

UW–Madison Service Animal Policy

Functional Owner: ADA Coordinator, Office of Compliance
Executive Sponsor: ADA Coordinator, Office of Compliance
Policy Contact: ADA Coordinator, Office of Compliance

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University of Wisconsin–Madison that service animals assisting individuals with a disability are generally permitted in all facilities and programs on the UW–Madison campus except as described below.

Definitions

Service Animals: The Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and Wisconsin law define a service animal as a dog or other animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind, alerting individuals with a hearing loss to sounds, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, pulling a wheelchair, or retrieving dropped items. Service dogs or other animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a service dog or animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs or other animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals.

Service Animals in Training: Wisconsin law allows service dogs in training and other service animals in training to be admitted to facilities **open to the public**, unless the presence of the service animal in training would jeopardize the safe operation or fundamentally alter the program, service or activity in the location. Service animals in training must wear a harness OR leash and special cape and remain under the control of the trainer at all times. Service animals-in-training are not protected by the ADA, are not considered a reasonable accommodation for a disability, and are subject to restrictions not placed on fully trained service animals that perform work or tasks for a person with a disability.

Emotional Support Animal (ESA): An ESA is defined as an animal that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability. An emotional support animal is recognized as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability under the federal Fair Housing Act (FHAct, 42 U.S.C.A. 3601 et seq.). An ESA, also referred to as an “assistance” animal, is not a pet according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), however, no special training is required for an animal to be considered an ESA. What is necessary is that the person with an ESA has a disability and the ESA mitigates the impact of the disability enabling the person to living more successfully in the dwelling.

An ESA is only permitted on campus if pre-approved by one of the following offices: University Housing (for approval in on-campus housing); the McBurney Disability Resource Center (students); the Office for Equity & Diversity, Disability Coordinator (employees). Approval is not automatic and requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis consistent with campus policies and legal requirements. Unless expressly authorized by one of the offices above, an ESA is not permitted in University buildings or

outdoors spaces except as permitted under UWS Chapter 18.08. The University Housing [ESA policy](#) is located on the Office of Compliance ADA website.

Therapy Animals: Therapy animals provide affection and comfort to the public, typically in facility settings such as hospitals, retirement homes, schools, or disaster sites. These pets have a temperament suitable for interacting with members of the public and enjoying doing so. A therapy animal, including a therapy animal-in-training, has no special legal rights of access, and are only permitted in facilities where they are welcomed and invited. While the handler may be a person with a disability, the therapy animal does not provide a disability-related service to the handler as its primary activity is interacting with and being attentive to the public, not the handler.

When a Service Animal May Be Asked to Leave, or is Prohibited in a UW–Madison Facility or Program

A service dog or other service animal may be asked to leave a UW–Madison facility or program if the animal’s behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example, a service dog that displays vicious behavior towards people may be excluded.

A service dog or other service animal may also be excluded in areas where the presence of a service animal fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity or is disruptive. Examples may include, but are not limited to, research labs, areas requiring protective clothing, food preparation areas, and primate labs.

Questions related to the use of service animals on campus should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at 608/265-6018 or ada_coordinator@wisc.edu.

Students and Service Dogs or Other Service Animals

Students may choose to have their service animal included as a reasonable accommodation on their disability service plan (VISA) developed with the McBurney Disability Resource Center however this is not required for animals that meet the definition of a service animal. Students who plan to live in a UW Madison apartment or residence hall should contact University Housing regarding making suitable arrangements for housing the service dog or animal.

Employees and Service Dogs or Other Service Animals

Employee requests for disability accommodations, including requests to have a service dog or other service animal at work, are handled through the appropriate disability accommodation policy and procedures (academic staff, classified or faculty). Employees can view these policies at www.oed.wisc.edu/disability and may contact the Office for Equity and Diversity at 608/263-2378 for information and assistance.

Visitors and Service Dogs or Other Service Animals

A service dog or other service animal accompanying an individual with a disability is welcome in all areas of campus that are open to the public (except in situations determined to apply under section 3 above). Specific questions related to the use of service animals on the UW–Madison campus by visitors can be directed to the ADA Coordinator at 608/265-6018 ada_coordinator@wisc.edu.

Appeals and Grievances

Any person dissatisfied with a decision concerning a service animal can use the UW–Madison [ADA Accommodation Requests and Appeal/Grievance Procedures](#).

Campus Resources

Cathy Trueba
ADA Coordinator
361 Bascom Hall
608-265-6018 voice and relay
ada_coordinator@wisc.edu

Mari Magler
Director, McBurney Disability Resource Center
905 University Avenue
608-263-2741 voice
608-263-6393 /cell
mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu

Top Tantivivat
Facilities Access Specialist
Facilities Planning & Management
915 WARF
608-263-3021 voice and relay
top.tantivivat@wisc.edu

Barbara Lanser
Disability Coordinator/Employment
Office for Equity and Diversity
183A Bascom Hall
608-263-2407 voice and relay
barbara.lanser@wisc.edu

Requirements for Service Dogs or Other Service Animals

UW-Madison requires individuals utilizing a service dog or other service animal on campus to adhere to the following City of Madison ordinances.

Vaccination: Service animals must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current.

Licensing: All dogs must be licensed by the time they reach 5 months of age. Service dogs receive the license at no cost [Wis. Stats. 174.055] [M.G.O.23.33(6)(b)].

Owner ID and Other Tags: The City of Madison requires dogs to wear an owner identification tag at all times [M.G.O. 23.33(6) (a)]. The dog must also wear a current rabies tag [M.G.O. 23.39(3)] and dog license tag [M.G.O.23.33 (6)(c)].

Leash: Dogs must be on a leash, harness or tether at all times, unless impracticable or unfeasible due to owner/handler's disability [M.G.O.23.32].

Under Control: The owner/handler of a service dog or other service animal must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service dog or other service animal is solely the responsibility of owner/keeper.

Health: Service dogs or other service animals residing in University Housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.

Other Resources

[U.S. Department of Justice, Information about the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Wisconsin Law Regarding Service Animals in Places of Public Accommodations](#)

[Wisconsin Law Regarding Service Animals in Training](#)

[City of Madison General Ordinances](#)

[Department of Justice FAQ on Service Animals and the ADA](#)

Policy History

Original policy approved on April 28, 1997.

Revised February 15, 1999; June 2005; July 2007; May 2017; December 2017.

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