



Animals in the Library Policy

Baker County Library District (BCLD) recognizes that some patrons with disabilities may have service animals, which are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual. BCLD recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. The district considers the safety and health of all of its patrons, the public and library staff to be of utmost priority. BCLD also recognizes that animals may enhance one's experience in the library whether through involvement in a library program or as companion. This policy aims to establish safe and reasonable accommodation for all our users.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Service animals, service animals in training, small pets and animals other than service animals (see definition below), are allowed in BCLD libraries under the conditions set in this policy.

Small pets and non-service animals must be personally carried or enclosed in a carrier at all times. Caretakers of uncontained or disruptive pets will be asked to remove them from the library.

Individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. All service animals must be under the full custody and control of their handler at all times. Also, all service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times unless the handler is unable to leash or harness the animal because of a disability or use of a leash or harness would interfere with the animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If the service animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means). Owners of the service animals are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal. Therefore, owners must keep the service animal directly with them at all times.

A service animal is defined as: "an animal that is trained for the purpose of assisting or accommodating a person's sensory, mental, or physical disability."

Users of service animals are not required to show papers or to prove a disability. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government or training program, or be identified by a special harness or collar.

Staff may ask if an animal is a pet or a service animal required because of a disability; they can also ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Owners of service animals or service animals in training will indicate that they are working animals and not pets. Terms used may include assistance, service, guide, hearing or helping animal. Staff may not ask about the owner's disability.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his or her service animal or service animal in training from the library unless the presence, behavior or actions of the service animal constitutes an unreasonable risk of injury or harm to property or other persons.

In these cases, library staff should give the person with the disability the option to obtain library services without having the service animal or service animal in training on the premises. Fear of allergies, annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals or service animals in training.

DEFINITIONS (if applicable)

Service Animal: Any animal that is trained for the purpose of assisting or accommodating a person's physical, sensory, or mental disability.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or any abnormal sensory, mental or physical condition that 1) is medically cognizable or diagnosable; 2) exists as a record or history or 3) is perceived to exist.

Date of Origin: 11/16

Date(s) of Revision: