

## Columbus State University

### Office of Residence Life

#### Service and Emotional Support Animal Procedures

##### **Definitions:**

##### **Service Animal:**

A “service animal” is an animal that is trained to perform tasks that benefit an individual with a disability. Tasks include but are not limited to guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sound, pulling a wheelchair, or retrieving dropped items. Currently, animals that are recognized as service animals under the American with Disabilities Act are dogs or miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a physical, intellectual, or mental disability.

##### **Emotional Support Animal:**

A “therapy/emotional support animal” (ESA) is an animal that is prescribed by a healthcare or mental health professional to an individual with a disability as part of their treatment plan. A therapy/emotional support animal differs from a service animal in that the animal does not assist the person with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany the individual at all times.

##### **Pet:**

A pet is an animal that is owned for regular use and companionship. A pet is not considered a service animal or a therapy/emotional support animal and therefore is not covered by this policy. Pets are not permitted in University Housing.

##### **Procedures for Notification of bringing a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal**

Students in housing are not required to provide documentation for a service animal, but are asked to provide prior notice to the Center for Accommodation and Access.

Contact should be made with the Center for Accommodation and Access in order for an emotional support animal to be permitted in University Housing and documentation that meets the criteria set by Columbus State University and the University System of Georgia will be required.

##### **Service Animal**

In the event that a student desires the assistance of a service animal, and the need for assistance is not readily apparent, CSU staff may ask the following questions:

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

3. No other questions may be asked.

### **Emotional Support Animal**

In reviewing requests, the Director of the Center for Accommodation and Access will require that the student's licensed health care provider who is familiar with the benefits of an emotional support animal submit a signed letter, on professional letterhead, addressing the following:

1. Verification that the individual has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The criteria for providing documentation can be found on the Center for Accommodation and Access webpage.  
<https://disability.columbusstate.edu/eligibility.php>
2. Demonstrates the connection between the disability and the emotional support animal and that the animal provides support which mitigates at least one identified symptom of the disability.
3. Any additional information the University may reasonably need in order to understand the basis of the professional opinion.

The Center for Accommodation and Access may deny a request for a service animal or emotional support animal if either of the following conditions exists:

1. The specific animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.
2. The specific animal would cause physical damage to the property of the University or others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by a reasonable accommodation.
3. In cases of a request for a miniature horse, if the horse is not housebroken, is not under control of the owner, or if the facility cannot accommodate the type, size, and weight of the horse.

If the Center for Accommodation and Access determines that a reasonable accommodation is necessary, then the Director of the Center for Accommodation and Access will communicate the approved accommodation to the Director of Residence Life.

In cases where an accommodation is made for a service animal, the Center for Accommodation and Access will make a reasonable effort to notify campus officials that the service animal is permitted in all areas of campus except where prohibited for health and safety reasons.

### **Standards for Approved Service or Emotional Support Animals:**

The care of the animal is the sole responsibility of the person who benefits from the animal. The person is responsible for cleanup of all waste and for maintaining control of the animal at all times. CSU will assist with clean-up of waste if student's disability prevents them from doing so.

**Vaccination:** The animal must be vaccinated against disease as recommended by a licensed veterinarian and must provide proof of vaccinations upon the initial request and on an annual basis. All dogs must have a current rabies vaccination and wear a rabies vaccination tag at all times.

**Health:** Proof of good health must be provided by a licensed veterinarian upon initial request and on annual basis. At any time that it is readily apparent that the animal needs veterinary attention, the University may require that the animal receive treatment.

**City Ordinances:** For emotional support animals, all city ordinances must be followed as outlined in the following document: [http://www.columbusga.org/PublicWorks/Animal\\_Control/pdfs/ordinances.pdf](http://www.columbusga.org/PublicWorks/Animal_Control/pdfs/ordinances.pdf) . Proof of city registration of dogs and cats must be provided upon the initial request. It is also recommended that service animal owners follow city ordinances.

**Control of Animal:** The ESA must be on a leash, if appropriate for the animal, at all times when outside of the private living area of the person. Both service animals and ESAs must remain under control of the owner at all times and control may not be transferred to another individual, even momentarily.

**Disruptive Behavior:** An animal may be removed if it howls, yelps, whines, or barks in such a manner as to reasonably disturb any person or if it attacks, bites, injures, snaps, growls, snarls, whines, or jumps upon others without aggressive provocation or any other behavior perceived as threatening. If the animal is a service animal, the student will be allowed to remain on campus without the animal.

