Poplar Creek Public Library District
Service Animal Policy

The Service Animal Policy is intended to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all library programs, services, and employment, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Consult the Library ADA Policy for information on all applicable disability-related federal or state laws and regulations.

It is the policy of the Poplar Creek Public Library District to prohibit all animals from entering the library, with the exception of service dogs and trained miniature horse; service dogs and miniature horses in training; or animals featured in programs sponsored by the Library.

Service Animal Guidelines

Service animals are defined as dogs or miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disabilities. The work or task that the service animal has been trained to provide must be related to the person's disability.

Dogs or miniature horses that are not trained to perform tasks that mitigate the effects of a disability are not service animals. Other species of animals, including any animals that are used for emotional support, are not considered service animals and are not allowed in the Library.

Trainers are permitted to accompany service animals in training. Service animals may wear special collars, harnesses, vests, etc. and some are licensed and certified and have identification papers. However, special identification and certification are not required by applicable law.

Service Animals are permitted in any area of the Library where members of the public are permitted to go and may not be segregated or excluded from such areas. In order to comply with the ADA and Illinois law (775 ILCS 30 and Public Act 097-0956), it is the policy of the Library that service animals assisting individuals with disabilities are permitted in all facilities, programs, and activities where employees, or members of the community are normally allowed access, except where the presence or behavior of the animal may compromise the health or safety of the animal or others, or fundamentally alters the nature of the program or activity.

Handler Responsibilities

Handlers, or individuals who use service animals, are responsible for the following, which include but are not limited to:

- Keeping the animal under control through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- Service animal is housebroken and service animal is free of vermin or parasites.
- Humane treatment of the service animal including veterinary care.
- Illinois law requires that dogs, including service dogs, be vaccinated against rabies and registered in the county in which the dog resides.
- Service animal may not unreasonably disturb the peace including, but not limited to, unreasonable level of noise, such as barking, or approaching employees or patrons in unwanted ways.

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Library Responsibilities

The Library has a responsibility to maintain compliance with state and federal law regarding access for individuals with disabilities by allowing the service animal to accompany the individual with a disability for whom it performs tasks.

In general, the Library will not ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability, but may make two (2) inquiries to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal. The Library may ask:

- If the animal is required because of a disability?
- What work or task the animal has been trained to perform?

The Library may not require identification for the service animal and may not ask about the individual's disability.

Removal of Service Animal

The Library reserves the right to ask that a service animal be removed if the animal's presence or behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of the animal or others. A service animal may be removed from the premises only if:

- The service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it
- The service animal is not housebroken. Service animals that urinate or defecate in the Library shall be considered a threat to the public welfare, safety and health of others.

Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless such devices interfere with the service animals work or the individual's disability prevents using such devices, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g. voice control, signals, etc.).

When there is a legitimate reason to remove a service animal, Library staff will work with the person with the disability to determine reasonable alternative opportunities to participate in Library services, programs, or activities without having the service animal on Library premises. The Library will make these determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Conflicting Disabilities

Some people using the Library may have allergic reactions to animals that are substantial enough to qualify as disabilities. The Library will consider the needs of both parties in meeting its obligations to reasonably accommodate all disabilities and to resolve problems as efficiently and fairly as possible. The Library will make these determinations on a case-by-case basis.

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