

# Inclusion of Service Dogs

## Video Transcript

- [Rebecca] So nice to have you all here today. My name is Rebecca Martin and I'm with the grant facilitation team at the Rutgers University, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, and I'd like to thank you for joining us this morning for this workshop on the inclusion of service animals provided by Nimit Kaur, who is Disability Services Coordinator for the Camden County Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Prior to this work, Nimit has worked for the Office of Disability Services at Rutgers, Camden, and also has interned with Cory Booker, and she's also a recent graduate from the Masters of Social Work Program at Rutgers. Before we begin, I have a few notes. We'd like to make you aware that we will be recording today's training.

We have enabled captions for today's event and an ASL interpreter, thank you, Sue, is here with us today and she's been spotlighted for all users. There will be a time for questions and answers towards the end of the conversation today, so please feel free to add any questions that come up in the chat, or you can hold them until the end when you'll be free to unmute and ask directly if you like.

You should have received an email this morning providing you a PDF of the slides that will be used during the event today, but in case you did not, I'll provide a link in the chat shortly after Nimit starts her presentation. And then finally, I'd like to take a moment to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to Peri Nearon and her team at the New Jersey Division of Disability Services for making this training series and the IHC grant program possible.

So now without further ado, I will turn it over to Nimit.

- [Nimit] Hi, everyone. Can you all hear me?

- I believe yes.

- Okay, great. Hi, everyone. So, my name is Nimit Kaur as Rebecca said. I am from Camden County Health and Human Services, division of Senior and Disabled Services. I am the disability services coordinator and I am also the area grant planner. I'm here today to provide you some of my experiences and also some legislations on service dogs and the differences between emotional support dogs, service dogs, and some guidelines and etiquette.

So, before we move on, I would like to give you guys a background on my story, where I started and how I'm here. So, I was born in India which is a country where at that time when I was a child, there was no ADA regulations or there was no support like IPs in school.

So, I went to a special boarding school for the blind. That's where I learned my braille and all the blindness techniques. However, mainstream opportunities were highly limited for me, so when I came here to the United States, going to the public school was my very first experience.

And when it comes to guide dog, in India, many of you guys might be aware that many of the countries have a high probability of stray dogs encounter, and so I have very clear vivid memories of being chased by stray dogs because, again, there were no regulated shelters at that time.

So, when I came to the United States, I attended middle school and then high school. So, they connected me through what's called New Jersey Commission for the Blind, and I was fortunate enough to have really great dedicated professionals through their team who guided me through my childhood years to middle school to high school.

In my high school, I had a teacher of visually impaired who basically meets the students in their school environment and helps them integrate into the classroom, whether it be enhanced technology skills. So, my teacher of visually impaired, she was blind and she had a guide dog, and watching her use her guide dog, she was a great role model for me because I was able to see how independent she was and her experiences and journey with the guide dog.

So, that's what inspired me to get a guide dog, but then the hurdle was because of my previous memories and because of my previous experiences with dogs, this was going to be a challenging experience. So, I connected with The Seeing Eye, where is where I got my guide dog from, and they allowed me to come there for one day and just to experience almost a day in the life of a dog, to walk with the dog, to kind of learn how to take care of the dog and basically, like, get a very basic overview of dog care and what it's like to walk with a guide dog.

That's when I decided that this is it, that I am definitely going to apply. I went through the application process, I went through the training and the training was intense. It was almost a month-long training at The Seeing Eye and they do a very thorough full-on life assessments to make sure that they match the right dog with the right person.

Why am I giving you guys all this background? It's because part of the differences, as I will present, in a moment is training. And I really want to emphasize this that many of the service dogs go through very intense trainings to be where they're at.

So, these are my experiences, some of this background is where I want to share my stories and some legalities like some legislations and how can you tell a difference? So, just to give a very brief agenda, I will give you a basic overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act and I will give you some facts to break down some of the myths about disabilities, and then we would touch

on service dogs, ESAs, guidelines and etiquette, and I will be sharing some tangible resources for you guys to use.

So, next slide. And thank you to Rebecca Martin for helping me navigate the slides while I talk. So, Americans with Disabilities Act, many of you guys are from the field and you guys are very aware it's a civil rights law that prohibits discriminations against people with disabilities in everyday life activity on the basis of disabilities.

