MaKs Dog Training

Connection - Not Correction

Housing and Your Psychiatric Service Dog: What Changed at HUD, in Plain Words

A one-page handout for clients who rent their home

The short version: HUD - the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - changed how it handles housing complaints about assistance animals. Dogs **trained to do specific tasks** for a disability are still on strong ground. **Untrained** emotional support animals are no longer treated the same way by HUD. The laws themselves - the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - **did not change**.

1. A trained task dog is still protected

A psychiatric service dog is trained to do real tasks tied to your disability - for example, creating space around you in a crowd, guiding you to an exit during anxiety, interrupting harmful repetitive behavior, or waking you from night terrors.

Under HUD's new position (May 22, 2026), a request to keep a dog like this - and to have pet rules and pet fees waived - is treated as **presumptively reasonable**. If a landlord refuses and you complain to HUD, HUD will pursue cases involving an animal individually trained to do work or tasks directly related to the disability.

2. Untrained emotional support animals: HUD's position changed

An emotional support animal (ESA) helps by being there - its comfort and companionship ease symptoms - but it has not been trained to do a specific task. Comfort alone does not count as a trained task.

- HUD withdrew its old 2013 and 2020 guidance on September 17, 2025. That guidance had treated untrained ESAs much like trained service animals.
- Now, a request for an untrained ESA is **no longer presumed reasonable**, and HUD no longer expects landlords to give ESAs the same treatment as trained dogs.
- That does **not** mean every ESA must be refused. It means HUD itself will generally not take up an ESA-only complaint.

3. What did not change

- **The Fair Housing Act did not change.** Only HUD's guidance and enforcement approach changed.
- **The ADA rules did not change.** HUD is now borrowing the ADA's trained-task idea for its housing complaints.
- **State and local laws still count.** Some states and cities protect ESAs more than HUD now does.
- **You can still go to court yourself.** A private Fair Housing Act case is still possible.
- **Federally funded housing** (Section 504 cases) was not covered by this change.

If you rent: helpful steps

- Ask your landlord **in writing** for a reasonable accommodation, and keep a copy.
- Be ready to **name the tasks** your dog is trained to do for your disability.
- Keep simple **training records** - what was trained, and when.
- If you are refused, get advice from a local fair-housing group or attorney - state law may help you.

General information only - not legal advice. This handout explains, in plain words, HUD guidance issued on May 22, 2026 and the withdrawal of earlier guidance effective September 17, 2025. It is a summary, not the full law, and rules can differ by state, city, and type of housing. It does not create an attorney-client relationship. For advice about your own home or lease, talk to a Michigan fair-housing organization or a qualified attorney.

MaKs Dog Training - Private, Individualized In-Home Dog Training
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