

# **RIVERHEAD FREE LIBRARY GENERAL POLICIES**

## **SUBJECT: SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY**

**PURPOSE:** To determine the Library's service animal policy.

**POLICY:** The Riverhead Free Library is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for people who participate in our organization's activities, including those who use service animals.

Service Animals are permitted in RFL in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Service Animals are defined by the ADA as working animals (not pets) that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks/duties for people with disabilities.

Please review our guidelines regarding both service and emotional support animals.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **Service Animals**

The ADA defines a service animal as a dog or miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. We welcome people with service animals on Library property. Library staff may ask individuals with service animals a few questions, including:

- Is the animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

#### **Emotional Support Animals**

An emotional support animal (also known as a comfort animal) provides reassurance just by being with a person. Dogs, cats, birds, hamsters and many other species can serve as emotional support animals. However, they do not qualify as "service animals" under the ADA.

Therefore, our organization has chosen NOT to allow emotional support animals on its premises. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause to you or your family.

#### **Animal Handler's Responsibilities**

Individuals who bring a service animal onto our premises are expected to:

- Keep the animal harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with an animal's work or an owner's disability prevents them from using these devices.
- Control the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls, if the animal cannot be harnessed, leashed or tethered.

- The animal is not to sit on furniture, indoors or out, as all seating is reserved for the public.
- The animal must not demonstrate disruptive, agitated or aggressive behavior, including but not limited to barking, whining, biting, growling, jumping, scratching, leash pulling, sniffing or any harassment of Library staff or the public.
- The animal must stay in public areas, be housebroken and limit relief to outdoor areas. The animal must not harass, injure damage, sever, mutilate, or kill any animal or vegetations of any kind.

Library staff will request the handler correct the animal's behavior if a service animal is not compliant with Library policy.

If the handler does not take effective action and control the animal, Library staff will request that the animal be removed from Library grounds.

In such a case, the handler will be able to continue the visit, or to visit on another occasion without the animal.