

Assistance Animals on Campus—Procedures and Guidance

Introduction

The information below explains Iowa State University's (ISU) general information and procedures related to the use of 'Assistance Animals' in providing disability accommodations to students, faculty, staff, and visitors in university buildings and on university property. The underlying "[Assistance Animals](#)" policy is located in ISU Policy Library.

ISU is committed to assuring that its programs are free from discrimination and harassment based upon protected classes, including physical or mental disability.

Definitions

In order to understand this policy and related procedures, it is important to have a clear understanding of the terms referenced. Below find several key definitions.

Assistance animal is a term that refers to any animal providing accommodations to individuals with disabilities. This term covers a broad category of animals that includes 'Service Animals' and 'Emotional Support/ Comfort / Therapy/ Companion' animals. Assistance animals are not pets.

Service animal is a dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to perform tasks or work for the benefit of a person with a disability. That work must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Emotional support animal (also referenced as "Comfort", "Therapy", or "Companion" animals) are any species of animal providing emotional support, well-being, or comfort that eases one or more identified symptoms or effects of a disability.

Pet is any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship.

Resident is any ISU student residing in university housing and/or paying guests registered for university guest or conference housing operated by the Department of Residence (DOR).

Making a Request to have an Assistance Animal on Campus

All assistance animals must be authorized to be on ISU campus as indicated below.

- **Student and visitor** accommodation requests will be reviewed/assessed by Student Disability Resources (SDR) consistent with applicable laws and policies. SDR can be contacted by phone at 515.294.7220 or by email at disabilityresources@iastate.edu. Information for students and visitors regarding documentation requirements for Assistance Animals is available online at: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/doc/assistance-animals-on-campus>
- **Employee** accommodation requests will be reviewed by University Human Resources Employee Relations/Labor Relations (UHR ER/LR). Questions pertaining to an employee's assistance animal (including requests to use a service animal as an accommodation) may be directed to UHR ER/LR at 515.294.4800 or 877.477.7485.

Determination of Eligibility-- Approval of Possession of Assistance Animals Made by SDR or ER/LR

SDR is responsible for reviewing all student and visitor requests to have Assistance Animals on campus. UHR ER/LR is responsible for reviewing all employee requests to have Service Animals on campus.

University faculty and staff should **not** attempt to determine whether an animal is an emotional support or a service animal. Just as it is inappropriate for faculty or staff to inquire into the nature of an individual's disability, faculty and staff should similarly refrain from inquiring into or making preliminary determinations regarding the appropriateness of an assistance animal's presence on campus. The law limits what types of inquiries may be made when a person presents with a service animal. The University's policy is to direct a faculty or staff member to contact SDR if they have questions or concerns about an apparent assistance animal belonging to a student or visitor and to contact UHR ER/LR when the person with the apparent assistance animal is an employee. Only SDR (for students and visitors) and UHR ER/LR (for employees) shall guide the legally required interactive process for making the appropriate determinations for eligibility and granting approval or denying of requests for possession of assistance animals on campus.

Service Animals on Campus

Approved service animals are generally permitted to accompany people with disabilities on all university properties where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are allowed, in buildings/facilities.

Assistance Animals Living on Campus

Approved assistance animals are permitted in assigned university housing units consistent with the Assistance Animals policy and these procedures established by SDR and DOR. Prior to bringing an assistance animal into university housing, residents are required to submit certain documentation (2 separate documents) which be completed by the student and a licensed healthcare provider. These documents can be obtained online at:

<http://www.housing.iastate.edu/contracts/requests.html#process> and by clicking on the 'Director's Letter' link at <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/student> .

Residents requesting to have an assistance animal reside with them in university housing must submit a request at least thirty (30) days **prior to** the assistance animal's arrival to assure there is sufficient time to review their request. Requests for assistance animal placement in university housing submitted less than thirty (30) days prior to the resident's arrival at the university may not be fulfilled prior to occupancy.

For purposes of processing a request for an assistance animal to reside in university housing, residents must complete the forms and provide the supporting documentation required by SDR and DOR. For an emotional support animal, the supporting documentation may include, for example, written verification from a health care provider indicating that the student has a disability and that the resident needs the emotional support animal as an accommodation.

Residents requesting either emotional support animals or service animals be permitted to live with them in their assigned university housing unit may also be required to provide verification of required vaccinations, where applicable.

The availability and adequacy of student housing appropriate for accommodating assistance animals within university housing is limited. A resident with a verified disability requiring an assistance animal

will be given equal consideration as a student with any other verified disability for special room assignments (e.g., requests for a single room; rooms on the ground floor; etc.). Any special room assignments that are granted will be billed to the student at the scheduled rate for that room type.

All requests for assistance animal placement in university housing will be processed on a case-by-case and first-come-first-served basis. Under most circumstances, only one assistance animal is allowed per resident. The university reserves the right to deny a request or revoke an accommodation for an assistance animal placement in university housing, if the accommodation would impose an undue financial or administrative burden or conflicts with City of Ames Municipal Code requirements.

Information about an individual's disability will not be shared with other students. However, appropriate SDR and DOR staff, potential roommates, and community members may be notified of the potential placement of an assistance animal to ensure they are not adversely affected by its presence (e.g., to ensure no nearby students or floor staff have severe allergies) or have other health/safety concerns that may be raised by residing in close proximity to an assistance animal. Students with concerns about being in a room/suite/apartment with an assistance animal will be expected to engage in an interactive process to resolve conflicts.

