



Animals in the Library

The Kent Free Library recognizes that some patrons with disabilities may have service animals, which are trained to perform specific tasks to assist or accommodate a person with a physical, sensory, or mental disability. Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 'public accommodations', including public libraries, requires the library to allow service animals in to areas of the library where members of the public are permitted. The library acknowledges the legal rights under federal and state law regarding use of service animals. The library also considers the safety and health of all its patrons, the public and library staff to be a priority.

A service animal is defined as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. As of 2011, animals other than dogs, except for trained miniature horses subject to certain limitations, do not qualify as service animals according to federal law. Dogs that are used purely for emotional support are not considered service animals in terms of public accommodations.

No pets or animals, other than service animals, are allowed in Kent Free Library with the exception of animals that are included in a program or event sponsored by the library or library staff. Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from the building.

Library staff has the right to ask the animal's handler (1) if the animal is a pet and (2) what task has the animal been trained to perform. However, the handler is not required to produce documentation about the service animal or to prove a disability. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified, or be identified by a special harness or collar. Service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times, unless the use of a leash or harness interferes with animal's effective performance of its task. If the animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be under the handler's control via voice, signals or other effective means at all times.

The library may ask that a service animal vacate the premises if the animal is not under the direct control of its handler or if the animal is not housebroken. In addition, library staff may ask a service animal to be removed from the building if its behavior is a direct threat to the health or safety of others. In these cases, library staff should give the option to obtain library services without the animal on the premises. Fear, allergies, or annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees are not considered valid reasons for denying access to people with service animals.