

# **Patron Service Animals Policy**

## **I. PURPOSE:**

In conformance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all service animals (including those in training) are welcome at the Altoona Public Library.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

(a) "Emotional Support Animal" shall mean an animal that is not trained to do work or perform tasks, but whose presence provides a sense of safety, companionship, and comfort to those with psychiatric or emotional conditions.

(b) "Library" shall mean the Altoona Public Library located at 1303 Lynn Avenue, Altoona, WI 54720.

(c) "Patron" shall mean any individual who enters the library for the purpose of obtaining any service(s) or engaging in any programming the library provides, including, but not limited to, reading, checking out books/movies, attending a meeting, etc.

(d) "Service Animal" shall mean a dog, or any other animal, that has been individually trained to perform tasks or do work for the benefit of a person with a disability.

Examples of Service Animals that must be allowed into public accommodations under the ADA and State law include:

- hearing dogs, which alert their handlers to important sounds, such as alarms, doorbells, and other signals.
- guide dogs, which help those who are blind or visually impaired navigate safely.
- psychiatric Service Animals, which help their handlers manage mental and emotional disabilities by, for example, interrupting self-harming behaviors, reminding handlers to take medication, checking spaces for intruders, or providing calming pressure during anxiety or panic attacks.
- seizure alert animals, which let their handlers know of impending seizures, and may also guard their handlers during seizure activity, and
- allergen alert animals, which let their handlers know of foods or other substances that could be dangerous (such as peanuts).
- dogs who pull a wheelchair or fetch dropped items.

## **III. POLICY**

(a) General Policy. Library employees and volunteers shall not ask patrons questions about a person's disability or demand to see certification, identification, or other proof of your Service Animal's training or status. The library shall take all steps reasonably necessary to ensure Service Animals and their handlers can be in every part of the

library that is otherwise open to the public, and to ensure that Service Animals and their handlers are not separated or segregated from other Patrons in the Library.

(b) Other Animals. Animals other than Service Animals, including Emotional Support Animals, are not permitted in the library, unless as a part of a program authorized by the Library Director.

(c) Permissible Question. If the Service Animal's skill is not apparent, library employees and volunteers may only ask the following: "Is the Service Animal required because of a disability?"

(d) Costs. No Patron shall be charged a special admission fee or be required to pay any other extra costs to have a Service Animal in the Library. Notwithstanding this section III(d), a Patron may be required to pay for any damage caused by the Service Animal.

(e) Exception. If the Service Animal is removed, the handler shall be allowed to return to the Library without the Service Animal. A Service Animal may be refused entry into the library or asked to leave if:

- The Service Animal is unruly, disruptive, or exhibits aggressive behavior. (An animal that behaves disruptively has not been trained successfully to function as a Service Animal in public settings. In such cases, the animal need not be treated as a Service Animal, even if the Service Animal performs assistive functions for a person with special needs).
- The Service Animal is not harnessed, leashed, or similarly tethered, unless the handler is unable to do so because of a disability or the tether interferes with the Service Animal's safe, effective performance of tasks, in which case the animal must still be under control (e.g., voice controls, signals, or other means). (Per City Ordinance 6.08.010, a leash no longer than 8 feet shall be used to control the Service Animal, unless the person in question is able to successfully use a harness for the control of the animal).
- The Service Animal is destructive, and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
- The Service Animal is not house broken. (The Library is not responsible to care for or supervise the Service Animal while on Library property).
- The Service Animal is ill.
- The Service Animal is unclean.
- The owner/Patron/handler does not clean up after his or her Service Animal.
- The Service Animal's vaccination record is not up to date. (All animals must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must wear a current rabies vaccination tag).

(f) Supervisor Notification. Library staff shall notify the Library Director, or current supervisor, whenever they plan to ask a Service Animal to be removed or excluded from the library.

**Patron Service Animals Policy approved by the Altoona Public Library Board of Trustees on September 19th, 2023.**