

## SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

It is the policy of Cedar Crest College to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the use of Service Animals (SAs) on campus. Under federal and state laws, individuals with disabilities who use SAs, or trainers of such animals, in Pennsylvania are entitled to equal opportunity in all aspects of employment and education, as well as equal access to and treatment in all public accommodations, housing accommodations or commercial property without discrimination.

### Definition of Service Animal

A Service Animal is defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability (physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability). Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks.
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds.
- Providing non-violent protection or rescue work.
- Pulling a wheelchair.
- Assisting an individual during a seizure.
- Alerting individuals to the presence of allergens.
- Alerting individuals to blood sugar issues.
- Reminding individuals to take medication.
- Retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone.
- Providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities.
- Helping individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship are not considered work or tasks under the definition of a service animal.

The College may allow a person with a disability to bring a miniature horse on the premises as long as it has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability. The College may, however, consider whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse based on the horse's type, size, and weight. The rules that apply to service dogs also apply to miniature horses.

### Service Animal Access

Service Animals are permitted across all College facilities for persons with disabilities, including buildings, classrooms, residence halls, dining areas, and recreational facilities. However, Service Animals

are not allowed in the pool as the ADA does not override public health rules that prohibit dogs in swimming pools. However, service animals must be allowed on the pool deck and in other areas where the public is allowed to go. Service Animals may not be permitted if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity, or is disruptive. A service animal can be excluded from a facility if its presence interferes with legitimate safety requirements of the facility (e.g., from a surgery or burn unit in a hospital in which a sterile field is required). The accompaniment of an individual with a disability by a Service Animal in location with health and safety restrictions (food preparation areas, laboratories etc.) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with representatives from that specific department.

### **Control of Service Animal**

The ADA requires that service animals be under the control of the handler at all times. In most instances, the handler will be the individual with a disability. The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair may use a long, retractable leash to allow her service animal to pick up or retrieve items. She may not allow the dog to wander away from her and must maintain control of the dog, even if it is retrieving an item at a distance from her. Or, a returning veteran who has PTSD and has great difficulty entering unfamiliar spaces may have a dog that is trained to enter a space, check to see that no threats are there, and come back and signal that it is safe to enter. If the dog must be off leash to do its job, it must be leashed at other times. Under control also means that a service animal should not be allowed to bark repeatedly in a lecture hall, theater, library, or other quiet place.

Handlers who bring a Service Animal on campus must follow all state and local requirements regarding the animal's presence on campus including vaccination, licensure and identification requirements. The City of Allentown requires all dogs over the age of three months to have rabies vaccinations. In addition, resident handler's (living in Lehigh County) must have their dogs licensed through the County.

### **Removal of Service Animal**

A handler may be asked to remove a service animal if the animal if:

- The animal is in a College building and does not meet the definition of a service animal or service dog in training.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage.
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the College community.
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a College program.
- The animal's handler does is not able to control the animal.
- The animal's handler does not pick up the animal's waste and dispose of it properly.
- The animal is not clean or in good health (poor hygiene, ill, abused etc.).
- The handler takes the animal into areas previously identified as restricted.

- The animal's handler does not follow federal, state and local ordinances/laws/regulations with regard to owning a dog. The owner is responsible for understanding and becoming familiar with these ordinances/laws/regulations.

Please note that if a Service Animal is removed from campus housing for any of the aforementioned reasons, the handler is still expected to fulfil housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

### **Voluntary Registration**

Cedar Crest College does not have a volunteer Service Animal registration program. Therefore, it is recommended the handler has the animal wear a contact tag on its collar in case the animal becomes separated from the handler for any reason.

### **Service Animals in Campus Housing**

If a student is planning to live in on-campus housing with a Service Animal, the student must notify the Director of Learning & Disability Resources in advance of the student residing on campus. Such notification allows the Director to work with Residence Life in order to assign the most appropriate housing location in consideration of both the student's and animal's needs. A request for housing with a Service Animal does not require documentation of disability; however, the handler (student owner) of an SA living in campus housing must provide a Certificate of Health from the treating veterinarian indicating the SA is in good health and that the animal has the vaccinations required by state and local ordinances/laws/regulations. In addition, the animal should be licensed by Lehigh County if the student is a permanent resident or licensed according to the individual's County of permanent residence. The animal must have all licenses and vaccinations as required by the City of Allentown. The SA must wear rabies/licensing tags. It is recommended, but not required, that SAs living on campus also wear a contact tag so the handler may be contacted in the event the animal is separated from the handler.

Service Animals should be with handlers at all times. However, on occasion, the handler may need to leave the animal in campus housing (animal is ill). Service animals may not be left in campus housing, without the handler, for longer than eight hours or left without the handler overnight. If the handler must leave campus overnight, the animal should accompany the handler or the handler should make arrangements for the animal to be cared for off-campus.

Handlers of Service Animals living in campus housing will be required to provide an off-campus emergency contact in case the handler becomes indisposed (for example, unexpected hospitalization) and is unable to care for the animal for a period of time. If, for any reason, the emergency care-taker is unwilling or unable to care for the animal, the animal will be boarded at the handler's expense.

Responsibilities for handler's living in on-campus housing and expectations for animal behavior will be discussed with the student prior to the animal living the residence halls. Questions about these responsibilities and expectations should be directed to the Director of Learning and Disability Resources.

### **Conflicting Disabilities**

Students with medical condition(s) that are exacerbated by animals (respiratory diseases, reactive airway diseases such as asthma, and/or severe allergies) should contact the Director of Learning & Disability Resources if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to a Service Animal. The student and Director will complete the interactive process (Self-Disclosure Meeting & supplemental documentation) to determine whether or not the student has a need for accommodations and what accommodations would be reasonable and appropriate given the nature of the student's condition and situation.