And it guarantees that people with disabilities have same opportunities as anybody else in all life aspects, whether it's education, employment, social engagement, and it levels the playing field for people with disabilities to allow them equal access to public services and information.

Next slide. So, what is a disability? That's a question I often get. How do you define a disability? So, according to the ADA, it is a physical or a mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

It could be a history of such impairment or is perceived by others of having such impairment. Major life activities can include ADLs, activities of daily living, and also IADLs, instrumental activities of daily living.

So shopping, using the public transportation, using the telephone, ADLs like eating, bathing, listening, reading. So, that's what they mean by major life activities. And just a general note about ADA rights and also a myth that usually people have, ADA rights are not benefit programs.

They are civil rights that allow, again, that equal the playing field for people with disabilities and allow them the same access to information as everyone else. So, they're not special treatment or benefits program, they're just civil rights that everybody has, and in order to level the playing field for people with disabilities.

Next slide. Okay. So, now I have some facts for you guys which I'm sure in your work you guys have already known some of this, but I think it's always good

reminders to check our own work and challenge our own biases that may happen. So, disabilities can be visible or invisible.

I have a visible disability, I am blind, so it's physical and it's visible. Some people might have invisible disabilities, for example, mental disabilities or something like epilepsy, seizures, that's invisible. So, it's important to understand that just because we don't see it doesn't mean it's not there.

People with disabilities do live independent lives and contribute meaningfully to societal expectations, whether it's through the use of assistive technology or through the use of accommodations, or what people with disabilities have skills and talents that allow them to contribute to societal expectations.

Accommodations are very important, not just for people with disabilities, but for anybody else. For example, elevators, ramps, yes, they were intended to be used by people with physical barriers, but let's be honest, in any chance that we see, we all find ourselves using elevators and ramps and even captioning services.

They were intended for people who were hearing impaired, but we all use the subtitles when we watch Netflix shows. And then even like something as simple as a magnifying glass, or magnify settings, or color contrast settings on one's phones, they had purpose but they're being used by everyone.

So this goes to show that accommodations can benefit everyone, even those without disabilities. Disabilities can be caused by a range of factors, genetics or medical, for example, not limited to, but are not a result of personal flaw.

That's something that I have found myself needing to express. So, one in four people in the United States have a disability, and that's one in six of us globally. Yet, disabilities is still hidden when it comes to, like, even conversations where diversity, equity and inclusion, and belonging, sometimes disabilities can be hidden.

The conversation is highly hidden because it's considered to be so individualized. That's why I like to make that point. Disabilities can be acquired by anyone at any point in their lives. It does not discriminate, so whether it's through birth or through traumatic experiences, or any time at any point.

So, we strive to create environments where we see ourselves and our loved ones thriving. As I said before, people with disabilities possess a wide range of skills and talents. Some disabilities can be temporary.

That's something that I think that sometimes we all forget to realize, as if it substantially limits one or more of your major life activities. You may not need the accommodations all the time. This was something that I ran into when I worked at Rutgers. We had students who we were helping obtain accommodations.

We always advise students to have accommodations if they needed it. They don't always have to use it, but if it's temporary, it's also acceptable. Next slide. Now I am going to touch on the service animals. I just wanted to give everybody an overview of where we are coming from.

Okay. So, service animals. Service animals are trained to assist a person with a disability to perform very specific tasks for their, in relation to their disability. So, for example, my dog is a guide dog. She is trained to guide.

Some of the example of other types of service dogs could be alerting hearing-impaired persons to sound, pulling wheelchairs or picking up items for people with mobility impairments, seizures or glucose-alerting dogs, assisting people with mobility impairments for balance, and then guide dogs which I mentioned before.

Some dogs are even trained to retrieve medications for their owners. So, all of these dogs, as you all can see, yeah, I mean, all of these tasks you all can see, they're very specific and they're trained to aid within this, in comparison and in relation to that particular disability.

Okay, next slide. Service animals are dogs and sometimes miniature horses. In some states laws could be miniature horses, but primarily just dogs. Service animals are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is the legislation that I mentioned in the very beginning of this presentation, which means they're allowed in all public spaces, again, because that particular legislation focuses on allowing access to public services and information without discrimination.

