DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

165 Capitol Avenue
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POLICY REGARDING SERVICE ANIMALS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in all of its activities and services. Accordingly, it is the policy of the DAS to provide access to all of its programs, services and facilities to persons with disabilities in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Service animals play an important role in ensuring the independence of people with disabilities. It is, therefore, our policy to welcome any service animal to accompany any individual with a disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go. **No individual with a disability shall be refused or denied access to DAS programs, facilities or services because that individual is accompanied by a service animal.**

What is a Service Animal?

Service animals are defined as dogs or miniature horses (see below) **that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.** Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. An animal whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support does not qualify as a service animal under the ADA.

How to Determine if an Animal Is a Service Animal

Service animals come in all breeds and sizes. Service animals do not always have a sign or symbol indicating they are service animals. If it is unclear whether an animal is a service animal, only two questions may be asked:

- If the animal is a service animal required because of a disability and
- What service the animal is trained to perform.

DAS shall not require proof of the individual's disability or any information about his or her disability or proof or certification of the animal's training.

Service Animals Must Be Under Control

Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his or her service animal from the premises unless:

- The animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it; or
- The animal is not housebroken.

Allergies and fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.

When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, the individual with the disability must be offered the opportunity to obtain services without the animal's presence.

Miniature Horses

Miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities must be permitted in DAS facilities 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.

The following factors must be considering in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in a facility:

- Whether the miniature horse is housebroken;
- Whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control;
- Whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and
- Whether the miniature horse's presence will compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

Melody A. Currey

Melody A. Currey
Commissioner of Administrative Services

7/14/15
Date

Related policy: DAS Americans with Disabilities Act Policy

Source of information: U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section