The Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Affirmative Action ("IDEAA")

Guidelines for Service and Assistance Animals on Georgetown’s Campuses

Georgetown University’s Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Affirmative Action (IDEAA) is responsible for coordinating the University’s compliance with Title III of the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability. ADA compliance is an essential component of the University’s Policies on Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination in Employment and Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination in Education. Georgetown University seeks to accommodate persons with disabilities through IDEAA for faculty, staff, and visitors, as well as through the Academic Resource Center ("ARC") for the Main and Medical campuses, and through the Office of Disabilities Services for the Law Campus.

As part of the University’s commitment to accommodate persons with disabilities, particularly persons who need the assistance of service animals, IDEAA has developed the following guidelines to address service and assistance animal requests and usage on Georgetown University’s three campuses.

Different provisions govern the use of “service animals” and “assistance animals,” depending on the context in which the accommodation is needed. The term “service animal” and the guidelines outlined in more detail below are based upon the provisions outlined in the U.S. Department of Justice’s revised regulations for implementing the ADA for Title II and Title III (for State and Local Governments and Title III requirements for Places of Public Accommodation). These rules govern the availability of a “service animal” as an accommodation in public spaces on campus. For more details on DOJ’s guidance on service animals, please refer to: http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm.

The term “assistance animal” and the guidelines below are based upon the Fair Housing Act ("FHA"). These provisions apply only to residents of University residence
halls. The term “assistance animal” outlined below comes from a 2011 Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity memo. In the context of housing, disabled persons may request a reasonable accommodation for assistance animals in addition to dogs, including emotional support animals under the Fair Housing Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

I. What is a service animal?

- A service animal is a dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go.
- In addition to trained dogs, miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities may be used. (Miniature horses range in height from 24 to 34 inches and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds).
- 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 a mental illness to take prescribed medications
  - Calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack or performing other duties

II. Where are Service Animals allowed on Georgetown’s campuses?

- The University community must allow service animals to accompany persons with disabilities at all times and everywhere on campus, except for places where there is a health, environmental, or safety hazard.
- All University facilities must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go.
- Examples of such areas
  - Libraries
  - Cafeterias, dining areas, restaurants
  - Performing halls, gathering places, classrooms

III. Must service animals be restrained or leashed?

- Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animals’ work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices.
In such instances, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

IV. What questions can be asked of a person with a service animal?
- If there is a reason to question whether an animal accompanying a student, faculty, or visitor to campus is a service animal or if it is not apparent that the animal is a service dog, the only two questions that can be asked are:
  1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
  2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?
- You **MAY NOT** ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card, vest, or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

V. Under what circumstance can a service animal be asked to leave or not allowed participation on Georgetown University’s campuses?
- When the service animal is out of control and the person with a disability does not take effective action to control it.
- When the service animal is not housebroken.
- When the animal’s behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of its owner or others on campus. (Any service animal that displays vicious behavior towards others may be excluded).
  - The dog is aggressive, exceptionally disruptive, or out of control. However, you cannot make assumptions, about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on one’s past experience with other animals. Each situation must be considered individually.
- In those instances where there is a legitimate reason to exclude or remove the service animal, you must give the person with a disability the option to return without the service animal.
- Persons with disabilities who use service animals cannot be isolated from other students, faculty, staff, or patrons or treated less favorably than others.

VI. What happens if the service animal becomes aggressive toward its owner or another member of the University community OR if the owner or others are behaving aggressively towards the service animal OR there is an animal-caused injury to students, faculty, staff or member of the public?
- For the Main and Medical Campuses, call the Department of Public Safety at (202) 687-4343.
• For the Law Center, call the Department of Public Safety at (202) 662-9325.

VII. What happens if someone is allergic to the animal or fears the animal?
• Allergies or fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing services to people using service animals.
• If there are concerns about allergies or the need to accommodate both the person with a service animal and the person with an allergic reaction, on a case-by-case basis, the following offices may be contacted to assist with accommodations:
  o IDEAA for faculty, staff, and visitors
  o ARC for students on the Main and Medical Campuses
  o The Office of Disability Support Services for students on the Law Center

VIII. What if the person is just training a service animal? Must the animal be allowed on Georgetown University’s campuses?
• Under the DC Code (§ 7-1002), you must provide the same access to a service animal trainer who is training an animal to be a service animal as you would a person with a disability who requires the assistance of a service animal.

IX. What is an assistance animal and can students have such animals in the residence halls?
• Under the Fair Housing Act, species other than dogs, with or without training, and animals that provide emotional support have been recognized as necessary assistance animals under the reasonable accommodation provisions of the FHAct and Section 504.
• Under the Fair Housing Act, “an individual with a disability may have the right to have an animal other than a dog in his or her home (University residence hall) if the animal qualifies as a ‘reasonable accommodation’ that is necessary to afford the individual equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, assuming that the animal does not pose a direct threat.”

X. What questions can or cannot be asked of a person with an assistance animal?
• Residence Life cannot ask what a student’s disability is, or about the nature or severity of that condition
• Residence Life cannot ask a student to provide proof of training or certification of the animal.
• However, questions related to a disability may be asked in certain situations, such as when particular units are set aside for priority for those students with disabilities.
• The Academic Resource Center has developed an Emotional Support Animal Policy and further questions about having an assistance animal in the residence halls can be addressed by ARC.
• The Law Center has policies and procedures for students seeking accommodations and further questions about having an assistance animal in the residence hall can be addressed by the Office of Disability Support Services.

XI. What resources are available for students, faculty, and staff who request a service dog or an assistance animal as an accommodation?
• For faculty and staff on all three campuses, please call IDEAA at (202) 687-4798 or email at ideaa@georgetown.edu
• For students on the Main and Medical Campuses who have questions about service or assistance animals, or who may wish to have a therapy animal in the residence halls as an accommodation, please call ARC at (202) 687-8354 or email at arc@georgetown.edu
• For students at the Law Center, please call (202) 662-4042 or email at lmc228@law.georgetown.edu