So, these animals, because they're trained to assist people with specific tasks, they are allowed under the ADA. So, when you see a service dogs, this is a question that I get asked often, what is it that we are allowed to ask? So, according to the ADA, these are the only two questions we can ask them if the behavior, if the training isn't obvious to you.

So, is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? And the second question, what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? So, we want to make sure that we do not ask them about their medical reason or their disability. These are the only two questions we can ask them.

Next slide. As I mentioned, no other questions can be asked. We cannot ask them for a proof of documentation or disability-related documentation. We also cannot ask them to demonstrate what the dog does for them. When the dog is trained, it's very obvious, but we can ask them what type of task the dog might be trained to perform, but we cannot ask them to demonstrate it in front of us.

So, service dogs, as I said, they're highly trained and they should not cause undue harm to anyone. They must remain tethered to their individual or their owner by verbal or a leash, verbal methods or a leash. So, service dogs, because they are highly trained from their very early on years, they're used to going out in public, they're used to being calm.

So, my dog is currently laying in my office right behind me, actually. I have a little dog bed for her, so she's laying right behind me and she's just sleeping. No disruptions whatsoever.

And she just walks right next to me when I am walking or I'm going to another place, but sometimes you wouldn't even know she's there because she's just so calm and highly behaved. And they're often highly attentive to their owners. She often looks and checks, make sure that I'm there, you know?

She's very in tuned to my surroundings. In the case that a service dog is causing harm, undue harm to the public, they can be asked to leave the premises.

That's important to know because often I've ran into businesses who are just so afraid to ask questions, and I've had fake service dogs who claim to be service dogs attack my dog in the public and then nobody wants to question it because right now people are just so afraid of being sued or having to deal with ADAs too.

So, you can, if the dog is say, urinating, if the dog is say, barking, lunging, or, like, causing distress to others, by distress I mean like really distress, barking, growling, lunging, then yes, if the handler is not taking effective actions to control their dog, then they can be asked to leave the premises legally.

Next slide. Okay. So, I want to talk about some guidelines and etiquette. When you encounter a service dog, whether in your workplace or in your service area industry, when you run into the service dog team, please do not talk to the dog, talk to the person directly.

I mean, I know they're cute and like you want to talk to them, but we want to respect the person, so don't just call the dog by their name. We also do not want to distract the dog while they're working, and if you want to pet the dog, or if you want to ask question about the dog, talk to the owner first.



So, I know for Seeing Eye dogs, meaning guide dogs, the way you can tell a guide dog is working is, I have a little... So, guide dogs from The Seeing Eye, they wear a harness. So, this is the harness, I'm just showing you guys.

So, that's the harness is on the dog. So you would know the dog is working because that's how Seeing Eye dogs have been trained. As soon as that harness goes on their body, it's mean work time. And you can see the temperament. You can see, like, their demeanor changes when they're working versus they're not working.

So, they are just dogs and dogs are funny. They can be silly sometimes, but when the harness is on, they're all about work. When the harness is not on, my dog, she likes to have her zoomies, she likes to have, you know, she likes to meet people.

She's a Golden Retriever, so she thinks the whole world is her best friend. But the harness, when it goes on top of her, she's like, "Okay, now it's business." Like, she will not try to do her silly dog things that she might do off harness. So, that's just an example.

Each type of dog, the way they're working might be different, and you just want to talk to the owner. I wanted to give a demonstration of a Seeing Eye dog. And as I said, you want to ask the owner permission to pet the dog. We don't want to just go and touch the dog.

Sometimes it's very tempting, I get that, but we want to try our best to respect that team as best as we can. Do not feed the dog or make like squeaking noises at the dog. I've seen that a lot happen to me, like in every new place or like work I've been to. You don't want to feed the dog when they're working and even if you want to give a dog treat, you don't want to just give it to the dog.

You want to ask the person, and if the person wants to take it, they can give it to the dog another day. If you see somebody else, say in your work

environment, trying to feed the dog, just if you can, you know, be an ally and speak up if you can just to let them know, "Hey, this dog is working. Please don't try to interact with it," or squeaking noises, or kissing noises.

Again, it's really distracting to them because they are dogs after all, and they're a social species. Using first language, if that's what the owner prefers. What I mean by that is if you're referring to the person, so for example, me, rather than saying, I don't know, blind woman, like, it doesn't bother me, but I know some people do get very offended.

So, we want to make sure when we are referring to, or when we are talking to the person, we use the language that they prefer to be called by, they prefer to be referred by. We also want to respect the service dog and handler partnership. So, there are certain ways that the service dog is trained to work with the owner, and sometimes we have to reinforce the training.

Sometimes we might be taking the time to, you know, especially in the very beginning stages of the partnership, we need to reinforce the training and make sure that the dog is doing what they're trained to do. For example, when I had her, we learned what's called obedience exercise. And, we would have the dog do sitting, laying down, and some recall just to make sure the dog is enforced the training.

So when you see, when you are watching the handler do something like with their dog, you can ask them questions, definitely for educational purposes, just ask them like, "Can I learn what it is?" But we don't want to interrupt it if we can, so just like respecting that this person went through training, they do know what they're doing and if they're having issues, they would initiate the contact of the program or wherever they might have gotten the dog from.

Lastly, I just want to reiterate this. We want to remember that the service dog is an extension of the person with a disability, just like a medical device. I mean, we don't go around and touch people's medical devices for no reason.

So, we don't want to distract the dog while it's working because again, it is someone's, in a way, medical device, it can put someone's life in danger. For example, if you see a guide dog team working in the middle of the street, and you will probably, like, we have the dogs are, guide dogs are trained to stop at the corners, so you may see someone like me standing there listening, trying to kind of understand the traffic signals to know when it's safe.

So, if you see the guide dog team standing, we don't want to stop them in the middle of the street, for example, when they're working, because if you stop me in the middle of the street, for example, while I'm trying to cross and listen to my sound and my traffic and while she's trying to stay focused, that can put us in safety risk, for example, or if we are going down the stairs and the stairs are right in front of us and the dog gets distracted, the dog might not signal to me that there are stairs going down, and that might lead to someone like me falling right down the face, so that's also not good.

Another example, if we are distracting a medical and cardiac alert dog, for example, and if they're distracted, they might miss a very important alert for their handler, which might even put the person's life in danger. I just want to demonstrate these examples to let people know why, why we don't want to distract, because that's the questions I get because we keep saying to the public that don't distract the dog, don't distract the dog, but I think that no, it's important that we take the time out to explain to the general public why we don't want to distract the dogs.

That's why I like to give concrete examples. You may have also ran into something in your service, in your professions where you may have just thought about this as I'm talking to you guys, you may have ran into allergies, dog allergies, if they're true.

I've ran into experiences when the people stated they had allergies to the dog but they actually didn't. So, if in the case of true allergies, both parties must be

accommodated. The service dog and the handler cannot be asked to leave the premises just because somebody else has allergies.

The business has to make an attempt to the best of their ability to accommodate both if there are two true allergies. Now, as I'm talking, I also want to touch on something therapy dogs, I did not touch on this in my presentation, but I think that it's important to know the distinctions.

Therapy dogs are different in the sense that they're also trained, but they're providing comfort to a large number of people simultaneously, like in a nursing home, in a hospital, or even in cases of disaster aid and relief. So, you might see therapy dogs that might look like service dogs and therapy dogs, they might look very similar in the way they're behaved and in the way they're trained, so.

But I just wanted to touch on the distinctions while I'm talking. Next slide. Okay, now I'm going to talk about emotional support dogs, emotional support animals, I should say rather. So emotional support animals, the distinction is that emotional support animals are providing therapeutic benefits, emotional support and comfort only to individuals with, who might have psychiatric or other mental disabilities.

So note the difference again. You might hear me reiterate this like three or four times, but I think it's important that we really understand the difference. The difference is that service dogs trained specific tasks, emotional support dogs providing comfort just by their presence.

So, for example, an emotional support dog might, just by its sole presence of being in the person's life, the person is gaining a comfort and a purpose. So, someone say who might be experiencing depression, having the dog, you know, being with them might be comforting for them, or just the purpose of having to take care of the dog and that might give them a meaning and purpose.

So, it might help coping with a disability, but, say, it's not specifically trained to perform a specific task for someone. So, legislations, emotional support dog, emotional support animals can be a variety of animals by the way, they're not specifically limited to just dogs.

I have seen some very interesting stories of emotional support animals being either cats, dogs, even birds and peacocks interestingly at one time. So, they're not just dogs, but they're also not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

They're covered under what's called a Fair Housing Act. In simple terms, this means that emotional support animals, they're not allowed in public spaces with their handlers. However, they are allowed in living spaces with their handlers. As I said, for a person who might be, for example, dealing with depression and ESA might be something they might find a purpose and a comfort in, but that's in their house.

They're not taking them into public spaces, just where they're living. So, as I told you guys, they can be limited. This can be any types of animal, as long as they have to be domestic animals. They cannot just be like non-domestic pets.

So, that's something you may run across to, run across in your careers many times. Okay, next slide. So, I wanted to give you guys like a very simple table, just kind of give an overview of some of the differences.

Again, typically service dogs are dogs or miniature horses in some states laws, and emotional support dogs can be a variety of domestic animals. So, in the case of service dog interaction, as I said before, medical documentation cannot be asked or required to present.

Medical document in the case of ESAs, emotional support dogs can be asked by housing facilities and other living facilities. Again, they're living with the person, they're not going out into the public. Documentation reminded me of something. So, The Seeing Eye, what they did was they gave us an ID with my

picture and my dog's picture on it, but it's not required that a person with a guide dog show them this ID.

So, that's what I also mean by documentation, not just medical, well, we cannot really ask them for a ID or any type of proof that they went to. And some dogs might be owner-trained, meaning that they might not have gone through a program.

They might be self-trained. So, there is no way for them to show documentation or any type of IDs. So, no IDs or documentation can be asked for service dogs, but you can ask them for ESAs. And it must show the need, why an ESA would benefit the person. Okay, so next, so service dogs are allowed in all public spaces and emotional support dogs are only allowed in housing spaces.

And service dogs receive very extensive and specific trainings from the very early ages of their lifetime. And emotional support dogs that don't need to have any training requirements which is why it's important, they're just there to provide therapeutic benefit or comfort just by being there.

Like, they don't have to do anything. So, I mean, it's nice to have an emotional support dog, for example, who is trained, but they're not. That's how you can tell a difference. They're often not very trained.

And I just mentioned that Americans with Disabilities Act is the legislation you want to look to when you have questions about service dogs and Fair Housing Act is the legislation you want to look into when you want to know more about emotional support dogs. Another distinction is some might be wearing identifying collars or leashes, harnesses in the case of service dogs, like I just showed you guys a harness and I just showed, and the leash is on my dog, so.

And it says The Seeing Eye on it, but it doesn't necessarily have to be. You might come across a service dog who doesn't have a vest. So, vest is not a distinction. So, I thought it was important to... And emotional support dogs

often do not. They might not have any colors or certain vests, but they might have some certifying papers.

Okay, next slide. Now I want to touch on what happens and what other, you know, my experiences when we experience service dogs and access denials.

So, some of the issues that I've come across is transportation. Transportation is already a barrier for many people with disabilities. So, using Uber and Lyft, for example, many of the drivers, even though they are signing something that says they have to transport service animals, they're often not willing to take service dogs.

I cannot even begin to tell you guys how many times I have ran into an Uber or a Lyft and the driver just either pulls away, looks at us and just like runs out, or they're like, "No dog. No dog."

And I have tried all my best to explain to them about service dogs, about ADA, they just don't want to do it. So, what that means for me is every time I have to take an Uber or a Lyft, I have to think about it in my head, "Okay, so I need to be at this place at this time. But I might be experiencing access denials, so I need to plan to leave an hour before, if I get denied once or twice, I won't be late."

So like that's the level of extra planning I have to do just for very simple tasks of being to a place. And now many of the paratransit companies like Access Link, they are partnering with Uber and Lyft to provide services, transportation services for people with disabilities.

So, when you experience this in my, like, everyday commute to work, if I have to worry about whether or not I will be able to get to this place, whether or not I'll be able to get to work on time, because I might have a driver who don't want to take the dog and they might just leave me stranded or, and then I have to go back to the Uber and Lyft companies and fight for something which they don't really do anything, they just put a bandage on the issue by just not

matching the driver with your profile, which also doesn't help which means then you are highly limited if you have a lot of denials.

So, I just wanted to give you guys just a personal example how this affects. And part of the reason why this all happens is again, because people don't know the differences between service dogs and emotional support dogs, and we have seen many cases where people say that their dog is a service dog and they bring their dog to transportation or public spaces and the dog is misbehaving and nobody wants to say anything.

