

Service Animal Policy

The purpose of this policy is to promote inclusivity and create guidelines for allowing service animals at facilities, programs, and activities of Reality Church of Los Angeles (Reality LA). It should be noted that religious organizations are exempt from Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and have no obligations under ADA to permit Service Animals.¹ Within that stipulation, the following describes Reality LA's current chosen service animal policy:

What is a service animal according to ADA?

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog or other animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. *Dogs or other animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.*

Where are service animals allowed?

Under the ADA, state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to

¹ Section 307 of the ADA states that "[t]he provisions of this title shall not apply to....religious organizations or entities controlled by religious organizations, including places of worship."

As noted in the preamble to the ADA Title III regulation: "[T]he ADA's exemption of religious organizations and religious entities controlled by religious organizations is very broad, encompassing a wide variety of situations. Religious organizations and entities controlled by religious organizations have no obligations under the ADA. Even when a religious organization carries out activities that would otherwise make it a public accommodation, the religious organization is exempt from ADA coverage. Thus, if a church itself operates....a private school, or a diocesan school system, the operations of the....school or schools would not be subject to the ADA or [the Title III regulations]. The religious entity would not lose its exemption merely because the services provided were open to the general public. The test is whether the church or other religious organization operates the public accommodation, now which individuals receive the public accommodation's services."

accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is allowed to go.

If there is a complaint regarding allergies, fear of dogs, etc., the person with a disability and their service animal must still be accommodated. They can be assigned to different locations in the room.

When can a service animal be excluded?

If admitting service animals would fundamentally alter the nature of a service or program, service animals may be prohibited. In addition, if a particular service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if it is not housebroken, that animal may be excluded.

For example, if there is a service animal sitting in a gathering and continuously barking, we can ask for the service animal to be removed from the premises. If the service animal barks once or is provoked to bark, then we cannot exclude it.

How to determine if an animal is a service animal

Only two specific questions can be asked in cases where it is not obvious that an animal is a service animal. They are:

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

Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the animal, require that the animal demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

Animals are also not required to wear vests or clothes that designate them as service animals.

Other guidelines

- Animals must not relieve themselves at Helen Bernstein High School or on Reality LA or Serve LA property.
- Owners must clean up after their animal.
- Animals are not allowed on furniture.

- Owners will be held liable for any injury caused to others by their animal.
- Animals must be fully trained to do work. Animals in training are not allowed.