

Service Animal Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 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 tasks a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability.” A service dog can be any breed or size. It might wear specialized equipment such as a backpack, harness, or special collar or leash, but this is not a legal requirement. If a dog meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program.

This policy speaks to the presence of service animals on campus, as defined by the Department of Justice, under the ADA. The ADA further states that “dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.” Those wishing to have other animals on campus should contact Accessibility Services for information about restrictions, or for referral to other policies or offices on campus.

The ADA allows service animals to accompany the owner at all times and everywhere on campus. This includes the right to bring the service animal into food service locations. Exceptions include areas that specifically prohibit service animals or in places where the presence of the service animal may compromise safety or a sterile environment and/or interfere with the fundamental nature of the activities being conducted in which the service animal would be not permitted.

In emergency situations, every effort will be made to keep the service animal with the owner.

Voluntary Registration of Service Animals While on Campus

- Students who are enrolled in courses that would like to voluntarily register their service animal with the University, please contact Accessibility Services.
- As stated, this is voluntary, but may aid one in accessing the University premises.
- Registration is not available for visitors to campus or service dogs in training.

Inquiries

- The individual’s disability may not be visible. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides and the owner has chosen not to voluntarily register their service animal with Capital University Accessibility Services, only limited inquiries are allowed.

- University personnel may ask two questions in determining the validity of the presence of the animal: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of your disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform?
- University personnel 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.

Requirements of Service Animals and their Owners

- The animal cannot pose a direct threat to the health and safety of persons while on the University's premises.
- Local ordinances regarding animals apply to service animals, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, restraint, and at-large animals.
- The owner must be in full control of the animal at all times. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or 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.
- The service animal must be in good health and be well-groomed and cared for.
- The owner is responsible for cleaning up the animal's waste and fluids and disposing of such in outside trash containers only. Waste disposal via University plumbing is prohibited. The owner should always carry equipment sufficient to clean up and properly dispose of the animal's waste and fluids. Owners who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of the animal's waste and fluids are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. The University is not responsible for these services. Additionally, the animal is not to be bathed or its cage/crate, or bedding cleaned using University Housing or University facilities.
- The owner is liable for damage caused by the service animal.
- The owner is responsible for instructing others on appropriate interactions with the service animal and setting clear expectations.

Exclusions

- A service animal may be excluded from any authorized area and its owner may be subject to disciplinary action if, including, but not limited to:
 - The service animal displays aggressive or disruptive behavior or noises and effective action is not taken to control it; unless said noise/behavior(s) are part of the needed disability service to the owner;
 - The service animal is not housebroken;
 - The service animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
 - The service animal is not in good health, well-groomed, or cared for;

- The service animal infringes inappropriately into other's personal space;
- The owner intentionally uses the service animal to block identified fire/emergency exits.
- Disciplinary action will be taken under the Student Code of Conduct and can include consequences up to barring the Service Animal from campus. In the event that restriction or removal of a service animal is determined to be necessary, every effort will be made to assure that the individual still has access to the programs, services, or activities of the University without the animal.

Service Dogs In Training

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assures people with disabilities who are accompanied by service animals that they will not be excluded from public places or activities, nor charged any additional fees, because they are accompanied by their service dog. However, the ADA does not provide the same protection to those who are training service animals (that is, the ADA assures access for the handler/partner only if the dog is fully trained to give some disability-related service).
- Ohio state law (RC §955.43) provides those same rights of access for individuals who are training service animals for a non-profit special agency. For example, an individual employed by Pilot Dogs, Inc., who is preparing future guide dogs to be paired with someone who is blind (in order to provide independent mobility) may bring the dog onto campus and interact with the campus community in public areas, campus offices, and so on.
- Because Ohio state law does not clarify further its use of the term "in training," Capital University has established policy, based on accepted practices suggested by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). A service-dog-in-training is a dog, accompanied by its trainer, that is undergoing individual training to provide specific disability-related work or service for an individual with a disability. This does not include obedience training or socialization of puppies who may later become service animals (generally 15-18 months). Thus, adult dogs are recognized as being "in training" to provide disability-specific assistance only after they have completed an earlier period of socialization (obedience training, being house broken, getting acclimated to public places and everyday activities as pets).
- As service animals in training in Ohio are only given access when they are in the company of someone employed by a nonprofit agency, they cannot be in-residence in Capital University housing, nor be present in other areas of campus except those places where all students are welcome to bring pets. Similarly, puppies who are being raised/trained in preparation for participating in formal service animal training are not permitted in Capital University housing or on campus except where pets are allowed.

Service Animals in Residence in University Housing

- Sufficient notice of the intent of an individual with a disability planning to have a service animal in University Housing should be given to Accessibility Services so that appropriate arrangements regarding placement, roommates, etc. can be made. Service animals residing in university

housing are subject to Capital University's Housing Emotional Support Animal and Service Animal Policy Agreement Form.

University Employee Service Animal Information

- Employees with service animals should refer to Human Resources.

Student Complaint Procedure

- Complaints arising under this policy shall be handled under the provisions of Accessibility Services Grievance Policy.
- The University reserves the right to modify this policy as needed. For additional information concerning the use of a service animal or other accommodations and services, please contact Accessibility Services.