



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA of Greater San Antonio Service Animal Policy

The mission of the YMCA of Greater San Antonio is to put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

By upholding our core values of **Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, and Caring**, the Y is committed to strengthening our community through programs that promote youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Using our core values and the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) ADA as a guide, we have developed the following **Service Animal Policy** to ensure that all who enter our facilities enjoy a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment.

Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability, is allowed in our facility. Service dogs are permitted to accompany the handler to any place in the building or facility where members of the public, program participants, customers, or clients are allowed.

The YMCA may hold special events or programs that would allow for animals who are not designated service animals to be invited into our facilities. This is on a case by case basis and must be approved in advance.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about this policy:

Q1: What is a service animal?

A: Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability, is allowed in our facilities.

Q2: What does “do work or perform tasks” mean?

A: The dog must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. For example, a person with diabetes may have a dog that is trained to alert him when his blood sugar reaches high or low levels. A person with depression may have a dog that is trained to remind her to take her medication. Or, a person with epilepsy may have a dog trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.



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Q3: Where are service animals allowed to go within YMCA facilities?

A: Service dogs are allowed to accompany the handler to any place in the building or facility where the community, program participants, customers, or clients are allowed. Service animals are not allowed access to any area in which the public or owner is restricted to.

Q4: Does the service animal have to wear a vest or patch and harness identifying them as a service animal?

A: The ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness. However, the ADA does require that the service animals be under the handler's control at all times. The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered in public unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents using these devices.

Q5: Are gyms and fitness centers with swimming pools required to allow a service animal in the pool with its handler?

A: No. The ADA does not override public health rules prohibiting dogs in swimming pools. However, the service animal must be allowed on the pool deck and in other areas where the public is allowed to go.

Q6: Are emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals considered service animals under ADA?

A: Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not servicing animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA and therefore are NOT allowed in our facility. Pets and all other species of animals or dogs that are not service animals are NOT allowed in our facility.

For additional information about the ADA, please visit their website at: www.ADA.gov