

Service to Patrons with Disabilities

The Du Quoin Public Library offers the same services to patrons with disabilities as to all other segments of the population. In addition to those services, the Du Quoin Public Library acts as facilitator between the patron and Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Policy on Service Animals in Library

The Du Quoin Public Library strives to provide a safe and welcome environment for its patrons. Therefore, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, service animals are allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere the individual with disabilities is allowed to enter. Pets, therapy dogs, and emotional support animals are not considered service animals under the ADA and are not allowed in the library with the exception of animals that are included in programs or events sponsored by the library.

According to the ADA regulations, "Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability." Animals that are for comfort or emotional support are not allowed in the library.

If it is obvious a service animal is performing regulated service tasks, library staff CANNOT challenge the animal's presence. Employees may NOT require documentation such as special ID cards or proof of certification for the animal.

Library staff who question the legitimacy of a service animal's credentials may ask the animal's handler only: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

All service animals are expected to either be on a leash or in the direct control by voice, signals, or other effective means of their handler at all times. Library staff may ask someone to remove their service animal from the library if:

- The service animal's handler does not have complete control of the animal;
- The service animal is not housebroken;
- The service animal directly threatens the health or safety of others;
- The service animal barks excessively;
- The service animal demonstrates aggressive behavior.

In these cases, staff should give the person with the disability the option to obtain materials and services without having the animal on the premises.

Service animals deemed out of control are welcome to return to the library on the condition that the behavior is not an ongoing issue.

Fear, allergies, or annoyance on the part of other patrons or library staff are not valid reasons for denying a service animal entry to the library.

Definitions:

Therapy Animal: A therapy animal is a pet that has been trained, tested, register, and insured to accompany its owner to visit patients, residents of hospitals, nursing homes, and other public facilities. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific disability-mitigating task, they do not qualify as a service animal according to the ADA.

Emotional Support Animal: An emotional support animal or ESA belongs to a person living with a disability. The person's mental health professional has determined that the presence of the animal is necessary for the disabled person's mental health and has written a prescription stating the pet is necessary. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Psychiatric Animal: The ADA makes a distinction between psychiatric service animals and emotional support animals. If the animal has been trained to perform a specific job or task then it would qualify as a service animal. However, if the animal is only providing emotional support it does not qualify as a service animal under the ADA.