Then it leads to a general mistrust among real service dogs who have gone through expensive and very extensive trainings. So, many of the drivers that I've witnessed, they had experiences with a dog jumping or like trying to attack them while they were driving.

So, they think that all service dogs are like that. It's very hard to break a trust when it's already broken. I mean, it's already hard to make a trust when it's already broken. So, I just wanted to reiterate that it's important that we spread awareness and we spread education. Even restaurants, I have been to restaurants where I got denied access because a previous owner or a previous experience they had with the dog was not very well, so they think that my dog is going to behave.

Once I went to a restaurant in North Jersey and she was just very rude and she basically, I even like, I don't have to show my ID, but I showed her my ID thinking that it would help to just get me by and it was a late night.

I was going out with my family celebrating a birthday and then all of a sudden this lady is like, "No, you can't have your dog because so and so, such and such customer might be having allergies." I said, well, I tried explaining to her about what the idea is, and she was just like, no, and she was not taking it.

She went through my ID and she was just highly unwilling to be educated and nobody really stepped in. So then I had to leave my dog in a car which you



should never leave a pet in car. Calling the police doesn't always help because they just tell them and the business can choose to pay the fine or not listen altogether.

And it was a very late night, so we couldn't even go anywhere else. So, that's why it's important to respect why service dogs are there and not try to use or understand the differences. So, people have these fake vests, for example, that are \$20 in Amazon that just says service dogs, and people can buy it and put it on any dog.

Again, when they bring that untrained dog into the public, it can be detrimental to a service dog, so I cannot even... I've had at least three or four instances when I went to a mall and I was me and my guide dog, we were both, not attacked, but almost lunged by dogs that were not trained, growling, barking, and even one dog even got on top of her and she was shaking the whole way until I got home and she was fine.

We had to check to make sure there was no bite and there was no issues. So, these issues are really the implementations and outcomes of like these fake vests are very detrimental for people who are needing legitimate service dogs and who went through the trainings. So, that's why I wanted to make sure that I give you guys that personal story just to demonstrate and picture what that really feels like.

That's why training is highly important. Even if you are walking on your street, just like taking a nice little stroll with your dog, with your just pet dog, and if you see a service dog walking with their handler, don't just have your dog want to say hi to the service dog to distract them, and you should leash your dogs so just for their own safety so they don't run away and they don't get hurt.

- Pardon me, Nimit, I just wanted to let you know we have about 13 minutes left till noon just for your timing.

- Okay. So, yeah. So, basically these are, I think, important experiences to keep in mind. Okay, so that's perfect because next, I just have a couple resources on the next slide. So, if you want to learn more about the ADA and service animals, you can go to this link and I know Rebecca will share the PDF.

And then next slide, that's a little handy flyer that I found from Pine Tree Guide Dog Users that basically mentioned everything that I mentioned. Very three simple ways for the businesses to know whether the service animal is legit, and working dogs, not pets.

They're trained to be calm from a very early age. They are well-behaved in public because again, they have been through training that exposed them to different kinds of environments from a very young age. So, you guys can use that flyer.

You guys can even use that to educate your own staff. So, that's all I had, but I'm sorry I talked a lot, but if you have any questions, feel free to ask me or you can always just call or email me too.

- Thank you, Nimit. That was fantastic. I really appreciate it. I think it was so very informative. I'm sure that people have some questions, so let me check the chat. Okay, so one thing we have in the chat is some emotional support dogs have service animal on their collar, and if you're not allowed to question service dog handlers, how do you approach people in a more sensitive matter?

And this is someone who works in, like, a healthcare facility kind of environment.

- That's a great question. And, we can still approach them, we just want to try to get more information on what that dog is performed to do, what task has it been performed to do, and if this is for specifically for their disability, so trying to engage in conversations with them, and they might be in a situation where they might need education that if it is an emotional support dog, knowing that this is not allowed in public spaces.

So, if you're just having a conversation with them and if the dog is causing harm, like if you see an emotional support dog with a service dog vest on it that is working, you can let them know that this dog is allowed to leave the premises if the handler doesn't take any effective method to control it.

