University of Indianapolis
Service Animal Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act Sec. 36.302© requires that a public accommodation shall modify policies, practices and procedures to permit the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability in any area open to the general public. In compliance with the ADA and Indiana state law, the University of Indianapolis recognizes that service/assistance animals can play an important role in facilitating the independence of some individuals with certain types of disabilities. Therefore, an appropriately trained animal, under the control of its partner/handler, may be allowed in campus facilities where animals would typically not be permitted.

The health and safety of UIndy students, faculty, staff, and the service animal is an important concern; therefore, only service animals that meet the criteria described below will be exempt from the rules that otherwise restrict or prohibit animals. The university reserves the right to ask for verification of the training that has been provided as well as the nature of the services being performed. These services must be more than providing emotional well being. UIndy reserves the right to ask that the animal undergo additional training or be removed if it does not fit this description or if it has become disruptive.

DEFINITIONS

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the term “service animal” is defined as an animal that has been individually trained to provide assistance or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more of their major life functions.

**Guide dog** – A dog that is carefully trained that serves as a travel tool by persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind.

**Hearing dog** – A dog that has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a particular sound occurs (e.g. a knock on a door, a fire alarm, the phone ringing).

**Service (Assistance) dog** – A dog that has been trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties the dog may perform include guiding, alerting, carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, assisting a person to get up after a fall, pulling a wheelchair, etc.

**Autism Service (Signal/Sig) dog** – A dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the partner to distracting repetitive movements, such as hand flapping, which are common among those with autism. This intervention allows the person to stop the movement. A person with autism may also have deficits in sensory input, and may need the same support services from a dog that one might provide for a person who is blind or deaf.
Seizure response dog – A dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. The method by which the dog serves the person depends on the individual’s needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure or may go for help. Some have learned to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance.

Companion/Therapy animal – This type of dog usually does not work and provides only companionship as a pet, rather than usefulness by doing specific tasks. Most animals labeled Companion/Therapy animals do not meet the criteria established by the ADA and does not qualify for the same legal protection.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must provide appropriate documentation of their disability that clearly and explicitly explains the need for a service animal and its specific functions to the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. At least two weeks advance notice is recommended in order to make appropriate plans to meet student/animal needs and to make arrangements with Residence Life if the student resides on campus.

Faculty/Staff should provide their documentation to the Human Resources office.

Visitors need not submit documentation, but must follow campus service animal policy. Visitors should report to the SSD office for a copy of the policy or visit the SSD website at http://ssd.uindy.edu.

Temporary Residents with service animals who will be on campus because of conferences, workshops, class work or other such circumstance must adhere to the same guidelines as outlined in this policy.

Animals – The user/handler of the service animal must show proof that the animal has met the following regulations:

Licensing – The animal must meet license requirements of the user/handler’s resident town and wear the tags designated by that community. Records are to be submitted to and maintained by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) or Human Resources (HR).

Health – The animal must be clean and in good health. Records of appropriate vaccination from a licensed veterinarian dated within the past year must be submitted to the SSD/HR office. Dogs must have had the general maintenance vaccine series and must wear a current rabies vaccination tag.

Training – The Americans with Disabilities Act and the U.S. Department of Justice have established two training requirements for an animal to be considered a service animal.
1. A service animal must be individually trained to perform tasks or work for the benefit of a disabled individual.

2. A service animal must be trained to behave properly in places of public accommodation. Most animals, including those labeled Companion/Therapy Animals, do not meet the criteria established by the ADA and do not qualify for the same legal protection.

Verification that the animal meets minimum training standards from a recognized school for service animals, including public access training, must be provide.

**Identification** – The animal must wear some type of easily recognized identification symbol (i.e., harness, backpack).

**HANDLER / PARTNER / OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To obtain required licensure, health and training verification.
- To provide care, feeding, and supervision of their animal.
- To keep animal on leash at all times. The animal should never be permitted to wander around off leash except if the animal is working.
- To maintain control of the animal at all times. The animal should be as unobtrusive as possible.
- To assume responsibility for any damages caused by the animal.
- To maintain the good health of the animal.
- To keep the animal well groomed and measures should be taken, at all times. To maintain flea and odor control.
- To clean up animal waste and properly dispose of it.

**RELIEF AREAS**

Relief areas will be designated on an individual basis with the collaboration of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), Human Resources (HR) and the University physical plant personnel. It is the partner’s/handler’s responsibility to be aware of the dog’s need to relieve itself, to clean up animal waste and to properly dispose of it.

**AREAS OF SAFETY**

There are certain instances that may be considered unsafe for the animal and its partner, or where the presence of an animal might interfere with the safety of others (i.e., medical facilities, laboratories, mechanical rooms, kitchen-areas where protective clothing is necessary). Exceptions may be considered on an individual basis. When it is determined unsafe for the team to be in one of these areas, reasonable accommodations will be provided to assure the individual equal access to the activity.
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In the event of an emergency, Emergency Responders should be trained to recognize a service animal and to be aware that an animal may be trying to communicate a need for assistance. The animal may become disoriented from the smell of smoke in a fire or laboratory emergency, from sirens or wind noise or from shaking and moving ground. The partner and/or animal may be confused in a stressful situation. Responders should also be aware that a service animal might be very protective, and in its confusion, is not to be considered harmful. Every effort should be made to keep the animal with its partner during emergency situations.

EXCLUSION FROM CAMPUS

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove their service animal from the premises unless:

- The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it. For example, a properly trained service animal will remain at its owner's feet.
- Disruptive behavior – including, but not limited to, running around freely, barking, whining, growling, wandering, sniffing (people, tables in eating area, other's belongings), jumping on people, initiation contact with someone without partner’s permission, or urinating or defecating inside buildings. An animal that engages in such disruptive behavior shows that it has not been successfully trained to function as a service animal in public settings.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Illness (bowel/bladder control problems, fleas, etc.)
- Hygiene – dirty, strong odor, not groomed, evidence of having fleas, ticks, etc.
- Animal is not on a leash
- Obstruction of aisles, passageways
- Aggressive behavior

A service animal must be well-behaved and its partner must ensure that the animal does not engage in behavior that would be a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

When a service animal is determined to be out of control, the infraction will be treated on an individual basis through the Services for Students with Disabilities office or Human Resources. If the animal poses a threat to the safety of others, Campus Police will be part of the collaborative team to determine the outcome of the behavior. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, muzzling a barking dog, refresher training for the animal and its partner or exclusion from University facilities; all of which would be at the expense of the owner.
SERVICE DOG ETIQUETTE

- Individuals should not pet a service dog while it is working. Service animals are trained to be protective of their partners and petting distracts them from their responsibilities. A service dog will wear an identifying vest when they are working.
- Individuals should not feed the service dog as this could disrupt his/her schedule.
- Individuals should not deliberately startle, tease, or taunt the animal.
- Individuals should not separate or attempt to separate the animal from its handler.
- Individuals and departments across campus should not prevent a service dog from accompanying its partner at all times and everywhere on campus except where specifically prohibited (refer to Areas of Safety in this document).
- Individuals should not feel offended if a person with a service dog does not wish to discuss his/her disability or the assistance their service animal provides.
- Individuals should not hesitate to ask a student if he/she would like assistance if the team seems confused about a direction in which to turn, an accessible entrance, the location of an elevator, etc.

CONFLICTING DISABILITIES

It is common for persons to have a disability that precipitates an allergic reaction to animals. Persons who have asthma/allergy/medical issues with the animal are to be directed to make the complaint to the SSD office. The person making the complaint must provide verifiable medical documentation to support their claim. Action will be taken to consider the needs of both persons to resolve the problem as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The guidelines for conflicting disabilities apply in the residence halls, as well. If there is an allergy/animal conflict within a residence hall that cannot be resolved agreeably, then the SSD and Residence Life will collaborate on a solution. It should be noted that if the first person that has been permitted into the residence hall uses a service animal and another person with severe allergies then arrives, the first person cannot be removed to accommodate the second person (Disability Compliance for Higher Education, July 1996. Vol. 1, No. 12, p 4 and 5).

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