

# Animals in the Library Policy

## I. Service Animals

The Two Harbors Public Library strives to provide a safe and welcome environment for everyone. Therefore, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere individuals with disabilities are allowed to enter. Service animals are defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act as being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Pets, therapy dogs, and emotional support animals are not considered service animals under the ADA.

### **Only service animals are allowed in the library.**

- Service animals are only dogs and miniature horses (see below). Therefore, any other type of animal is not allowed in the library.
- Pets, therapy animals, and comfort animals are not allowed in the library.
- Animals in carriers are not allowed in the library.
- Animals in bags or purses are not allowed in the library.

### **How does one know whether or not an animal is a service animal?**

The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division states:

Service animals are defined as dogs 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 a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. (ADA Requirements: Service Animals. (2011, July 12). Retrieved April 30, 2018, from [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm))

If a staff member is unsure of whether or not an animal is a service animal, or it is not obvious what service an animal provides, a staff member is allowed to ask:

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

These two questions are the only questions that a staff member is allowed to ask. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification

card or training documentation for the animal, or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Until our staff get to know a patron with a service animal, staff should be asking the above questions to **any** patron that brings in an animal. To help prevent patrons from feeling interrogated and unwelcome, staff should begin questions with a disclaimer to the effect of, “Until our staff get to know you and your service animal, you may be asked these questions again. I apologize for the inconvenience, but we want to make sure service animals are able to do their job without interference from untrained animals.”

### **When might a patron be asked to leave with an animal?**

Patrons will be asked to leave the library with their animal in the following situations; patrons are still welcome to return to the library without the animal.

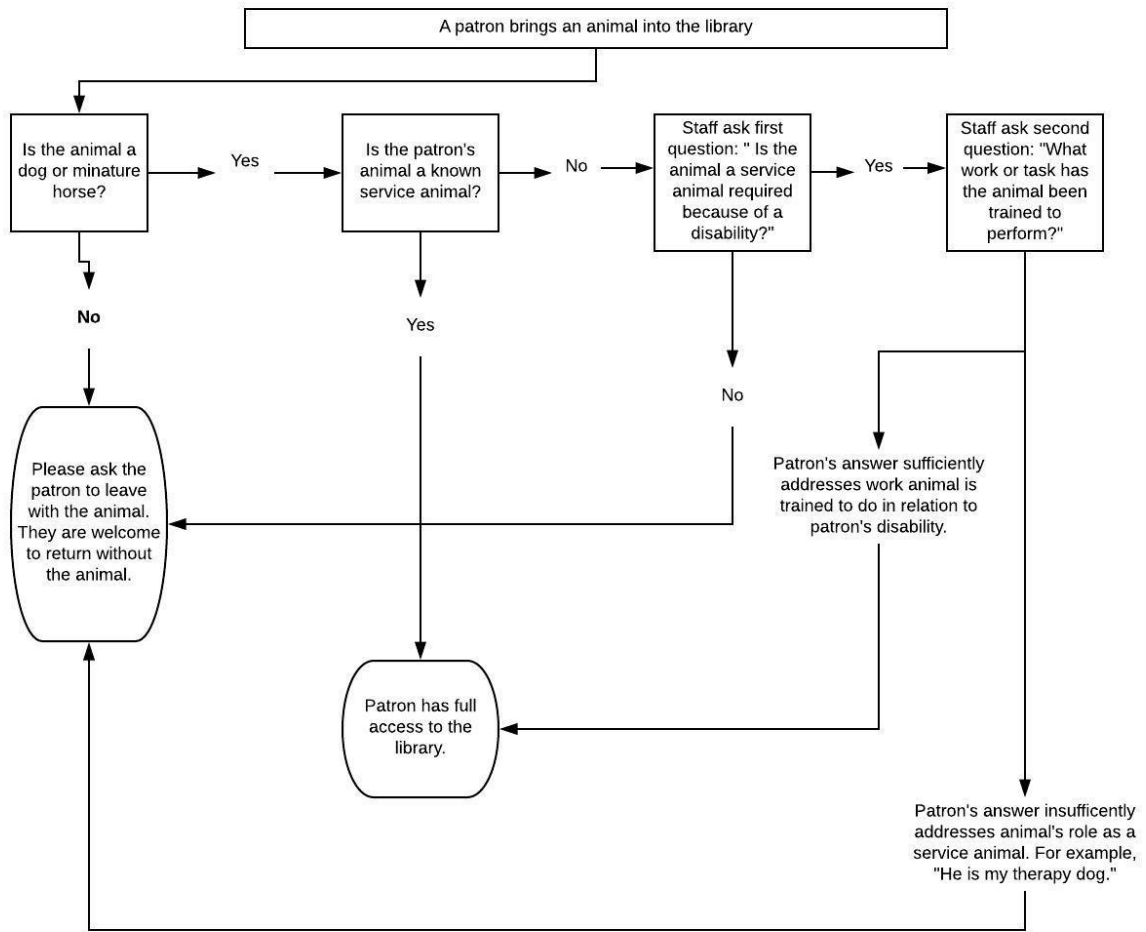
- The animal is not a service dog or service miniature horse.
- If the answer to the question “Is the animal a service animal required because of a disability?” is “no.”
- If the patron provides an insufficient answer to the question, “What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?” An example of an insufficient answer would be, “It is my therapy (or comfort) dog.”
- The service animal is “out of control and the animal’s handler does not take effective action to control it.” (ADA Requirements: Service Animals. (2011, July 12). Retrieved April 30, 2018, from [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm))
- The service “animal is not housebroken.” (ADA Requirements: Service Animals. (2011, July 12). Retrieved April 30, 2018, from [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm))

## **II. Special Exceptions**

The Library may choose to host programs that include the presence of an animal or multiple animals. Examples include, but are not limited to, trained reading therapy dogs, the Zoomobile, and naturalist programs. However, in deference to the needs of the public, as well as the needs of working service animals, these programs will follow these guidelines:

- Each program will have a clearly defined day and time, which will be advertised well in advance.
- The animal(s) will remain in the library’s meeting room.
- A trained handler will accompany the animal(s) at all times.

**Flowchart for easy reference of this policy**



*Adopted December 2018; Revised December 2022*