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Winter 2017

Job Corps Disability Support Newsletter

Service and Assistance Animals

Ensuring program access for students with service animals and considering reasonable accommodation requests for assistance animals is becoming more common on Job Corps centers. The [Service Animals and Assistance Animals in the Job Corps Program Guide](#) (Information Notice 17-05, released August 25, 2017) can be used as a reference, as well as contacting your Regional Disability Coordinator. Since legal obligations vary depending on the type of animal (i.e., service or assistance), each is addressed separately in the guide. The following are a few common questions and answers about service and assistance animals; more detailed information is available in the guide.



Service Animals

➤ **What is a service animal?**

A service animal is 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. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the person’s disability. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship, without more, do not constitute work or tasks.

➤ **Can a service animal be denied access to the center?**

A center cannot deny an individual with a service animal access to the center. Such access is legally mandated.

➤ **What documentation can be requested related to a service animal?**

A Disability Coordinator (DC) must not ask about the nature or extent of a person’s disability, but may make two inquiries to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

A center cannot require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal.

Service and Assistance Animals (cont'd)

- **Can a student's service animal accompany the student in all areas of the center?**

A student with a service animal must be permitted to be accompanied by his/her service animal in all areas of the center where students are allowed to go. A student who needs to use a service animal in a food preparation area must be allowed to do so unless it is determined that the presence of the service animal presents a direct threat to health or safety that cannot be eliminated or reduced by a reasonable accommodation to the student.

- **How can center staff make sure they are prepared for the arrival of a service animal?**

While the center cannot deny an individual with a service animal access to Job Corps as such access is legally mandated; a DC can contact the student prior to his/her arrival on center to discuss the Job Corps environment and related behavior expectations of the animal, ensure s/he is comfortable with the care and supervision of the animal, and discuss any accommodations that will be needed to allow the student to attend to these necessary tasks. This will allow for a smooth transition and help to avoid any unexpected issues.

Assistance Animals

- **What are assistance animals?**

Assistance animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression and certain phobias, but do not have training to perform specific tasks that assist people with disabilities. Consequently, these animals do not meet the definition of service animal.

- **Does Job Corps allow assistance animals?**

Job Corps will consider assistance animals as a reasonable accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

This reasonable accommodation process is outlined in Appendix 605. Consideration will be given to the specific needs and request of the individual with the disability, the type of animal, and type of assistance it provides.

- **What documentation can be requested related to an assistance animal?**

If the disability is not obvious and/or the reason the animal is needed is not clear, then documentation may be required to establish the existence of a disability, the manner in which the animal alleviates one or more symptoms or effects of the disability, and the necessity of the animal in order for the student to participate in Job Corps.



Other questions covered in the guide include:

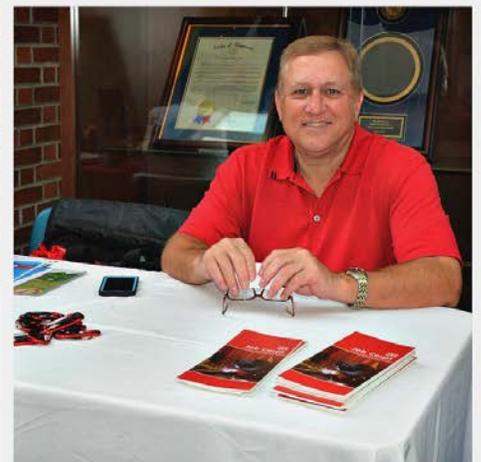
- **What are some tasks that service animals may perform for a person with a disability?**
- **Who is responsible for the care and supervision of the service or assistance animal?**
- **What if other students or center staff are allergic to or fearful of the service or assistance animal?**

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This year's theme, "Inclusion Drives Innovation," reminds us that successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities results in successful outcomes for their employers too. Some of the NDEAM 2017 activities held by Job Corps centers are summarized below.

