



Policy on Animals in the Library

Outside of service animals, appropriate library programs, and other special cases approved by the Director or their designee, animals are not permitted in library facilities. However, BPL (“the Library”) welcomes the use of a service animal by a person with a disability. A *service animal* is defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual’s disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. A library staff member may ask a person with a disability to remove a service animal from the premises if: the animal’s behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, if the animal displays disruptive or unacceptable behavior (such as uncontrolled barking, jumping on other people, or running away from the handler), or if the animal is not housebroken. Library staff are not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal.

Library staff cannot ask about the nature or extent (i.e., diagnosis, symptoms, severity, etc.) of a person's disability to determine whether a person's animal qualifies as a service animal. However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a service animal, library staff may make two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a service animal, which are:

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

To ensure the safety of all patrons, companion or support animals are not permitted in the library, except as specifically authorized by the Director or their designee.

The Director or their designee will assess requests for the use of trained miniature horses by people with disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be submitted to the Director and, consistent with applicable laws, the Library may modify its policies to permit their use if they meet specific criteria and have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of people with disabilities. In determining whether reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures can be made, the Director shall consider—

- (i) The type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features (Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.);
- (ii) Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;
- (iii) Whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and
- (iv) Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.