

Animals in the Library Policy

1. Purpose

Baker County Library District (BCLD) is committed to providing an inclusive and safe environment. This policy outlines conditions for animals present in BCLD libraries, ensuring compliance with federal and state laws regarding service animals.

2. Service Animals

BCLD complies with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and **Oregon law** (ORS 659A.143 Assistance Animals), and recognizes the rights of individuals with disabilities, and assistance animal trainers, to be accompanied by service animals and service animal trainees.

Definition & Rights

- A **service animal** is a **dog** (or, in specific cases, a **miniature horse**) that is individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.
- An **assistance animal trainer** accompanied by a **service animal trainee in training** to do work or tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability will be provided the same rights and responsibilities as a person with a disability accompanied by a service animal.
- A **disability** is any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- Service animals are permitted in all areas of the library where the public is normally allowed.
- An individual may be accompanied by a maximum of two service animals.
- **Fear of animals, allergies, or personal discomfort** are **not valid reasons** to deny access to a service animal.
- Service animals must be **under the handler's control** at all times and should be leashed, harnessed, or otherwise controlled (e.g., voice or signal commands) unless these restraints interfere with their work.
- The handler is solely responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal.

Staff Interaction Guidelines

Staff are not allowed to request or require any documentation or demonstration of service animal's skill, or ask about the nature of the person's disability.

In situations where it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, library staff may **ask only**:

1. **Is this a *trained* service animal required because of a disability?**
2. **What specific work or task(s) has the animal been *trained* (or *is currently being trained*) to perform to assist with a disability?**

The task(s) a dog has been trained to perform must be **directly related** to the person's disability. Examples include:

- **Guiding** individuals who are blind or visually impaired.
- **Alerting** individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Assisting** with mobility, such as pulling a wheelchair or navigating for stability.
- **Alerting** and protecting an individual with a seizure disorder or severe allergy.
- **Alerting** an individual with mental illness to take prescribed medication.
- **Interrupting** symptoms of a psychiatric disorder such as panic attacks or self-harming behavior.

3. Non-Service & Companion Animals

- Animals that provide **companionship, therapy, comfort, or emotional support** do not qualify as service animals under the ADA and are referred to in this policy as **companion animals or non-service animals**.
- **Small companion animals** are permitted in BCLD libraries **only if they are fully enclosed in a carrier or carried by the handler** at all times and are not placed directly on library furniture or floors.
- **Non-service animals may be permitted** in the library as part of **pre-approved library programs** (e.g., therapy reading dogs, educational events). These events must be **authorized in advance** by library administration.

4. Staff Guidelines & Enforcement

- If an animal is present in the library and does not appear to be a service animal, staff **will politely inform patrons** of the policy.
- **Uncontained or disruptive** companion animals must be effectively corrected by the handler immediately upon notice by library staff, or removed from the premises.
- If a patron is asked to remove an animal, they will be given the opportunity to **continue using the library without the animal present**.
- Patrons with a history of failure to comply with this policy will be subject to the Library Use Restrictions policy.

Removal of Service Animals

Staff may request the removal of a service animal if it:

- **Poses a direct threat** to the health and safety of other people or animals in the library, or district property (e.g., uncontrolled barking, aggression, or property damage).
 - A direct threat includes **showing signs of poor health** (e.g., retching; vomiting; excessive scratching, drooling or fluid discharge).
- **Is not housebroken.**
- **Is not under the handler's control at all times, and effective action is not taken to control the animal.**

5. Revision History

- **Original Policy Date:** November 2016
- **Revised:** February 2025