- **Westover:** The center held a Disability/Healthy Living Fair. Staff and students had the opportunity to interact with disability partners including Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Springfield Technical Community College Disability Services, Stavros Center for Independent Living, the Institute of Abilities, and Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation.
- **Pittsburgh:** The center provided two separate NDEAM activities: 1) A Disability Awareness Poster Contest featuring famous people with disabilities. The winners received gift cards. 2) The Pittsburgh Steelwheelers, a professional wheelchair basketball team, played against the Job Corps staff and students. The head coach gave an inspirational speech about working hard and persevering.
- **Anaconda:** The center hosted a returning guest speaker, Rhonda Cochrane, the President of the Montana Association for the Blind. She talked with students and staff about being in the workforce as a person with a disability using her service dog, Shadow.
- **Guthrie:** The center hosted a wheelchair basketball game as an opportunity to raise awareness about varying physical disabilities and people who use wheelchairs for mobility. Posters for sign-ups were distributed throughout the center, and many students participated.
- **Long Beach:** The center Disability Coordinator put up nine Campaign for Disability Employment posters throughout the center. Students and staff participated by locating the posters, taking pictures posing in front of them, and submitting the photos to her. The Center Standards Incentives Manager rewarded the students with \$15 SGA funds. Staff were rewarded with "Shout Out" cards.
- **Hawaii:** The center hosted guest speakers from Access Surf Hawaii (a non-profit organization helping children and adults with disabilities, and wounded veterans to discover their level of abilities in the ocean), and the Hawaii FI-DO Project (a non-profit that provides service dogs to people with disabilities other than blindness). Students, staff, and guests learned about the importance of inclusion, not only in the workplace, but in all aspects of life.
- **Pinellas:** The center placed posters and information about NDEAM in all the buildings showing people with various disabilities as employed and productive citizens. The center Disability Coordinator conducted a staff training to discuss the importance of promoting equitable employment for all students, including students with disabilities.
- **Phoenix:** The center hosted a guest speaker who was diagnosed as an adolescent with a neurological condition that affects his learning and motor skills. He has been involved with Special Olympics for eight years, and is a Family Advisor with Raising Special Kids. He spoke about being bullied based on his disability, as well as feeling isolated as a result. He shared his experiences making new friends via Special Olympics, and how helping other young people helped him overcome many obstacles.
- **Jacobs Creek:** The center participated in the Mountain Home Virginia Healthcare System Employment Awareness Month celebration, held at the Virginia Hospital in Johnson City, Tennessee. The center set up a table to raise awareness about disability employment issues and how Job Corps welcomes the talents of all people, including people with disabilities.

Job Corps 2017 NDEAM Events

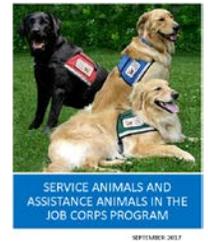


Job Corps centers participating in NDEAM activities from top to bottom, left to right: Guthrie, Westover, Long Beach, Hawaii, Pittsburgh, Hawaii, and Jacobs Creek.

Disability Resources: Service and Assistance Animals

Service Animals and Assistance Animals in the Job Corps Program Guide

The [Service Animals and Assistance Animals in the Job Corps Program Guide](#) provides information on ensuring access for service animals, and considering requests for assistance animals through the reasonable accommodation process per federal disability and nondiscrimination laws, and Job Corps policy.



Anything Pawsable

[Anything Pawsable](#) is an online magazine that provides resources created by the Service Dog community. It includes dog news, disability news, events, training tips, interviews, and personal stories.



Petjoy

[Petjoy](#) provides helpful information on service dog etiquette, and features a Petjoy Learning Center where students can access articles on maintaining healthy pets, training support, and the responsibilities of pet ownership.



Guide Dog

[Guide Dog Foundation](#) is a website that provides etiquette and guide dog information with links to other resources such as newsletters, brochures, and videos for students, teachers, and researchers.



Job Accommodation Network (JAN): Service and Assistance Animals in the Workplace

[JAN](#) provides dedicated website information and resources regarding service and assistance animals in the workplace. Resources include service/assistance animal related job accommodations, service/assistance animals and allergies in the workplace, as well as frequently asked questions about service animals.

Regional Disability Coordinators

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