

Policy for the Use of Service Animals

The University of Nebraska complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Among other things, the ADA and Section 504 require the University to make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a Service Animal by a student, faculty, staff or visitor with a disability.

Definition of Service Animal

The ADA defines a Service Animal as “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.” Importantly, other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not Service Animals for the purposes of the ADA. However, under certain conditions, UNL will make reasonable modifications for a miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability.

When assessing whether a dog is a Service Animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, the dog must be trained to do work or perform tasks that are directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks;
- alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds;
- providing non-violent protection or rescue work;
- pulling a wheelchair;
- assisting an individual during a seizure;
- alerting individuals to the presence of allergens;
- retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone;
- providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities; and
- assisting persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

The crime deterrent effects of a dog’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for purposes of determining if a dog is a Service Animal under this policy.

Verification of Service Animal

The University will not ask about the nature or extent of an individual's disability. However, when it is not readily apparent that the dog identified by the individual with a disability is trained to do work or perform tasks for him or her, the Services for Students with Disabilities Office or the Equity, Access and Diversity Office may ask the individual with the disability if the dog is required because of a disability and what work or task the dog has been trained to perform. However, the University will not require documentation, such as proof that the dog has been certified, trained, or licensed as a Service Animal.

Care and supervision of Service Animal

The individual with the disability using a Service Animal is responsible for the care or supervision of a Service Animal. The Service Animal must be under the control of the individual at all times and must have a harness, leash, or other tether. If the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the performance of the work or tasks performed by the Service Animal or is impractical because of an individual's disability, a harness, leash, or other tether may not be required. However, in that case, the individual must be able to control the Service Animal by other effective means such as voice controls or signals.

A Service Animal is generally permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to University facilities where members of the public, students, staff, and faculty are allowed to go. However, the University may ask the individual with a disability to remove a Service Animal from any of its facilities if: (1) the Service Animal is out of control and the individual with a disability does not take effective action to control it; or (2) the Service Animal is not housebroken. The University may also ask the individual with a disability to remove a Service Animal from any of its facilities if the use or presence of the Service Animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or if the animal's behavior, such as barking, is unreasonably disruptive to the other participants within the facility.

The University may impose legitimate safety requirements on the use or presence of a Service Animal that are necessary for safe operation of its facilities. There are some facilities that are not safe for use or presence of Service Animals and from which the University may exclude Service Animals on a case-by-case basis based on actual risks.

The individual with a disability must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances/laws/regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals (It is the individual's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws and regulations). The individual with a disability is responsible to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's feces in a safe and sanitary manner.

The University will not ask for or require an individual with a disability to pay a surcharge or to comply with other requirements generally not applicable to people without pets.

However, an individual with a disability may be charged any damage caused by his or her Service Animal.

Requesting a Reasonable Modification

Students wishing to utilize a Service Animal on campus should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office at 402-472-3787. Faculty, staff and visitors wishing to utilize a Service Animal on the campus should contact the Equity, Access and Diversity Office at 402-472-3417 for approval

If you feel you were denied this accommodation, a grievance can be filed through the regular University grievance procedures on file with the Equity, Access and Diversity Office (402-472-3417) or the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (402-472-3787). If you have further questions, please contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities at (402-472-3787), or the ADA/504 Compliance Officer at (402-472-8404).