

Service Animal Policy of the Wilkinsburg Public Library

Policy number: 112

Date adopted: June 18, 2024

Replaces: All prior Wilkinsburg Public Library service animal policies

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the use of service animals in the library

STATEMENT:

The library recognizes the right of individuals with disabilities to be accompanied by service animals, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any other applicable laws. The library recognizes as well a need to regulate the presence and behavior of animals within the library to maintain a safe and healthy atmosphere for patrons and staff.

POLICY:

Only service animals are permitted in the library. Service animals are defined as dogs or miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog/miniature horse a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog/miniature horse been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog/miniature horse, or ask that the dog/miniature horse demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog/miniature horse is out of control (e.g., behaving viciously or barking excessively) and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog/miniature horse is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.