

Service Animal Policy and Procedures

I. PURPOSE

This policy provides the rules concerning employees, students and any visitors or contractual workers who bring their service animal to campus.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the College, including faculty and staff members; students; alumnae/i, volunteers, donors, business representatives, contractors and others having legitimate business on college property; and to all visitors to the College.

III. DEFINITIONS

Service Animal: Service animal means any dog or, in certain circumstances, miniature horse, that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability.

Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained, or untrained, are not service animals for the purpose of this policy. “Under the American with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is allowed to go. An example, in a hospital it usually would be inappropriate to **exclude** a service animal from areas such as patient rooms, clinic, cafeteria, or examination rooms. However, it may be appropriate to exclude a service animal from operating rooms or burn units where the animals’ presence may compromise a sterile environment.”¹

Service animals in training are not protected under the ADA in any way -- only trained animals are protected under the ADA. Students cannot be legitimate trainers of a service animal, therefore service animals in training are not permitted.

College Property: For the purposes of this policy, college property includes all areas owned or controlled by the College, all campus workspaces of college employees, all class sites for students, all event sites for college events and all other venues in which the College controls the site.

Handler: A handler is a person with a disability who is the owner and user of a service animal, or the owner or person bringing any animal onto college property.

¹ <https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-2010-requirements/>

IV. STATEMENTS

A. Service Animals on Campus

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), public institutions are required to allow the use of service animals on college campuses in order to achieve access to programs, activities and services. Under this policy the use of service animals is allowed in all buildings, classrooms, residence halls, meetings, dining areas, recreational facilities, activities, and events when the animal is accompanied on campus by the service animal handler.

Members of the college community and visitors are prohibited from interfering in any way with a service animal, or the duties it performs. Appropriate behavior around service animals and their handlers includes not petting, feeding, harassing, or attempting to separate a service animal from their handler. When it is not readily apparent that a dog is a service animal, Goucher employees may ask only two questions to verify the animal's status: (1) Is the dog required due to a disability? and (2) What are the tasks or work the dog has been trained to perform? Service animals are not required to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific type of harness. Individuals may not request documentation regarding the individual's disability or the training or certification of the service animal.

The College welcomes the presence of trained service animals assisting people with disabilities on its campus in all areas that are open to the public, consistent with the provisions of this policy and applicable law. A service animal is generally permitted to be on college property in any place where the animal's handler is permitted to be, although there are specific locations and activities on college property where all animals are prohibited for safety and health reasons.

These areas may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Private offices.
2. Mechanical rooms/Custodial closets.
3. Food service preparation areas.
4. Areas where protective clothing is necessary.
5. Research and teaching laboratories.
6. Areas where there is a danger to the Service Animal.

Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Vice President for Campus Operations or designee, or the program/center director responsible for the restricted area, in Consultation with the Director of Accessibility Services.

B. Service Animals in Training

Service animals in training are not eligible to be taken everywhere. Under the U.S. ADA laws, the dog must already be trained before it can be taken into public places. (Nelson S., 2023)

In Maryland, dog trainers who are with service dogs in training can participate in county programs and events unless admitting the service dog would be a clear danger, or a disturbance. (Nelson S. 2023)

Service dogs in Maryland and other states do not need to be trained by a professional service dog training program, or professional trainer (under the ADA laws). However, service animals in training do not get the same public access rights as fully trained service animals. (Nelson S., 2023)

V. PROCEDURES

Students need to request the College's permission to allow the presence of a service animal or a service animal-in-training on college property in advance of coming to campus with the animal, particularly if the student resides in campus housing. This should be done through the [Office of Accessibility Services](#). The student will be asked whether the animal is needed because of a disability, and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. If the student needs any other accommodations while attending the College, documentation of the disability and a request for accommodations must be made as provided on the college [website](#).

Visitors, including alumni, event attendees, seminar participants, potential students and families on campus tours, vendors and other business visitors to the college property, and all other college property guests, are not required to receive permission from the College prior to bringing a service animal onto college property. The department or office the visitor wishes to visit, or the office sponsoring the event the visitor wishes to attend, should be contacted in advance if the visitor has any questions about the rules concerning the presence of a service animal at a specific event or in a specific location on campus.

Questions may also be addressed to the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

VI. APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES

Any employee who feels that they have been unfairly denied the ability to bring a service animal onto college property or to a particular area of college property, or who feels that they have been unfairly denied the ability to have an service animal in a college residence or the workplace, may file a complaint under the college's [Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

Students who believe they have been unfairly denied the ability to bring a service animal onto college property or to a particular area of college property, or who feel that they have been unfairly denied the ability to have an service animal in a college residence or in other spaces on campus, may file an appeal under the College's [Disability Accommodation Appeal Policy For Students](#).

