

## **Animals in the Library Policy**

### **Approved by ECRL Board 11/14/16**

East Central Regional Library (ECRL) recognizes that some individuals with disabilities may have service animals, which are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a physical, mental or sensory disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual. ECRL recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. ECRL also considers the safety and health of all its patrons, the public and library staff to be of utmost priority.

No pets or animals other than service animals, service animals in training, or animals featured in ECRL approved programs are allowed in ECRL libraries.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. As of 2011, animals other than dogs, except for trained miniature horses subject to certain limitations, do not qualify as service animals according to federal law.

Service animals are allowed in all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. All service animals must be under the full custody and control of their handler at all times. Service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times unless the handler is unable to leash or harness the animals due to a disability or the use of a leash or harness would interfere with the animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If the animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be under the handler's control via voice, signals or other effective means. Owners of the service animal are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animals and must keep the animal directly with them at all time.

A person with a disability may be asked to remove a service animal if:

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler doesn't take effective action to control it;
  2. The animal is not housebroken;
- or
3. The animal's behavior is a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others.

Fear, allergies or annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees are not valid reasons for denying access to patron with service animals.

In cases where a service animal has been properly removed as provided above, library staff should give the person with the disability the option to obtain library services without having the service animal on the premises.

Library staff has the right to ask the animal's handler:

1. Is the animal a service animal?
2. What tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

The handler is not required to produce documentation or special licensing, nor is the animal required to be identified by a special harness or collar. Staff may not ask about the owner's disability.

Signage will be placed at the entry of all ECRL facilities stating "No Pets Allowed. Service Animals Welcomed."