SERVICE/ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY IN UNIVERSITY HOUSING

Policy Statement

The University provides reasonable accommodations to housing residents with a documented disability. This Policy governs the use of service and assistance animals in University housing.

Definition

Service animals are defined by the University’s Service Animal Policy and users shall follow that policy.

Assistance animal:
Under federal regulations, a person may keep an assistance animal in his or her dwelling unit as a reasonable accommodation if:

A. The person has a disability;
B. The animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; and
C. There is an identifiable relationship or nexus between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

Under federal regulations the animals ameliorative affects must be reasonably supported and the University may reject an animal that:

A. Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
B. Would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others;
C. Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden;
D. Would fundamentally alter the nature of housing operations.

Service/Assistance Animal Requirements

A person who has a service/assistance animal on campus (including in University Housing) is financially responsible for property damage caused by his or her animal.

Approval Process

A. A resident desiring use of a service/assistance animal in University Housing must identify and register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) in advance, at least 30 days before housing for the animal is needed, and provide the following documentation:

1. Documentation of a disability;
2. A signed letter, on professional letterhead, from the individual’s health care provider stating:
   • The nature of the disabling condition or impairment; and
   • The provider’s professional opinion regarding the relationship between the disability and the service/assistance that will be performed by the animal.

   The University reserves the right to request additional clarification or documentation.

B. The RCPD will validate the need for approved accommodations and work with the resident and campus officials to facilitate a supportive network.

Policy Exceptions

Individuals wishing to request a modification or exception to this policy as a reasonable accommodation should contact the RCPD.

Dispute Resolution Procedure

Disputes or disagreements about a disability determination, appropriateness of an accommodation, service/assistance quality, or an animal restriction should first be raised with the RCPD specialist involved. If the matter cannot be resolved, a dispute resolution should be submitted to RCPD. Individuals may also file a written complaint with Tracy Leahy, Deputy ADA Coordinator for Grievances,
Office of Institutional Equity, 4 Olds Hall, phone (517) 353-3922, email tleahy@msu.edu.

**Policy Implementation**

The RCPD is responsible for implementing this policy. Success requires the cooperation of all students, staff and faculty.