



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA

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## Service and Support Animals for Members of the Public at the Judicial Council of California

The Judicial Council of California allows people who use service or support animals equal access to Judicial Council services, programs, and activities<sup>1</sup> in accordance with all state and federal laws. Under state and federal law, a **service animal** is a dog or, in some cases, a miniature horse that is trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Examples of such tasks may include but are not limited to guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, assisting people with mobility disabilities with physical tasks, alerting an individual to a seizure, or providing medication reminders. Animals that meet this definition are considered service animals whether or not they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

A **support animal** (also referred to as an emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animal) is an animal of any species that is used by a person with a disability to provide companionship. A support animal may have basic obedience training but not specific training to perform a service. Support animals do not have the same legal status as service animals, as described in more detail below.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this policy, Judicial Council services, programs, and activities primarily refer to those conducted at the Judicial Council's staff offices located at 455 Golden Gate Avenue in San Francisco and 2850/2860 Gateway Oaks Drive in Sacramento in areas that members of the public may access, are invited to, or are otherwise granted access to by the Judicial Council for its services, programs, and activities (e.g., public meetings and events). Judicial Council services, programs, and activities that members of the public may access also may be held or conducted at other facilities in the state, whether controlled and managed by the Judicial Council or in a third-party location; in such instances, this policy applies to the areas in the facility that members of the public may access or are invited to for the Judicial Council services, programs, and activities, as applicable to those services, programs, and activities at the location. Except as required by applicable law, this policy does not apply to any nonpublic or restricted areas in a facility at which Judicial Council services, programs, and activities may be conducted.

**Use of a Service Animal**

When a member of the public requires the use of a service animal to access Judicial Council services, programs, or activities, the Judicial Council may ask the following questions about the service animal:

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

An individual using a service animal is not required to notify the Judicial Council in advance. However, individuals may provide advance notice or ask questions by contacting the Judicial Council access coordinator via email:

**Access Coordinator**

JCCAccessCoordinator@jud.ca.gov

Individuals will be permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of the Judicial Council's facilities that members of the public are allowed to access.

**Use of a Support Animal**

Unlike the use of a service animal, the Judicial Council's advance approval is required when a member of the public desires to use a support animal while accessing Judicial Council services, programs, or activities. Requests for the use of a support animal should be made as early as possible but at least five business days before the date of the Judicial Council service, program, or activity at which the support animal would be present. The Judicial Council may waive this five-business-day timing requirement at its discretion. Requests should be submitted to the Judicial Council access coordinator via email:

**Access Coordinator**

JCCAccessCoordinator@jud.ca.gov

Individuals requesting the use of a support animal are required to provide:

- The date, time, location and, if applicable, name of the Judicial Council service, program, or activity for which the individual is requesting use of the support animal;
- A statement confirming that the requester has a disability that necessitates the use of a support animal as an accommodation (the requester should not, and is not required to, disclose a diagnosis or any specific information about the nature of the disability); and
- For contact purposes, the name, address, and telephone number or email address of the requester.

The Judicial Council may deny a request to use a support animal when:

- The requester has failed to satisfy the requirements of this policy;
- The requested accommodation would create an undue financial or administrative burden on the Judicial Council; or
- The requested accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

The Judicial Council will keep confidential all the information of the requester concerning the request for accommodation unless confidentiality is waived in writing by the requester or disclosure is required by law. The requester's identity and confidential information will not be disclosed to the public or to persons other than those involved in the accommodation process.

### **Handler and Service and Support Animal Conduct**

Handlers are responsible for the care and supervision of their service or support animal at all times. This includes toileting, feeding, and conduct. The service or support animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In such instances, the animal must be under control by voice or hand signals.

### **Exclusion or Removal of a Service or Support Animal**

The Judicial Council may require removal of a service or support animal if:

- The animal is not housebroken;
- The animal is out of control (exhibiting disruptive or aggressive behavior) and the handler does not take effective action to get the animal under control; or
- The presence of the service or support animal would fundamentally alter the nature of a service or program provided to the public.

To determine whether such risks exist, the Judicial Council will make an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment or the best available objective evidence. The assessment will evaluate the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the potential for injury; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services will mitigate the risk. Excluding a service animal based on such risks will be based on the actual behavior of the animal.

## ***Service and Support Animals at the Judicial Council of California***

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This policy is not intended to address the use of service and support animals for employees of the Judicial Council. The council's Equal Employment Opportunity policy governs employment-related accommodations.

### *Contact:*

Amber Barnett, Leadership Support Services,  
[jccaccesscoordinator@jud.ca.gov](mailto:jccaccesscoordinator@jud.ca.gov)

### *Additional resources:*

Judicial Council Meeting Attendance and Procedures:

[courts.ca.gov/policy-administration/judicial-council/judicial-council-meetings/attendance-and-public-comment](https://courts.ca.gov/policy-administration/judicial-council/judicial-council-meetings/attendance-and-public-comment)

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities:

[courts.ca.gov/about/accessibility](https://courts.ca.gov/about/accessibility)

Judicial Council's ADA Grievance Procedure:

[courts.ca.gov/about/accessibility/americans-disabilities-act-grievance-procedure](https://courts.ca.gov/about/accessibility/americans-disabilities-act-grievance-procedure)

Additional information from ADA.gov:

[Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA;](#)  
[ADA Requirements: Service Animals](#)

California legislative information—Civ. Code, § 54.2:

[leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=CIV&sectionNum=54.2](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=CIV&sectionNum=54.2)

Federal regulations regarding service animals—28 C.F.R. § 35.136:

[ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-35/subpart-B/section-35.136](https://ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-35/subpart-B/section-35.136)