

ANIMALS IN THE LIBRARY POLICY

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and welcoming library environment while complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rhode Island state law regarding service animals and public accommodation.

Policy

Service Animals

The Library complies fully with ADA Title II. ADA-defined service animals are permitted in all public areas of the Library where members of the public are normally allowed to go.

A service animal is defined under federal law as a dog that has been individually trained to perform work or tasks for an individual with a disability. Miniature horses may also qualify as service animals under ADA guidelines.

Emotional support animals, comfort animals, therapy animals, or companion animals are not service animals under ADA and are not permitted, unless explicitly authorized as part of an approved Library program (see “Program Animals”).

When the service animal’s role is not obvious, staff may only ask the two ADA-permitted questions:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

The Library will not require documentation, licensing, registration, or certification for service animals.

Service animals must remain leashed, harnessed, or otherwise under the handler’s control at all times unless such device interferes with the animal’s trained work.

A service animal may be asked to leave if it is not housebroken, or if it is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.

Program Animals

Animals (including therapy animals, educational animals, reading dogs, or Library-owned animals) may be allowed in the Library only when part of a pre-approved Library program or event, with written approval from the Library Director or designee.

All program animals must comply with all applicable Rhode Island animal welfare regulations and any species-specific safety requirements.

Pets

Patron pets or companion animals that are not ADA-defined service animals are not permitted in the Library.

Staff-Owned Animals

Staff-owned animals are subject to the same restrictions as patron animals. Staff may not bring personal animals into the Library except as part of an approved program covered under this policy and with written program approval and agreement on care responsibilities.

Safety and Liability

Any animal may be required to leave the Library if it exhibits aggressive behavior, poses a health or safety risk, creates a disruption, or damages property.

Handlers are responsible for any damage caused by their animals.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least every three (3) years, or sooner if federal or state law is amended.

Adopted by the Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees December 18, 2025

