



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Title: Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

Document Number: SS_108

Effective Date: 06/2018

Revised Date:

Department: Office of Disability Services

Purpose

Louisiana Delta Community College is committed to complying with federal, state, and local laws in regard to equal access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. This includes allowing service animals on the College's campuses and property, in accordance with these regulations and laws.

Scope

Entire College community.

Policy

Service Animals

Many people with disabilities use a service animal in order to fully participate in everyday life. Dogs can be trained to perform many important tasks to assist people with disabilities, such as providing stability for a person who has difficulty walking, picking up items for a person who uses a wheelchair, preventing a child with autism from wandering away, or alerting a person who has hearing loss when someone is approaching from behind.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires State and local government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations (covered entities) that provide goods or services to the public to make "reasonable modifications" in their policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to accommodate people with disabilities. The service animal rules fall under this general principle. Accordingly, entities that have a "no pets" policy generally must modify the policy to allow service animals into their facilities.

Disability: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A disability may be physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental.

Handler: the individual who utilizes a service animal to perform work or tasks pertaining to that individual's disability.

Service animal: 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. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Tasks may include, but are not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to sounds, pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, turning off/on switches, assisting during a seizure, or providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability.

In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department of Justice's revised ADA regulations allow for miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, where reasonable. Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds. There are four assessment factors to assist entities in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in their facility: (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

As such, Louisiana Delta Community College is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for persons with disabilities and will permit service animals on college campuses and facilities for persons with disabilities, in accordance with relevant state and federal law. Service animals are allowed to accompany their handlers at all times and permitted everywhere on the College campuses, except in areas where specifically prohibited due to health, environmental or safety hazards (e.g. mechanical rooms, machine shops, custodial closets, etc.). Service animals also may be prohibited when their presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity (e.g. research lab, areas requiring protective clothing, food preparation areas, etc.).

General Guidelines

- Do not pet or feed service dogs. They are working and must not be distracted.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate the service dog from his/her handler.
- Allow animals in all permissible places at LDCC pursuant to rules noted below.

Service animals do not have to be registered with the LDCC Office of Disability Services to be considered legitimate. You are only allowed to ask two questions of an animal handler:

- 1. Is this a service animal required because of a disability?***
- 2. What work or tasks is the animal trained to perform?***

Handler's Responsibilities

- Handlers are encouraged, but not required, to register their service animal with the Office of Disabilities Services.
- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the handler must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- All service animals must be in good health. Current vaccinations and identity tags must comply with state-specific requirements.
- Handlers accompanied by service animals must follow local ordinances regarding animal feces. If a handler with disabilities cannot pick up the dog's feces, he/she must make arrangements for cleaning up after the dog.
- Handlers are responsible for their animal's behavior. If the accompanying animal exhibits unacceptable behavior, including aggression when not being provoked, the handler is expected to employ proper training techniques to correct such behavior.

Reasons for removing a service dog from College Property

- Illness. Sick animals are not allowed in public spaces and therefore the animal's handler will be asked to remove any sick animal from LDCC's campus.
- Disruptions. If a service animal presents disruptive behavior such as barking, running around, showing unprovoked aggression or bringing attention to itself, handlers may be asked to remove the animal from the classroom or premises.
- Uncleanliness. Handlers with animals that are not clean may be asked to leave the LDCC campus.

Emotional Support Animal

Emotional support animal: animals of any species which may provide emotional support to a person but are not trained to perform work or tasks related to a person's disability.

Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not service animals because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task; therefore, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

In order to maintain an academic environment conducive to the well-being of all students, Louisiana Delta Community College prohibits all types of animals on the College's campuses, with the exception of service animals required to assist persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities who wish to have an emotional support animal on the College's property must file a request with the Office of Disability Services and have such a request approved. Determinations of allowing an emotional support animal on campus will involve an interactive process in which the College strives to accommodate the needs of the person with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, while recognizing the health, safety, and educational goals of others in the campus community.

Custodians of emotional support animals must abide by all rules required under the state laws and local ordinances. Emotional support animals are not permitted inside of the College's buildings and facilities, except in cases where the animal has been approved as a reasonable accommodation for a disability in accord with standard procedures for requesting such accommodations.

Questions/ Concerns

Any student, faculty, or staff member who has a question or concern relating to the use of a service animal or emotional support animal is encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services at (318)345-9152 or to the Dean of Student Success Services at (318) 345-9145. Additionally, questions and concerns can be directed to the main college phone number (318) 345-9000 for further information.