

## **ANIMALS ON THE LIBRARY SITE POLICY**

The Thayer Memorial Library brings people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and build community. The Library is open to all and is a judgment-free space for everyone, shared by the community and used by many different people for many other reasons.

The Animals on the Library site policy exists to create an environment that promotes the use and enjoyment of the resources and services of the Library and which protects the safety of the public, the Library staff, and the equipment and collection materials of the Library.

Animals shall not be brought into the Library unless they meet one of the following conditions:

1. The animal is a service animal accompanying and providing support to a patron with a disability.
2. The animal is an integral part of a Library-sponsored event. Outside groups holding events in the meeting rooms may not bring animals into the building unless the Library agrees to formally co-sponsor their program.

Animals shall be under the control of their handler, housebroken, and pose no danger to people or property.

Animals shall be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless required by a Library-sponsored event or if an individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance.

Animals shall not sit on furniture meant for patrons or ride in or on conveyances unless required by Library-sponsored events.

### **Service Animals.**

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely because of their handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity within the Library. Many people with disabilities use a service animal in order to fully participate in everyday life. Service animals are permitted to go wherever their handler is allowed to go.

By law, a service animal is defined as a dog or miniature poney ranging in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds. Service animals are not pets. Service animals are individually trained or receiving training to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Library staff is permitted to ask persons requiring service animals:

1. Is the dog or miniature pony a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog or miniature pony been trained to perform?

Examples of services include:

- Guiding a person who is blind
- Alerting a person who is deaf
- Interrupting a compulsive behavior
- Retrieving objects

The definition of a service animal includes psychiatric service dogs or miniature ponies trained to recognize and respond to psychiatric disability symptoms. For example, a dog or miniature pony trained to help its owner with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) avoid environmental triggers to their disability symptoms would be considered a psychiatric service animal. However, animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support are not service animals.

A service animal's handler is solely responsible for caring for and supervising the animal while in the Library. A person with a disability shall be asked to remove their service animal without the following requirements.

Service animals shall:

1. be under the control of its handler
2. shall 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.
3. be housebroken.
4. not pose a legitimate, direct threat to health or safety.
5. not sit on furniture meant for patrons, to eat from plates provided by a food service establishment, or to ride in or on conveyances.

### **Removal of service animals from the premises.**

If any handler cannot take effective action to control their animal, staff will ask that the animal be removed from the building. Examples of unacceptable behavior include:

- The animal does not promptly obey the handler's instructions if off-leash
- The animal approaches other patrons without the patrons' consent or the handler's instruction to do so
- The animal fails to remain near the handler (unless it is performing a specific task that requires it to be at a distance from its handler)
- The animal repeatedly makes noise without reasonable provocation, and the handler

cannot or will not silence the animal

- The animal damages Library furnishings, carpets, walls, etc.
- The animal sits, climbs, or jumps on Library furniture (unless it is performing a specific task that requires it to be on the furniture)
- The animal behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of people or property.

The Library shall charge handlers of a service animal if a service animal causes damage to property so long as it is the regular practice to charge non-disabled customers for the same types of damages.

If a service animal must be removed from the building, Library staff shall continue providing services to the handler without the service animal present. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the animal's handler may need to speak with the Director before the animal is permitted back into the building.

The law prohibits the Library from refusing access or denying service to a patron with a service animal because other people are afraid of or allergic to the animal. The Library will make reasonable attempts to accommodate anyone with animal phobias or allergies. Service animals are permitted to go wherever their handler is allowed to go. The law prohibits isolating individuals who use service animals from other patrons.

### **Limitation of Liability**

By bringing an animal into the Library, the handler is responsible for the actions of its animal, and the Library disclaims all liability for injuries that an animal may inflict upon other individuals or animals in the building. An animal that demonstrates aggressive or dangerous behavior or has a history of such conduct shall not be brought into the Library.