

Animals in the Library

A. Purpose

1. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local government agencies and non-profit organizations that provide goods or services to the public to make “reasonable modifications” in their policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to accommodate people with disabilities.
2. The Greentown & Eastern Howard School Public Library (GPL) recognizes that some patrons with disabilities may have service animals, which are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual. GPL recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding the use of service animals. GPL also considers the safety and health of all of its patrons and staff to be of utmost priority.

B. Definitions

1. Service Animal

GPL accepts the ADA Title 2 definition stating a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person’s disability.

- a. In addition to the provisions about service dogs, GPL also accepts the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) ADA regulations separate provision for miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

2. Disability

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or any abnormal sensory, mental, or physical condition that:

- a. is Medically cognizable or diagnosable
- b. exists as a record or history
- c. is perceived to exist

C. Policy

1. No pets or animals other than service animals are allowed in either location of the Greentown & Eastern Howard School Public Library.
 - a. Following the ADA guidelines, the service animal must already be trained before it can be brought into the library.
 - b. Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from the library.
 - c. No animals may be left unattended on library premises.

- d. An exception will be made for library-approved programs that involve animals.
2. Individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go.
3. All service animals must be under the full custody and control of their handler at all times.
4. All service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times unless the handler is unable to leash or harness the animal because of a disability or use of a leash or harness would interfere with the animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks.
 - a. If the service animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).
5. Owners of the service animals are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal.
 - a. Owners must keep the service animal directly with them at all times.
6. Users of service animals are not required to show papers or to prove a disability.
7. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government or training program, or be identified by a special harness or collar.
8. Following the DOJ Guideline, when it is not apparent as to why the person needs the animal, **staff are allowed to ask two questions:**
 - a. **Is the animal a service animal required because of a disability?**
 - i. If the answer is no, please ask the patron to remove the animal from the library.
 - b. **What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?**
 - c. Owners of service animals will indicate that they are working animals and not pets. Terms used may include assistance, service, guide, hearing, or helping animal.
 - d. Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the animal, require that the animal demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.
9. A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his or her service animal from the library unless the presence, behavior, or actions of the service animal constitutes an unreasonable risk of injury or harm to property or other persons.
 - i. Library staff should give the person with the disability the option to obtain library services without having the service animal on the premises.
 - ii. Fear of allergies, annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees, or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.
 - iii. If another patron is allergic to animals, the library staff will attempt to keep the animal and the allergic person separated as much as possible.
 - iv. All service animals must be housebroken.
2. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not considered service animals under the ADA and therefore not allowed in the library.

3. If other patrons complain that they are not allowed pets, staff should state that the library complies with the ADA.

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