

Service Animals Policy

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Effective: July 7, 2015

Revisions: N/A

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In conformance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all service animals (including those in training) are welcome at the Amery Area Public Library. Animals, other than service animals, are not permitted in the Library, unless as a part of a program authorized by the Library Director.

The U.S. Department of Justice defines service animals as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. 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 are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.”

Under Wisconsin state law, a service animal is “a guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is individually trained or is being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including the work or task of guiding a person with impaired vision, alerting a person with impaired hearing to intruders or sound, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items” (Wis. Stat. § 106.52).

Under the ADA, “when it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.”

Library staff may ask the handler to remove his or her service animal from the building under circumstances that include the following:

- The service animal does not meet the definition of a valid service animal as defined by the U.S. Department of Justice or Wisconsin state law.

- The service animal is unruly, disruptive, or exhibits aggressive behavior. (A service 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 animal performs assistive functions for a person with special needs.)
- The service animal is not harnessed, leashed or similarly tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. (Per City Ordinance Sec. 7-1-6.010, a leash no longer than 10 feet shall be used to control 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 animal while on Library property).
- The owner does not clean up after his or her service animal.

If the service animal is removed, the handler shall be allowed to return to the Library without the service animal.

Library staff may also reasonably restrict a service animal from those parts of the Library where the height/weight of the service animal might jeopardize the safety of persons or property.