510:** Persons with disabilities have the right to be accompanied by a service dog in all public places, housing, and transportation.

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- NRS 651.075:** Hotels, motels, and public accommodations cannot charge extra fees for service dogs or require them to be removed from the premises.

## CHAPTER 05

# How to Choose a Reputable Trainer

*The service dog industry is largely unregulated. Anyone can call themselves a service dog trainer. This makes choosing the right one critically important – your dog's training quality affects your safety, independence, and quality of life.*

## Red Flags to Watch For

Walk away from any trainer who:

- Guarantees a timeline** – No ethical trainer can guarantee exactly when a dog will be ready. Every dog learns differently.

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- Offers "instant" or "fast-track" service dog certification** – There's no such thing. Real service dog training takes 12-18 months.

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- Won't explain their methods** – Training methodology matters. A good trainer is transparent about how and why they train the way they do.

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- Uses primarily punishment-based methods** – Research consistently shows that aversive methods increase stress and behavioral fallout in service dogs, undermining reliability.

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- Pressures you to commit immediately** – High-pressure sales tactics are a red flag in any industry, especially one involving a multi-year commitment.

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- Has no verifiable credentials or references** – Anyone can put up a website. Look for real, verifiable qualifications and client references.

## What to Look For Instead

### Professional Certifications

Look for trainers who hold credentials from recognized bodies:

- 1 **CCPDT** (Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers) – The most widely recognized certification in the industry.
- 2 **IAABC** (International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants) – Indicates expertise in understanding animal behavior.

- 3 **KPA CTP** (Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner) – Focused on science-based, positive reinforcement methods.

### Science-Based Training Philosophy

The best service dog trainers use methods grounded in behavioral science. Look for references to the **LIMA framework** (Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive) – this approach prioritizes the dog's welfare while still achieving reliable, real-world performance. It's the gold standard in modern professional dog training.

### Insurance, Safety, and Transparency

A legitimate trainer should carry liability insurance, require trainers to be background-checked, hold Pet CPR and First Aid certification, and be willing to provide references from past clients. Don't be shy about asking – a good trainer expects these questions and welcomes them.

### The Right Questions to Ask

#### QUESTIONS FOR A POTENTIAL TRAINER

- What training methods do you use, and why?
- What certifications do your trainers hold?
- What does your training timeline look like?
- Can I speak with past clients?
- What happens if the dog doesn't pass public access testing?
- Do you offer handler training as part of the program?
- Are your trainers insured and background-checked?

## CHAPTER 06

# Frequently Asked Questions

*Honest answers to the questions we hear most often from people exploring the service dog path.*

## How much does a service dog cost?

Program-trained service dogs typically range from \$15,000 to \$50,000+. Owner-training programs with professional guidance are generally less expensive, ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 depending on the program length and level of support. Some nonprofit organizations place service dogs at no cost, though waitlists can be 2-5 years long.

## Can my pet dog become a service dog?

Sometimes. Your dog needs to have the right temperament – calm under pressure, not reactive to other animals, food, or loud noises, physically healthy, and eager to work. A professional evaluation can determine if your dog is a candidate. Be prepared for the honest answer – not every dog is suited for service work, and that's okay.

## What breeds make the best service dogs?

Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and Standard Poodles are the most common, but breed alone doesn't determine suitability. Temperament, health, and individual personality matter far more than breed. Many service dogs are mixed breeds. The best service dog is the one that reliably performs its tasks and is well-suited to your lifestyle.

## Do I need a doctor's note to have a service dog?

Not for public access. Under the ADA, no documentation is required to bring a service dog into public places. However, for housing (Fair Housing Act) and air travel (Air Carrier Access Act), you may need documentation from a licensed healthcare provider. A good trainer can guide you through these requirements.

## Can a landlord charge pet rent or deposits for my service dog?

No. Under the Fair Housing Act, landlords cannot charge pet rent, pet deposits, or breed-restrict service dogs or emotional support animals. You are, however, liable for any damage the animal causes beyond normal wear and tear.

## What happens if my service dog doesn't work out?

This is called a "career change" – and it's more common than people think. Not every dog completes the program. A responsible trainer will identify this early, be honest with you, and help you find a suitable replacement. The dog typically goes on to be a wonderful pet or may be redirected to less demanding work like therapy dog certification.

### **Can a business ask me to leave if my service dog is misbehaving?**

Yes. Under the ADA, a business may ask you to remove your service dog if the dog is out of control and you are not taking effective action to control it, or if the dog is not housebroken. The business must still allow you to return without the dog.

### **I'm a veteran with PTSD. Can I get a psychiatric service dog?**

Absolutely. PTSD is a qualifying disability under the ADA. Psychiatric service dogs (PSDs) are trained to perform specific tasks like interrupting flashbacks, performing grounding behaviors during anxiety attacks, doing room checks, and waking handlers from nightmares. The VA has also begun supporting service dog programs for veterans. A professional trainer can help you identify which tasks would be most beneficial.

## CHAPTER 07

# About Nose For Success

*We built Nose For Success because we believe everyone who needs a service dog should be able to get one – trained with integrity, backed by science, and supported by people who truly understand what's at stake.*

## Founded by Someone Who Gets It

*"I live with Lupus. I know what it's like to have your independence affected by something outside your control — and I know what it feels like to get some of that independence back with the right support. That's why I started Nose For Success."*

— Vinaya Pressley, Founder

Vinaya brings over **8 years of professional experience** in service dog training — spanning mobility assistance, psychiatric support, medical alert, and multi-purpose service dogs. She founded Nose For Success with a clear mission: to bring transparency, accountability, and genuine expertise to an industry that too often operates without them.

## What Makes NFS Different

### OUR APPROACH

#### LIMA Framework

- ✓ Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive methods
- ✓ Science-based, individualized training plans
- ✓ Every training decision documented and defensible
- ✓ The dog's welfare is never compromised for speed

### OUR STANDARDS

#### Professional Accountability

- ✓ CCPDT / IAABC / KPA CTP certified trainers
- ✓ Pet CPR and First Aid certified
- ✓ Background checked and fully insured
- ✓ Transparent communication at every step

## Our Programs

### Service Dog Training

Full program-trained service dogs for mobility, psychiatric, medical alert, and multi-purpose needs. Includes complete handler training and ongoing support. We work with you to match the right dog and the right training plan for your specific situation.

### Owner Training Academy


For handlers who want to be actively involved in training their own service dog. You'll work alongside our trainers, learning the methods and building a deep working bond with your dog throughout the process.

### Pet Training


Private, in-home training for pet dogs — from puppy foundations and basic obedience to advanced skills and behavior modification. Same science-based methods, tailored to your pet and your household.

## Ready to Take the Next Step?

Whether you're ready to start a program or just have questions, we'd love to hear from you. Book a free consultation — no pressure, no commitment. Just a real conversation about your needs and how we can help.

 (702)  
622-6401

 [noseforsuccess.com](https://noseforsuccess.com)

 Henderson, NV  
89011

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