



**I. Purpose**

It is the Policy of the Stoughton Public Library to prohibit all animals from entering the library, with the exception of service animals and animals featured in programs sponsored by the Stoughton Public Library.

**II. Definitions**

A service animal is any animal that is individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

If animals meet this definition, they are considered service animals under the ADA and regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

**III. Guidelines**

The only persons permitted to bring service animals into the Library are persons who require the assistance of such an animal and service animal trainers. All service animals must remain under a responsible person's control and on a leash at all times.

**IV. Animal Owner Responsibilities**

The care or supervision of any service animal is solely the responsibility of his or her owner, including the prevention or remediation of any damage to library property caused by the animal. All service animals must remain under a responsible person's control, on a leash, within arm's reach of the owner at all times. Even service animals will be excluded from the Library if:

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it. For example, a dog that barks repeatedly, or engages in similar actions.
2. The animal poses a threat to the health or safety of others. For example, a dog that displays vicious behavior towards others, or engages in similar actions.

3. In the opinion of the senior Library staff present, the animal disrupts the normal operation of the Library. For example, a dog that engages in disruptive play, or similar actions.

Each situation should be considered individually.

If a service animal is excluded from the Library for any of the above reasons, the individual who uses the service animal has the option of continuing to use the Library without having the service animal on the premises.

## **V. Library Responsibilities**

Library employees may ask if an animal is a service animal required because of a disability, and ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. These questions should not be asked, however, if the animal's service tasks are obvious. Employees cannot require special ID cards for animals or ask about person's disabilities, e.g. "Are you blind?" or "Are you under a physician's care for this?"

Library staff may NOT ask to see documentation or proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal.

Allergies or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access to the Library facility or refusing Library service to people with service animals.

People with disabilities who use service animals may not be isolated from other patrons or employees or treated less favorably than other patrons or employees.

Library staff may not make assumptions about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on past experiences with other animals. Each animal must be considered individually.

The Library is not required to provide care or food for a service animal or provide a special location for the animal.

First Approved: 3-21-12

Revised: 10-19-16

Revised: 10-16-19

Revised: 8-20-25