

## **University Housing Service and Emotional Support Animals Policy**

Syracuse University is committed to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities who require the assistance of service or emotional support animals. However, the University is also mindful of the health and safety concerns of the campus community. Thus, the University must balance the need of the individual with the disability with the potential impact of the animal on other campus patrons. The successful implementation of the policy requires the cooperation of students and staff.

### **Definitions**

#### **Disability:**

“Disability” is defined as a physical, mental or medical condition or impairment that limits one or more of a person’s major life activities or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques. These limitations may include: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning.

#### **Service Animal:**

A “service animal” is any animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The tasks a service animal provides include but are not limited to: guiding individuals with impaired vision; alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sound; providing minimal (non-violent) protection or rescue work; pulling a wheelchair; assisting an individual during a seizure; or fetching dropped items.

#### **Emotional Support Animal:**

An “emotional support animal” (“ESA”) is an animal that provides comfort to an individual with a disability upon the recommendation of a healthcare or mental health professional. An emotional support animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living but rather its role is to live with a student and alleviate the symptoms of an individual’s disability to provide equal opportunities to use and enjoy residential life at the University.

#### **Pet:**

A pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship unrelated to a disability. A pet is not considered a service animal or an emotional support animal, and therefore, it is not covered by this policy. Students are not allowed to have pets on University property.

## **Responsibility of Persons with Service or Emotional Support Animals**

**Care and Supervision:** Care and supervision of the animal is the sole responsibility of the student who benefits from the animal's use. The student is required to maintain control of the animal at all times. The student is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the animal in areas designated by the University.

**Health and Safety:** The student is responsible to ensure that the health and safety of others is not threatened by a service animal or emotional support animal. Similarly, animals authorized to live in University housing must not interfere with others' enjoyment of the residential space (e.g., by barking, creating an unsanitary condition, etc.). The University reserves the right to request vaccination and licensing information for emotional support animals, but this information will not be requested for service animals.

**Other Conditions:** In response to a particular situation, Syracuse University may impose other reasonable conditions or restrictions, if necessary to ensure the health, safety and reasonable enjoyment of others.

## **Expectations of Faculty, Staff, Students, and Other Members of the University Community**

Members of the University community are expected to abide by the following practices:

1. Allow a service animal to accompany its owner at all times and in all places on campus, except where the presence of the service animal would present an unreasonable threat to health or safety. In extraordinary situations or settings, such as animal research laboratories and areas housing research or teaching animals, it may be necessary to ban service animals. In those situations, the University will work with the individual to determine other options for the individual to receive the benefit of the University's program.
2. Do not touch or pet a service or emotional support animal.
3. Do not feed a service or emotional support animal.
4. Do not deliberately startle a service or emotional support animal.
5. Do not separate or attempt to separate an owner from his or her service or emotional support animal.
6. Do not inquire for details about a person's disabilities. The nature of a person's disability is a private matter.

## **Removal of Service or Emotional Support Animal**

The owner of a service or emotional support animal may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities if the owner or animal fails to comply with this policy. The following describes behaviors which may result in the removal of the animal:

**Disruptive Behavior:** An animal may be removed if its behavior is unruly or disruptive (e.g., barking, growling, damaging University property, jumping on people, taking food from tables, taking or damaging of personal belongings of individuals other than the owner, running around, or displaying aggressive behavior). The owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal on campus until the owner takes significant and effective remedial steps to correct the animal’s behavioral problems.

**Poor Health:** Animals with health conditions that pose a threat to others are not permitted.

**Uncleanliness:** The animal must be kept clean and free of pests. Owners who fail to properly clean up and dispose of the animal’s waste may be required to remove the animal from University property. Owners of animals that are otherwise unclean or unkempt may be required to remove the animal from University property. An animal that becomes wet from walking in the rain or mud, but is otherwise clean, is considered a clean animal.

