



SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Policy # 3014

Effective Date: 1/7/2026

I. POLICY STATEMENT.

The purpose of this Service Animal Policy is to afford individuals with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal to ensure equal opportunity to access library property, programs, and activities.

II. DEFINITIONS.

The following definitions shall apply to this Policy, unless the use and context clearly indicates otherwise.

- A. "Director" means the Director to the Sonoma County Public Library, or designee.
- B. "Handler" means, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability who is utilizing a Service Animal. Not all individuals with disability "own" their Service Animal, so it is not appropriate to generally refer to them as owners.
- C. "Policy" means this **Service Animal Policy** approved by the Library Commission, and as may be amended from time to time.
- D. "Service animal" means, Under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), any dog or, in some cases, a miniature horse individually trained to perform work or a task for a person with a disability that is directly related to the person's disability. Disabilities that can be supported by service animals may include:
 - i) Physical
 - ii) Sensory
 - iii) Psychiatric
 - iv) Intellectual
 - v) Mental

III. POLICY.

- A. **Scope.** This policy shall apply to individuals with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal to ensure equal opportunity to access library property, programs, and activities.

B. Policy Standards.

i) Staff Inquiries.

- (1) Sonoma County Library staff, employees, and management are permitted to ask a Service Animal Handler only the following two questions:
 - a. Is your service animal required because of a Disability?
 - b. What work or tasks has your service animal been trained to perform?
- (2) All Library staff are prohibited from inquiring about:
 - a. Identification or description of a disability;
 - b. Requesting medical documentation proving a disability or condition;
 - c. Requesting special identification of a service animal; or
 - d. Asking for a demonstration of the animal's work or tasks.
- (3) Library staff are reminded that not all disabilities are visible or obvious. Service Animals are used by a wide range of individuals with disabilities and the work or tasks performed by the Service Animal may not be obvious.

ii) Service Animal Handler Responsibilities.

- (1) Handlers and trainers of Service Animals should maintain control of their Service Animal at all times and take reasonable steps to prevent the Service Animal from barking repeatedly or unnecessarily, jumping on other Library patrons or staff, or running out of the control of the handler.
- (2) Library staff, after consulting with a supervisor or manager, may request a Handler or trainer of a Service Animal to remove the Service Animal from the facility if:
 - a. The Handler or trainer cannot reasonably control the Service Animal;
 - b. The Service Animal is not housebroken or reliably trained to control its waste, causing a health and safety issue for other Library patrons and staff;
 - c. The Service Animal interferes with other Service Animals; or
 - d. The Service Animal is of a type, size, or weight that cannot safely or physically be accommodated by Library facilities; or
- (3) Handlers and trainers of Service Animals that are asked to remove their Service Animals from Library facilities are free to continue use of Library services and facilities without the offending Service Animal.
- (4) Miniature horses trained as service animals must be housebroken and under the handler's control. Miniature horses are only permitted in Library facilities when the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight, and the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of Library facilities.

iii) **Service Animals in Training Authorized.**

Service Animals that are being trained or certified as Service Animals may enter and remain in Sonoma County Library facilities, as long as the animal is with an authorized trainer or a person with a disability providing testing or training services.

iv) **Non-Service Animals Prohibited.**

Non-ADA-recognized animals, such as emotional support animals ("ESAs"), well-being, comfort, and companionship animals, are not included under this policy and are generally prohibited from entering or remaining in Library facilities.

Under California law, fraudulently presenting an animal as a Service Animal or Service Animal in Training is a misdemeanor criminal offense.

C. Administrative Procedures.

- i) If any questions related to this policy arise, please reach out to the following individual who The Library has designated as the ADA Coordinator:

Suzanne Silva
Human Resources Director/ ADA Coordinator
Sonoma County Library

6135 State Farm Drive
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
707-545-0831
ssilva@sonomalibrary.org

D. Library Director Authority.

The Library Director, or designee, is expressly authorized to make minor amendments to this Policy, including, but not limited to, imposing additional policies or procedures that are deemed necessary for the efficient and safe functioning of the Library, so long as in line with the purpose of this Policy.

IV. APPLICABLE LAW AND REGULATIONS.

- A. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
(42 U.S.C. section 12101 and following)
- B. Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Public Accommodations and Commercial Facilities (28 C.F.R. Part 36)
- C. Disabled Persons Act (California Civil Code section 54.1)
- D. Service Animal Fraud (California Penal Code section 365.7)

V. REVISION HISTORY.

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Significant Changes: New Policy