

Hellertown Area Library
Animals in the Library Policy

Purpose:

The Hellertown Area Library (“the Library”) recognizes that patrons with disabilities may have service dogs that are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual.

The Library recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service dogs. The Library also considers the safety and health of all its patrons, the public, and library employees to be of utmost priority.

Scope:

Library users with disabilities requiring service animals who are individually trained to work or perform tasks for them are permitted to bring their service animal with them into the library. No pets or animals other than service animals are permitted within the library. This policy equally applies to library employees.

Policy:

Any service animal behavior that creates a health and/or safety concern or unreasonably interferes with patrons’ use of the Library may be prohibited on Library property.

Definitions

- “Service Animals” are animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
Examples of such work or tasks include: guiding people who are blind; alerting people who are deaf; pulling a wheelchair; alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure; reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications; calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack; or performing other duties.
Service animals must have proof of vaccinations as required by law.
- Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals which have not been trained to perform a specific job or task do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.
Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.
The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks.
- The term “disability” means, with respect to an individual:
 - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual;
 - A record of such an impairment; or
 - Being regarded as having such an impairment.

If an individual meets any one of these three tests, he or she is considered to be an individual with a disability for purposes of coverage under the ADA.

Guidelines

- No pets or animals other than service animals or service animals in training are allowed in the Library. Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from the Library.
- Individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals into all areas of the Library where members of the public are normally allowed to go.
- All service dogs must be under the full custody and control of their handler at all times. Also, all service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times unless the handler is unable to leash or harness the dog because of a disability or use of a leash or harness would interfere with the animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If the service animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).
- Owners of the service animal are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal, including cleaning up any "accidents" that occur. Animal waste must be disposed of in outside trash bins only. Owners must keep the service animal directly with them at all times.
- Users of service animals are not required to show papers or to prove a disability. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government or training program or be identified by a special harness or collar.
- Employees may ask two questions:
 1. Is the animal a service animal required because of a disability?
 2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
- Owners of service animals or service animals in training must indicate that they are working animals and not pets. Terms used may include assistance, service, guide, hearing, or helping dog. Employees may not ask about the owner's disability.
- A person with a disability may not be asked to remove their service animal or service animal in training from the Library unless the presence, behavior, or actions of the service animal constitute an unreasonable risk of injury or harm to property or other persons, or the animal is disruptive and the owner does not take effective action to control it.
- In these cases, Library employees must give the person with the disability the option to obtain Library services without having the service animal or service animal in training on the premises.
- Fear of allergies, annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees, or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals or service animals in training.

Exceptions for Library Offerings

- Pending approval by the Director or their designee, the Library may have animals in the building as part of its educational and recreational offerings.

Animal Endangerment

- Animals may never be left unattended on library grounds. The Library reserves the right to contact the police regarding any unattended animals on its premises. The Library also reserves the right to ban patrons who endanger animals in such a way.

Grievances

- The Library is committed to the equitable use of the Library for all its patrons. Any patron who feels their use of the Library has been compromised due to this policy should report grievances to the Director or their designee.

Citations and Related References

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Title II, Section 35.136 (Revised September 15, 2010)