



I. Purpose

It is the Policy of the Stoughton Public Library to prohibit all animals from entering the library, with the exception of assistance animals and animals featured in programs sponsored by the Stoughton Public Library.

II. Definitions

“Assistance” animals is a newer term being proposed to replace the term “service” animals. Assistance animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Assistance animals are working animals, not pets.

If animals meet this definition, they are considered assistance animals under the ADA and regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

III. Guidelines

The only persons permitted to bring assistance animals into the Library are persons who require the assistance of such an animal and assistance animal trainers. All assistance animals must remain under a responsible person's control and on a leash at all times.

IV. Animal Owner Responsibilities

The care or supervision of any assistance animal is solely the responsibility of his or her owner, including the prevention or remediation of any damage to library property caused by the animal. All assistance animals must remain under a responsible person's control, on a leash, within arm’s reach of the owner at all times. Even assistance animals will be excluded from the Library if:

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it. For example, a dog that barks repeatedly, or engages in similar actions.
2. The animal poses a threat to the health or safety of others. For example, a dog that displays vicious behavior towards others, or engages in similar actions.

3. In the opinion of the senior Library staff present, the animal disrupts the normal operation of the Library. For example, a dog that engages in disruptive play, or similar actions.

Each situation should be considered individually.

Although this Library policy excludes any assistance animal that is out of control, the Stoughton Public Library gives the individual who uses the assistance animal the option of continuing to use the Library without having the assistance animal on the premises.

V. Library Responsibilities

Library employees may ask if an animal is an assistance animal required because of a disability, or ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. These questions should not be asked, however, if the animal's service tasks are obvious. Employees cannot require special ID cards for animals or ask about person's disabilities, e.g. "Are you blind?" or "Are you under a physician's care for this?"

Library staff may NOT ask to see documentation or proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as an assistance animal.

Allergies or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access to the Library facility or refusing Library service to people with assistance animals.

People with disabilities who use assistance animals may not be isolated from other patrons or employees or treated less favorably than other patrons or employees.

Library staff may not make assumptions about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on past experiences with other animals. Each animal must be considered individually.

The Library is not required to provide care or food for an assistance animal or provide a special location for the animal.

First Approved: 3-21-12

Revised: 10-19-16

Revised: 10-16-19