

Fort Dodge Public Library

Animals in the Library

Policy Statement

Fort Dodge Public Library affirms the rights of all people to free and equal access to information and use of the Library without discrimination, intimidation, threat of harm or invasion of privacy. The Library is dedicated to providing a safe, clean, comfortable, respectful environment for all library users. Patrons are expected to observe the rights of other patrons and staff members and to use the library for its intended purposes.

Service Animals

Fort Dodge Public Library recognizes that some patrons may have service animals, which are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual. The Library recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. Service animals are defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as dogs and miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

In accordance with the ADA, any person with a disability is allowed to bring their service animal into 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 harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices interfere with their work or the owner's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the service animal through voice, signal or other effective controls. Owners are solely responsible for the supervision and care of their service animal.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Library staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog or miniature horse a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. Library staff will not ask about a person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the animal or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove their service animal from the premises unless: (1) the animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the animal is not housebroken. In these instances, library staff will offer the person with the disability an opportunity to obtain library services without the service animal's presence.

Fear of allergies, annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to individuals with service animals or service animals in training.

Other Animals

Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or pet/companion animals are terms used to describe animals that provide comfort just by being with a person. Because they have not been trained to

perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Owners of these types of animals will be asked to remove them from the library. Further, animals in carriers, bags or purses are not allowed in the library. Anyone who is found to have misrepresented an animal as a service animal may have their library privileges revoked.

The Library does not condone leaving any animal outside the library in a way that may endanger the animal or library patrons. The Library reserves the right to contact animal control or the police regarding any unattended animals on its premises.

The Library's bird ambassador and any animals featured in programs sponsored by the Fort Dodge Public Library are exempted from this policy.

Adopted: 5/24/2021