



Service Animals & Pets

Last modified AUGUST 8 2023

SERVICE ANIMALS

The Rowan County Public Library (“the Library”) recognizes that service animals assist people with disabilities to cope with the effects of their disabilities. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), animals are defined only as dogs and, in some cases, miniature horses. Service animals may be any breed, size, or weight. Some, but not all, service animals wear special collars or harnesses. Service animals are not required to have special licenses, to be certified, or to have any visible identification.

In some situations, a person with a disability may require multiple service animals, where each animal provides a different type of assistance. For example, an individual may need both a hearing dog and a seizure alert dog.

Service animals can perform various tasks and services for a disabled person, and can be trained to do so by their owners. Examples of such services include:

- Guidance (serves as a travel aide for a person who is legally blind)
- Hearing or signaling (alerts a person with hearing loss or deafness when a sound occurs, such as an alarm or a knock on the door)
- Mobility assistance (helps a person who has a mobility or health disability, and may carry, fetch, open doors, ring doorbells, activate elevator buttons, pull a wheelchair, steady a person while walking, help someone get up after a fall, etc.)
- Seizure response (warns a person of an impending seizure, or provides aid during a seizure, such as cummoning help or standing guard over the person)
- Therapeutic assistance (aids people with cognitive or psychological disabilities, allowing them to live more independently, and may bring an emergency phone to the disabled person during a crisis, call 911 or the suicide hotline, turn on the lights in a dark room, fetch medications, summon help in an emergency, assist a person with a panic disorder in coping with crowds, etc.)
- Psychiatric and neurological assistance (which use is protected under ADA)



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Verification of Need

Library employees may ask whether a service animal is required because of a disability and what tasks the animal has been trained to perform.

Employees cannot require documentation such as special identification cards or proof of certification for the animal. Staff may not inquire as to the specific nature of a person's disability.

Removal of a Service Animal

If a service animal is unruly, disruptive (aggressively jumping, nipping, etc.), or not housebroken, staff may ask the patron to remove the animal. Repeated inappropriate behavior may be a cause to restrict a service animal to (or from) certain areas of library premises and/or facilities until it can be demonstrated that a patron has taken steps to eliminate the inappropriate behavior.

If the behavior remains uncorrected and restrictions do not mitigate the impact of the behavior, the Library may prohibit the service animal from entering library premises and/or facilities.

PETS & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS (NON-ADA)

The Library is a pet-friendly environment; however, if a patron or staff member has an allergy or substantial fear of an animal, that animal may be required to leave library premises and/or facilities. All animals must be well-behaved and may not show any aggression toward persons on library premises or in library facilities. Animals who are loud or disruptive will be required to leave. All animals must be under the control of their owners or handlers at all times. Owners or handlers are responsible for any cleanup that may be necessary due to an animal in their care.

STAFF PETS

Staff who have animals on work premises must keep them in private areas, and such animals are not to be in the workplace for more than a transitory period. Animals that are onsite for longer than four (4) hours during a normal work period are considered non-transitory, and staff may be disciplined for keeping animals on library premises or in library facilities. An employee should



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discuss all animal-related issues with the Executive Director, and is required to obtain written permission from the Executive Director if they intend to keep an animal in any staff area.

LIBRARY PETS & ANIMAL VISITORS FOR PROGRAMMING

The Library may occasionally have a “library pet.” Examples of pets in public libraries include, but are not limited to, fish, domestic felines, therapy canines, lizards, and hermit crabs. The Library Board of Trustees has the authority to allow or disallow any pets and/or pet care. The Board will set limits on any pet expenditures in the annual budget, and may choose to limit or terminate any Library pet ownership.