

HOW TO OBTAIN A LEGAL ESA (EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL) LETTER



Having an ESA can provide comfort to those with mental health conditions and greatly improve quality of life, but not having a legal ESA letter can create challenges and block access to needed accommodations. An ESA letter, prescribed by a licensed mental health professional, is required for legal protections to apply.

Avoiding ESA Scams: What to Look For

Make sure your ESA letter is legal and valid. Sadly, some websites offer fake letters, leading to issues like denied housing, lack of accommodations, and wasted money. A valid ESA letter must be written and signed by a licensed mental health professional and include their license number, type, and date.

The letter must also state your qualifying mental health condition and explain how the ESA helps alleviate your symptoms. ESA letters are valid for one year and must be renewed annually. Below are the steps to getting a legal, valid ESA letter.

Consult with a licensed mental health professional

1. Consult with a licensed mental health professional to determine if an ESA is right for you. If you already have one, start there. If not, reputable websites can connect you with a provider. Some trusted options include

- [CertaPet](#)
- [Pettable](#)
- [U.S. Service Animals](#)
- [Pet Certify Express](#)



2. Mental health evaluation. A professional will assess your condition to determine if an ESA is necessary for your well-being. If they believe it will help, they'll provide a "prescription" (recommendation) for one.

3. Wait a few business days. Once you receive your letter, you can start using it to get your accommodations. The letter will allow you to legally get housing in places that have a no pet policy and get access to other rights that are for ESA owners.