**Responsibility for Damages:** The emotional support animal's owner will be held financially responsible for all damages as a result of the animal, including but not limited to pest control, repair or replacement of furnishings or flooring, repair to walls, doors and molding, deep cleaning and odor reduction, stain removal, and damage to all property of others or the University. Within 24 hours of damage, owner is required to submit a report to the Director of Residence Life outlining the incident and resulting damage.

#### **Waste Disposal for Emotional Support Animals:**

**CSU Facilities:** Proper cleanup of waste includes at a minimum, immediate removal of all liquid and solid waste and disposal of waste into an outside waste container. Owners are required to have in their possession appropriate cleaning materials and waste bags when animal is present on university grounds. In the event of an incident and after immediate cleanup is completed, owner is required to notify custodial staff in area or if staff is not readily available, to notify Plant Operations.

**Housing Unit:** Litter boxes and animal habitats must be cleaned daily and kept free from odor. Waste must be placed into an impermeable container and disposed of in an outside container on a daily basis.

**Uncleanliness:** All animals must be kept reasonably clean and free of parasites. Animals must be cleaned and dried from walking in the rain or mud before re-entering the residence. Animals must be groomed regularly as recommended by a licensed veterinarian.

**Areas off Limits:** Emotional support animals are not permitted in or on campus areas outside of University Housing. Emotional support animals are not permitted in indoor public or common areas including but not limited to recreational areas, laundry rooms, and lobbies. Emotional

support animals are not permitted in apartment unit kitchens or living areas except when temporarily necessary as a passageway to the persons private living area.

Service animals may accompany the person as necessary to provide functional support. The University may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health and safety restrictions. These areas may include but are not limited to: custodial closets, food preparation areas, research laboratories, areas where protective clothing is necessary, and areas where the animal may be in danger.

### **Roommates and ESA/Service Animals:**

It is the responsibility of the student requesting an ESA to inform their roommates of the entering ESA. If a roommate is not comfortable with an ESA, the student requesting the ESA will be responsible for finding roommates that comfortable with their ESA within their Apartment or Suite.

**Restricted Housing Areas:** Dogs of any breed are not able to be accommodated in Residence Halls with interior hallways. We will work with students to find proper accommodations in housing areas that can accommodate dogs as ESA's.

**Deadline for notification of bringing an ESA:** August 1 (Fall), January 1 (Spring) and May 1 (summer).

**Boarding:** Animals may not be left alone when the person is traveling and must be crated as appropriate for the animal, when the person is not present in the apartment unit. The owner of the ESA will have contact information on file in the event of an emergency in which the owner is impaired and/or otherwise unable to care for the ESA in order to maintain humane care of the animal. Once emergency contact has been notified, they will have 24 hours to pick up the animal.

**Support Staff Entry Requirements:** The person must be present as requested for preventative and routine maintenance, for residence life health and safety inspections, and for any other purposes when staff must enter the private living area as requested by the Residence Life Office. The person will be given a sticker that they can voluntarily place on the outside of their unit door alerting others that a service or emotional support animal is present within the private living area.

### **Conflicting Disabilities**

Students with a medical condition that is affected by animals should contact the Center for Accommodation and Access for assistance. The individual will be asked to provide documentation for the medical disability and a determination will be made if the person needs an accommodation.

If a student does not have a documented disability, but is uncomfortable residing in a unit where a service or emotional support animal is present, the student may request a room change by contacting the Residence Life Office.

## **Service Animals in Training**

Individuals who provide training for service animals must be a registered agent of an organization that trains service animals and is required to have on his/her person and available for inspection the credentials for the accredited school. Service animals in training in are required to wear a collar, leash, or other appropriate apparel or device that identifies the dog with the accredited school for which the dog is being trained. An animal being trained as a service animal has the same rights as a trained service animal when accompanied by a trainer.

## **Requirements for Faculty, Staff, and other members of the University Community**

Members of the University Community are required to abide by the following guidelines:

- A. Do not ask any questions about the service animal except:
  - a. Is the service animal required due to a disability?
  - b. What tasks does the service animal perform?
- B. Do not inquire for details about a person's disability
- C. Allow a service animal to accompany its owner at all times and in all places on campus except where specifically prohibited for health and safety reasons
- D. Do not touch or pet a service or emotional support animal unless invited to do so.
- E. Do not feed a service or emotional support animal
- F. Do not startle, chase, or intentionally surprise a service or emotional support animal
- G. Do not separate an owner from its service or emotional support animal