**Responsibility for Damage and/or Uncleanliness:** Owners of service or emotional support animals are solely responsible for any damage to persons or property caused by their animal. The owner's residence and/or work area may be inspected for physical damage, fleas, ticks, or other pests. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence or work area will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a University-approved pest control service. The owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment. The owner's residence and/or work area may be inspected to ensure it is being properly cleaned and that sanitary and safe conditions are being maintained. If required, the owner will be billed for the expense of the additional cleaning required.

### **Service and Emotional Support Animals in University Housing**

Service and emotional support animals may not reside in University housing without express written approval of University officials.

#### A. Service Animals

If it is readily apparent that the individual has a disability and that the animal is a service animal, no further information will be requested. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a “service animal” such request should be processed as follows:

1. A student requesting to live with a service animal should provide the Office of Disability Services or Housing Office with as much advance notice as possible.
2. An individual may be asked if the service animal is required because of a disability and to explain the work or task that the animal has been trained to perform. The animal will not be required to demonstrate this task and no documentation of training will be required.

## B. Emotional Support Animals

1. A student requesting an emotional support animal should provide the Office of Disability Services and the Housing Office with as much advance notice as possible. A student is not permitted to live with an emotional assistance animal until expressly approved to do so by the Housing Office.
2. The student should provide a signed letter, on professional letterhead, from the person's physical or mental healthcare licensed provider or therapist. The provider or therapist should be familiar with the professional literature concerning the assistive and/or therapeutic benefits of assistance animals for people with disabilities. At a minimum, the letter should include the following items:
  - a. The provider's professional opinion that the individual's condition qualifies as a disability and the basis for that opinion.
  - b. The provider's opinion that the emotional support animal is required to help alleviate symptoms associated with the person's disability and to allow the person use and enjoy University housing services.
  - c. A description of the comfort or assistance that the animal will provide.
3. The Office of Disability Services will review documentation and, if the Office of Disability Services determines a qualifying disability exists, it will forward a recommendation to the Housing Office. A Housing Office staff member will meet with the student requesting that an emotional support animal be housed in University housing. This policy will be carefully reviewed with the person at that time.

### **Service Animals in Areas other than a Residential Unit**

If it is readily apparent that the individual has a disability and that the animal is a service animal, no further information will be requested. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a "service animal", the individual will be asked if the service animal is required because of a disability and to explain the work or task that the animal has been trained to perform. The animal will not be required to demonstrate this task and no documentation of training will be required.

### **Conflicting Disabilities**

The Syracuse University Housing Office will make a reasonable effort to notify students in the residence hall where the animal will be located of the existence of a service or emotional support animal in the building.

Students with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) should contact the Housing Office if they have a health or safety-related concern about exposure to a service or emotional support animal. The individual will be asked to provide medical

documentation that identifies the condition(s), and will allow determination to be made as to whether the condition is disabling and whether there is a need for an accommodation.

The Housing Office will resolve any conflict in a timely manner, considering the conflicting needs and/or accommodations of all persons involved. The Housing Office may use the Health Center as a resource for information on health issues. In the event an agreement cannot be reached, the final decision will be made by Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolution Services.

### **Service Animals in Training**

Syracuse University housing does not allow service animals in training in its facilities.

### **Questions**

Questions or concerns related to this policy should be addressed to:

- Office of Disability Services, 804 University Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13244 email: [odssched@syr.edu](mailto:odssched@syr.edu) phone voice: 315-443-4498, TDD: 315-443-1371, FAX: 315-443-1312
- Housing Office, Steele Hall, Room 206, Syracuse, NY 13244 email: [housing@syr.edu](mailto:housing@syr.edu), phone: 315-443-2721, FAX 315-443-5188
- Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolution Services, Steele Hall, Room 005, Syracuse, NY 13244; email: [butlerdl@syr.edu](mailto:butlerdl@syr.edu); phone: 315-443-5367; FAX 315-443-5021

Consulted with websites from University of Minnesota, Catholic University of America, NACUA Notes, Brigham Young University, Eckerd College, Clemson University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Cornell University, and Columbia University.

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