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES

A service animal must be personally supervised by the handler, and the handler must retain full control of the animal at all times while on college property. Service animals must always be leashed and/ or harnessed unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work, or the handler/s disability prevents use of these devices. (Rights, 2023)

Service animals must always be with their handler. Animals may not be tied or tethered to any college property, including but not limited to buildings, railings, bike racks, fire hydrants, fences, signposts, benches and trees, and may not be allowed to run loose anywhere on campus.

Animals must not be allowed to disrupt or interfere with college activities including, but not _____

limited to, teaching, research, service, or administrative activities. If the animal is unruly or disruptive, or if the handler fails to maintain control of the animal, the handler must regain control immediately or remove the animal from the college property. If the improper behavior continues or happens more than once, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal onto college property, to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Campus Safety or designee, or the program/center director responsible for the area, as most appropriate.

In the event an animal is banned, the College will engage as needed in a good faith process with the individual to determine if other accommodations will effectively allow the individual to participate in the program, service, or activity.

College personnel shall not be required to provide care or food for any service animal, including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm.

Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal. Additionally, service animals may not be left overnight in college housing to be cared for by any individual other than the handler. If the handler is to be absent from their residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the handler. The handler will also be required to designate a third party as an emergency contact to care for the animal in the event the handler is unable to do so because of a medical, or other emergency.

All handlers are responsible for compliance with state and local laws concerning animals (including registration, vaccinations, and tags), and to show proof of such compliance upon request, for controlling their animals, for cleaning up any waste created by the animal, and for any damage caused by the animal to persons or property while on college property. This includes fees for clean-up and disposal of animal waste or replacement and repair of college or other individuals' assets, including grounds, personal property and improvements, and the remediation of flea infestation. If the handler fails to clean up after the animal or the animal causes damage to property, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal onto college property.

Handlers must sign the form entitled [Responsibility of Persons Living in the Residence Halls with Service or Assistance Animals](#) prior to residing in the residence hall with the animal. The form will be maintained by the director of Residence Life.

VIII. RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO SERVICE ANIMALS

The College may impose some restrictions on, and may even exclude, a service animal in certain instances. Restrictions or exclusions will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable laws, but an animal may be excluded if:

- it is out of control and effective action is not taken to control it,
- it is not house broken,
- it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications, or

- its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program, service or activity.

In considering whether an animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, the College will make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence, to determine:

- the nature, duration, and severity of the risk,
- the probability that the potential injury will actually occur, and
- whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

IX. SANCTIONS

Any member of the college community who interferes with a service animal or the duties it performs, may face sanctions under appropriate misconduct charges.

Sanctions for violations of this policy by handlers will be commensurate with the severity and/or frequency of the offense and may include termination of employment, dismissal of a student, or banning an animal from college property. If a service animal is banned from college property, the individual with a disability will have the right to engage in a deliberative process to determine if effective participation can occur with other appropriate accommodations.

Any animal found unattended in or on any college property may be impounded by the college Office of Campus Safety. Owners of impounded animals will be held responsible for payment of any impound and/or license fees required to secure the release of their animals.

Any handler whose animal causes damage to property may be charged for replacement and repair of college or other individuals' assets, including grounds, personal property and improvements.

X. RESOURCES/FAQ

Nelson, S. (2023). ADA Service Dog Laws and Info – Huge Guide & FAQs [2023]. U.S.

Rights, U. D. (2023). ADA.gov. Retrieved from <https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-faqs/>

XI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

The official responsible for implementing and updating this policy is the [Accessibility Services Director](#).

XII. HISTORY

Updated: January 2017, November 2020, June 2023.

Sample Letter from a Service Provider

(To be used for service animals in residence halls only)

[Date]

Name of Professional (therapist, physician, psychiatrist, rehabilitation counselor, or other reliable third party)

XXX Road

City, State Zip

Dear Director, Health and/or Counseling Center:

[Full Name of Student] is my patient and has been under my care since [date]. I am familiar with his/her/their history and with the functional limitations imposed by his/her/their disability.

Due to the _____ disorder, [first name] has certain limitations regarding [social interaction/coping with stress/anxiety, etc.]. In order to help alleviate these difficulties, and to enhance his/her/their ability to live independently and to use fully and enjoy the college owned and administered housing unit, I have determined that it is necessary for _____ to have an animal in his/her/their room in order to alleviate the symptoms of his/her/their disability. It is anticipated that the animal will assist [first name] in the following manner:

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I am competent to make an assessment regarding the assistive and/or therapeutic benefits of service animals for people with disabilities such as that experienced by [first name]. Upon request, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning my recommendation that [Full Name of Student] have a service animal. Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name of Professional