

Service Animals

I. Purpose

The Museum is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and fulfilling obligations under State and Federal law. This Policy governs the use of service animals during Museum visits by persons with disabilities.

II. Policy Statement

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by working service animals during visits to the Museum consistent with the provisions of this Policy.

III. Definitions

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Service animal: Any dog 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. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. 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 for the purposes of this definition. A service animal-in-training is not considered a service animal for the purposes of this Policy.

IV. Reasonable Modifications - Miniature Horse

The Museum shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability. Other requirements which apply to service animals shall also apply to miniature horses.

a. Assessment factors

In determining whether reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures can be made to allow a miniature horse into a specific facility, the Museum shall consider:

- The type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features;
- Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;
- Whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and
- Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.

V. Service Animal Use During Museum Visits

Visitors to the Museum with service animals may access all public facilities, with the exception of areas where service animals are specifically prohibited due to safety or health restrictions or where the service animal may be in danger.

VI. General Requirements

Service animals on campus must comply with all state and local licensure and vaccination requirements.

The care and supervision of a service animal is the responsibility of the individual who uses the animal's service. The individual must maintain control of the animal at all times. The individual using the animal's service is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of all animal waste and for any damage caused by the animal. Museum officials and staff may designate animal toileting areas.

VII. Clarifying Animal Status

Service animals are permitted in all public areas of the Museum in accordance with this Policy. Museum employees should not question an individual about an accompanying service animal if the individual's disability is readily apparent and the function of the accompanying animal is clear.

In the unusual circumstance when an inquiry must be made to determine whether an animal is a service animal, a Museum employee may only ask two questions:

1. Whether the animal is required because of a disability;
2. What work or task the animal is trained to perform.

Museum employees shall not ask any questions about the individual's disability.

Although a service animal may sometimes be identified by an identification card, harness, cape, or backpack, such identifiers are not required and should not be requested or demanded for any service animal at the Museum. Museum employees shall not request proof of a disability or documentation that the service animal has been licensed, trained, or certified.

VIII. Conflicting Disabilities

Individuals with medical issues impacted by animals (e.g., respiratory conditions, allergies or psychological conditions) should contact the Museum administrator for assistance.

IX. Removal of Service Animals

A service animal may be removed from the Museum premises if disruptive (e.g., barking, wandering, displaying aggressive behavior) and the behavior is outside the duties of the service animal. Ill, unhygienic, and/or unsanitary service animals are not permitted in public areas of the Museum. The individual responsible for such an animal may be required to remove the animal.

X. Interacting with Service Animals

Service animals work and perform tasks and are not pets. Accordingly, the Museum recommends that Museum employees adhere to the following best practices when interacting with service animals:

- Do not touch or feed a service animal unless invited to do so;
- Do not deliberately distract or startle a service animal; and,

- Do not separate or attempt to separate a service animal from the individual using the animal's service.

XI. Emergency Situations

A handler/animal team may become stressed during emergency situations involving smoke, fire, sirens, or injury, and exhibit protective behavior. Be aware that service animals may try to communicate the need for help. In emergency situations make every effort to avoid separating the handler from the animal.