

SERVICE ANIMAL GUIDE

PPL does not allow pets in our facilities. PPL acts in compliance with Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) law and local ordinance. This policy and protocol is based on the law pertaining to Service Dogs updated on September 28, 2011 that defines **dogs only***. The law was further updated in October 2016 under LD 1601 which makes it a civil offense to “knowingly misrepresent” an animal as a service or assistance animal, punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine.

Some clarification of the different definitions of animals:

Service Dogs are individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.

Service Dogs in Training - Under Maine law, an official Service Dog trainer, while engaged in training of Service Dogs, has the same rights, privileges and responsibilities to public facilities.

Assistance/Therapy/Emotional support animal is an animal that provides a therapeutic benefit to its owner through companionship. Unlike a Service Dog, such animals are pets, do not qualify as Service Dogs under the ADA, and are not granted access to public places.

Admittedly, determining the qualifications of a service animal is challenging because it requires sensitive and legally defined questioning. **We cannot ask for documentation** about certification or license, which is a violation of the Maine Human Rights Act, nor ask about the nature of a person’s disability. However, it is the Library’s right and responsibility to know the information below.

When a person comes into the Library with a dog:

- 1. Greet them and inform them that “the Library has a strict no pet policy.”** Simply stated.
 - If the patron requests just to take a moment to do library business, say:
“You will have to leave the animal outside.” They can certainly leave an item they want to return with you or in an outside book drop.
 - If the patron says their dog is a therapy animal, say:
“I’m sorry. ADA law defines therapy animals as pets and the Library doesn’t allow pets.”
 - If the patron says their dog is a Service Dog or if you’re not sure, you can say:
“I’ll call my colleague who can talk with you about how we can accommodate you.”
Call Public Safety, so they know about the dog and can check-in with the patron.

2. **ADA law allows us to ask the owner only these two specific questions** to determine if the animal is a Service Dog. You can first ask the patron if they prefer to talk here or move somewhere more discreet.
- **“Is the animal required because of a disability?”**
 - **“What work or task has your dog been trained to perform?”**
Service Dogs are individually trained to perform a task(s) for their owner with a disability. If the patron refuses to answer this question, we may interpret that as non-confirmation of the dog’s status and refuse entry.

3. **Service Dogs must be leashed, except under very specific terms**
Under the ADA, Service Dogs must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the specific task the Service Dog must do, or the owner’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the owner must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. Guideline for leash length is 8-feet by City of Portland ordinance for the safety of all – the owner, the dog, and other patrons.

Other expectations we have about Service Dogs in the Library:

- Dogs may not be on furniture and must be as close as possible to the owner’s side. The dog cannot create a hazard or block a passageway. These requirements are for the safety of all.
- The Library reserves the right to require that a Service Dog be removed from the premises if it is a direct threat to the health or safety of others, if it would result in damage to the property of the Library or others, or if the dog substantially interferes with the enjoyment of the Library by others. A dog that barks or nips must immediately leave the Library.
- Owners must alert staff about any dog ‘accident’ and will be expected to clean up after them, unless impossible. The Library will supply cleaning materials.
- If the dog is in a location near a person with an allergy to dogs, we will ask both the owner and the affected person to re-locate in the Library, however, we cannot require the owner to move.

Misrepresentation of a Service Dog is a violation of state law and punishable with a \$1,000 fine; failure to clean up after an animal is a violation of City Ordinance.

*The only exception to animals other than trained Service Dogs being allowed in the Library is for a Library-offered and -sponsored program (e.g., reading to animals in the Children’s Library). There is also a federal law which allows for Service Miniature Horses individually trained to do similar tasks as Service Dogs.