



Save One Soul Animal Rescue League statement regarding Emotional Support Animals

What is an Emotional Support Animal? An emotional support animal is a companion animal that is intended to provide some comfort to an individual with certain mental health or emotional disorders. ESA pets can be of different species, but are generally dogs. They are not service or therapy animals. Since SOS is strictly a dog rescue, our ESA placements are limited to dogs.

Do I need certification for my ESA dog? ESAs do not require certification. As a matter of fact, there are many websites on the internet who claim they can supply an “ESA certification” for a fee. These sites are not regulated and are not valid to obtain an ESA pet. Only licensed, certified mental health professionals are able to provide a valid ESA letter as prescribed to an individual.

Do all dogs make good ESA companions? We firmly believe that not all dogs are born to be Emotional Support Animals. This cannot be trained “into” them. Some dogs are born with the natural ability to be support animals, and some are not. For example, a nervous animal who gets scared or skittish in new situations, or one who is reactive or not well socialized, is likely to cause more stress than s/he alleviates. Additionally, dogs with special or high needs themselves are not likely good candidates for the same reason.

Can I pick my own emotional support dog? As with each placement, SOS works with each adopter to carefully select the best fit for each household. For adopters looking for an ESA, we will consider dogs that have been living in an approved local foster home and is more than one year old.

Does a puppy make a good ESA dog? Just like people, dogs have their own set of DNA and are also influenced by their life experiences along the way. Dogs do not develop their full personality until 12-18 months old and it is not possible for us to make an accurate prediction of the temperament of the dog to the extent that ESA adopters need to be successful. For this reason, we do not consider puppies as ESA placements.

Can I travel/fly/shop/dine with my ESA pet? You will need to contact your hotel/airline/store/hotel directly as they all adhere to different policies. ESA animals are not afforded the same rights as service animals.

Will my landlord allow an ESA pet? SOS is not able to provide any legal advice in this area. For more information, please see the following link provided by The Humane Society of the United States. <https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/fair-housing-act-and-assistance-animals>

When should I notify my landlord if I would like to adopt an ESA pet from SOS? To expedite the process, we strongly recommend that applicants have explicit landlord approval in place before submitting an SOS adoption application. This is the first reference check that we do, and is an important step in the process; delays in this step will delay all the next steps.

How do I apply for an ESA dog with SOS? All adoption applicants are directed to complete our online application at sosarl.org/adopt. After the initial reference checks are completed, an adoption counselor will reach out to you to guide you through the remainder of the process and be your personal matchmaker. While we may or may not have an appropriate dog candidate available at the time you apply, we will continue to work with you until we find just the right match. Your patience during this process will be important, as it could take several weeks or months to find the right companion for you for the next 10-15 years.

Thank you for considering pet adoption; we are so excited to help you find the right dog to provide the emotional support you need!