

Animals in the library policy

Marion Public Library recognizes that some patrons 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.

Marion Public Library recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. The library also considers the safety and health of all of its patrons, the public and library staff to be of utmost priority.

Patrons are not permitted to bring emotional support animals, therapy animals, comfort animals, companion animals, or other animals into any library building except for the following:

Service Animals (service animals in training):

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person with a disability is allowed to bring their service animals into 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 always under the full custody and control of their handler. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, with feet on the ground unless these devices interfere with the service animals' work or the owner's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the service animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. Owners of the service animals are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animals. Therefore, owners must always keep the service animal directly with them. Service animals should be housebroken, and owners must notify staff regarding cleanup if animals if mishaps occur. Service animals are not allowed on library furniture or fixtures, or in library baskets or carts, and must remain on the floor or be carried (as appropriate) by their handlers at all times.

A service animal is defined as an animal "that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability." The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person's 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 inquire about the presence of animals in the library by asking the following two questions:

1. Is the dog (animal) a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

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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. Any animal identified as a service animal must be admitted.

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.

Library-Sponsored Programs

The library may choose to offer educational programs for the public that include various animals. Such animals are permitted in the library building for the duration of the program and must be accompanied by the owner at all times.

Violation of Policy

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 in training in the building.

Dogs whose only function is to provide comfort or emotional support (emotional support animals) are not considered service animals under ADA. Emotional support animals, and all other animals, are not permitted in the library, unless special permission has been granted for programming purposes.

In accordance with library policy, if a pet is brought into the premises, owners will be directed to utilize curbside service for book delivery or relocate their pets outside the library building. Owners of pets are required to ensure their animals are on a leash, supervised, and any waste is promptly cleaned up after. Owners must keep their animals from obstructing access to or from the library premises.

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