An approved assistance animal will be permitted to reside and stay with its owner in university housing. This includes the assigned room/suite/apartment and any common areas within the building where the room assignment is located.

General Responsibilities for the Care and Well-being of All Assistance Animals on Campus

ISU is not responsible for the care or supervision of any assistance animal on campus.

People with disabilities using assistance animals on campus are wholly and personally responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of their assistance animals. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Proper care for the assistance animal. The assistance animal must receive appropriate food and water. It must receive appropriate medical attention including care for injuries and illness. It may not be abused or neglected by its owner or be permitted to be abused or neglected by others.
- Maintain control of the assistance animal and take timely and effective action when it is out of control (e.g., ensure the animal is not creating a nuisance such as constant barking, or destroying personal property).
- Comply with all applicable state and local laws pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification.
- Comply with all general university rules regarding noise, safety, disruption, and cleanliness.
- Proper disposal of the assistance animal's waste. Waste disposal via university plumbing is prohibited in university buildings, including campus housing. University staff can provide guidance on how to appropriately dispose of animal waste.

ISU does not impose any surcharges or fees related to possession of assistance animals. However, a person with a disability may be charged for damage caused to university property by an assistance animal to the same extent that ISU would normally charge a person if they caused the damage. Additionally, a person with an assistance animal may be personally liable for any damage to person or

property their assistance animal causes to third parties (e.g., personal injury resulting from a bite; damage to a roommate's personal property). In the event that the University must take temporary possession of an animal fees for boarding and/or medical treatment of the animal may be assessed (see the section on Emergencies below).

General Inquiries

Individuals with general questions or non-emergent concerns may contact the following offices for help or information regarding assistance animals on campus.

Student Questions about Assistance Animals on Campus. Any student with questions pertaining to assistance animals (including requests for accommodations) may contact Student Disability Resources at 515.294.7220 or by email at disabiltyresources@iastate.edu . Information for students and visitors regarding documentation requirements for Assistance Animals is available online at: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/doc/assistance-animals-on-campus>

Employee Questions about Assistance Animals on Campus. Any employee with questions pertaining to assistance animals (including requests to use a service animal as an accommodation) may contact University Human Resources – Employee Relations/Labor Relations at 515.294.4800 or 877.477.7485.

Questions about Assistance Animals Living on Campus. Any individual with questions pertaining to assistance animals living on campus must complete a 'Housing Accommodation Request Form' (see <http://www.housing.iastate.edu/contracts/requests.html>) and appropriate documentation from a licensed healthcare provider(see <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/doc/assistance-animals-on-campus>). Contact the Department of Residence at 515.294.7612 or Student Disability Resources at 515.294.7220.

Concerns about Assistance Animals on Campus. Any individual adversely affected by the presence of an assistance animal on campus (e.g., allergies, phobia, specific concerns about a specific assistance animal) should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at 515.294.7612.

Emergencies

Emergencies related to Assistance Animals. Contact the ISU Police Department by dialing 911 immediately for **any** emergent health or safety concerns related to any animal posing a direct threat to the health or safety of **anyone** on campus.

Emergency Situations related to Assistance Animal owners. If a student, employee, or visitor with an assistance animal experiences a medical emergency, the university may take temporary possession and control of the assistance animal until such time as the individual, or designee, can retrieve the animal.

Resolving Concerns

ISU is committed to ensuring that the needs of all people with disabilities are met and will determine how to resolve any conflicts or problems as expeditiously as possible. Any individuals with concerns about an assistance animal on campus will be expected to engage in an interactive process to resolve conflicts.

Students should engage SDR in its interactive disability accommodation process to resolve any concerns related to disability accommodation requests involving service animals. Additional information is

available from the SDR website: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/grievance> or by contacting an SDR staff member at 515.294.7220.

Faculty and Staff should engage UHR ER/LR in its interactive disability accommodation process to resolve any concerns related to disability accommodation requests involving service animals.

Visitors are free to contact either The Office of Equal Opportunity or SDR with concerns regarding assistance animals.

Current and prospective students, employees, visitors, and guests may file disability discrimination complaints related to a request for or utilization of an assistance animal or to challenge a decision reached by SDR or UHR ER/LR by contacting ISU's Office of Equal Opportunity at 515.294.7612 or email at: eooffice@iastate.edu. The website for ISU's Office of Equal Opportunity is: <http://www.eoc.iastate.edu/>. If the Office of Equal Opportunity denies your complaint then you may not use the animal for the requested service.

Resources

Legal References

- Title I & II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (the *Fair Housing Act*)
- Iowa Code Section 216.8A
- Ames Municipal Code, Chapter 3, Sections 3.107 (Rabies Vaccination) & 3.110 (Rabies Tags)

Links

- [Policy—Assistance Animals on Campus \(ISU Policy Library\)](#)
- [681 IAC 13.18 Animals on Campus](#)
- [Animals on Campus](#)
- [Animals at Events](#)
- [Student Disability Resources](#)
- [Environmental Health and Safety](#)
- [Department of Residence](#)
- [University Human Resources \(UHR\) Employee/Labor Relations](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity](#)
- [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)