- And I think, you know, I've been exposed to places where I've seen Nimit's dog interact with another, a couple other service dogs, right? And this might be more Seeing Eye-specific, but these dogs are so well-behaved that I even saw food fall in front of them once and all three of them just lay there and looked at it. Like, the amount of training and practice that goes into making service dogs service dogs, makes it, I think pretty clear once you've been around a few service dogs when other dogs are maybe more masquerading as service dogs.

We have a question that says, "Are there certain breeds of dogs that can be a service dog?"

- Not limited to certain breeds. So, the ADA doesn't specify what breeds the dogs can be. They just have to be trained, so not specific breeds. So, they don't have to be retrievers, but they're commonly seen as retrievers, or Black Labs, or Golden Retrievers, or German Shepherds, but they're not limited to just those particular breeds.

- And we have another question wondering whether there's any legislation that prohibits the sale of fake vests that indicate service animals when they're not.

- Currently no, and that's a great, great question because I wish there was, and if you have a way to advocate for it, I would be more than happy to support your initiatives.

- Thank you. And then I have another question. It says, "Did you say that you cannot ask for proof of a service animal?"

- So by proof, I mean you cannot ask them to show that they have a disability, to show a paper that says that they have a disability, but you can ask them, as I said, the two questions of what tasks, and is this dog because of your disability? And you typically know just as I said, you would know if a true service dog walked into your facility just by how well in tuned they are to their owners and how well trained and calm they are.

- And I think, Nimit, I wanted to know, can you tell us a little bit about, like, what benefit does Chardonnay bring to your life? Like, how does it impact your daily living?

- So, for sure. Well, first she allows me to expand my horizon to unfamiliar places, to go beyond what I thought myself capable of doing before I had her, again, because I know I have to keep up the training. I know I have to take care of her so that our training and partnership lasts for a long time, so this makes me want to go out to places.

This makes me want to go out to more walks and make sure that, you know, because I see the benefit that having her allows me to interact in unfamiliar places and go way beyond what I even thought I could do.

You can do that with a cane too, I'm not denying that, but I think Chardonnay really, really, allowed me to expand my horizon.

- Thank you, Nimit. I have another question and it says, "If someone says it's a service dog, but the landlord does not feel it is because of behavior, is there anything a landlord can do?"

- If you see very noticeable behavior that you can see it's not a service dog and the person isn't doing anything about it, you can tell the person you can't have that dog. So, for example, if the dog is biting people and constantly urinating and the person isn't doing anything to help it, like, they're not doing anything, like, for example, if the dog is sick, they're not taking them to the vet, they're

not trying to stop the dog from negatively interacting with the public, yes, you can tell them that, "No, you can't have it legally."

I know it's hard to do, but you have that right if you see noticeable behavior.

- Thank you. And then I think just one more question which is a lot of the people who are on the call today are from service organizations. So, I'm wondering what you would like people to do as allies who work in service organizations to help support people understanding the importance of service dog inclusion.

- Thank you. I think first it's important for all of us to know the differences and also educate people you see. And if you see something, if you are able to speak up, you should speak up to be an ally to the person. And just being aware of what the difference is and why it's important for us to really respect that team.

If you're able to support the person by educational awareness in your communities or just welcoming environment for the service dog partnership service team, I mean, service dog and the handler team in your work, asking the person what their preferences are working alongside and collaborating with guide dog or service dog users, I think that's important.

Collaboration and education is important. And if there's any way I can help with any of you guys with your initiatives about this or if I can help answer any questions, you are more than welcome to reach out to me anytime.

- And I will put your email address into the chat as well. Are there other places for, other than The Seeing Eye, what other places for service dogs, for people with vision impairments exist?

- There's a guide dog school. There's actually several guide dog schools in the country. There's one in New York and I believe there is a couple up south too. I don't remember the names off top of my head, but I know there's a few out there.

- Okay. I just put your email address and your phone number that was on the last slide because I shut the slides, so that anyone can reach out to you if they have questions.

- Yes. Anytime.

- All right. So, thank you so much for being here today. I think it's been really wonderful having you. Thank you to everyone who's joined and thank you for your great questions. I want to thank Sue for being our interpreter today. We really appreciate it. And as always, I want to express appreciation to the Division of Disability Services for their ongoing support of the Inclusive Healthy Communities grant program and the trainings that we're able to offer as part of that.

I hope you all have a wonderful day. Thank you so much.

- Thank you.