Bethlehem Public Library

Animal Policy

Policy

The Bethlehem Public Library welcomes service animals under guidelines set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Certified therapy dogs are also invited into its facilities for special programs. Pets are not permitted in the library.

Definitions

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as an animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. Its tasks must be directly related to its owner's disability, such as guiding the blind, pulling a wheelchair, or alerting someone to a seizure. Emotional support, comfort or companion animals which have not been trained as a service animal to perform specific job tasks do not qualify as service animals.

A therapy dog provides emotional support to more than one person and has undergone therapy training, temperament evaluations and obedience training through a recognized dog therapy organization.

Guidelines

1. **With the exception of animals approved by the Library Director for use in specific library programs,** members of the public may only enter the library with an animal if it is a service animal in accordance with the ADA.
2. Owners must show proof of all up-to-date vaccinations.
3. If it is not obvious that the animal brought into the library is a service animal, a staff member may ask the following questions:
    a. Is the animal required because of a disability?
    b. What specific task has the animal been trained to perform?
4. Library staff attempting to ascertain whether an animal is a service animal will never ask about the nature of a person's disability.

Program Animals

1. Animals used for special programs must be pre-approved by the Library Director.
2. Handlers must provide the following documentation in advance of the program:

    a. Proof of liability insurance
    b. Membership card, official certificate or letter of registration from a recognized therapy organization
    c. Up-to-date vaccination records, including rabies vaccination and a negative fecal exam
3. Therapy dog handlers must wear an ID badge with an ID number from the registering organization on a lanyard.
4. Therapy dogs must wear an ID tag on its collar or harness, or a vest or bandana showing the logo of the registering organization.
5. Therapy dogs must be on a standard leash. Retractable leashes are prohibited during the visit.