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## **SERVICE ANIMALS POLICY**

### **.1 GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Washington Law regarding the presence of service or assistance animals in Clallam County facilities. The policy defines various types of service/assistance animals and provides guidance for Clallam County employees regarding the rights of citizens and fellow employees who have service animals. Behavioral guidelines for service animals are set forth to protect citizens and staff while they participate in services and programs within County facilities. Pets are prohibited from being brought into the Courthouse, Juvenile and Family Services, and other Clallam County facilities.

### **.2 APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all County offices/departments and agencies and to all elected and appointed County Officials, their employees, volunteers, and visitors of Clallam County facilities unless otherwise governed by statute, County ordinance, or policy.

### **.3 DEFINITIONS**

#### **3.1 Service Animal**

The ADA defines a service animal or assistance animal as “any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” Services include, but are not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

Any animal meeting this definition for an individual with a disability is considered a service animal regardless of whether it is licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program. If there are questions about whether an animal is a service animal or for questions regarding disabilities, contact the Human Resources staff for assistance.

#### **3.2 Fully Socialized**

To be fully socialized means the animal will not, except under rare occasions, bark, yip, growl or make disruptive noises; will have a good temperament and disposition; will not show fear; will not be upset or agitated when it sees another animal; and will not be aggressive. The service animal must be fully housebroken.

### 3.3 Pet

A pet is a domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. Pets are not permitted in County facilities.

### 3.4 Partner/Handler

A person with a service animal where a partner is a person with a disability and a person without a disability is a handler.

### 3.5 Team

A person with a disability, or a handler and his or her service animal is a team. The twosome works as a cohesive team in accomplishing the task of everyday living.

### 3.6 Trainee

An animal undergoing training to become a service animal is a trainee.

## .4 GENERAL POLICY

Clallam County allows service animals to accompany persons with disabilities in Clallam County facilities accessible to the public. Disabled employees may have service animals in the facilities in places where they would have normal access in the performance of their duties provided the safety of the team or other employees is not jeopardized. Employees must register their service animals with the Human Resources Department.

Pets are prohibited in County facilities except as may be allowed at the Clallam County Fair per rules established by the Public Works Department, or Clallam County Park per rules established by the Board of Clallam County Commissioners.

## .5 TYPES OF GUIDE DOGS

5.1 A carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool for persons with severe visual impairments or are blind.

### 5.2 Hearing Dog

A dog who has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound, e.g., knock on the door, occurs.

### 5.3 Service Dog

A service dog has been trained to assist a disabled person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of tasks the dog may perform include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after a fall, etc. Service dogs are sometimes called assistance dogs.

### 5.4 SSig Dog

SSig dog is a "Social Signal" dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog may alert the partner of distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (e.g., hand flapping). Recognizing familiar persons in a crowd, steering around a mud puddle, or responding to others' social signals are possible roles for a SSig Dog. A person with autism may have problems with sensory input and need the same support services from a dog it might give to a person who is blind or deaf.

### 5.5 Seizure Response Dog

A dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. How the dog serves the person depends on the person's needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure or go for help. Some seizure response dogs are able to predict seizures and warn the person in advance.

## .6 SERVICE ANIMAL ETIQUETTE

- a. Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on County facilities except where strictly prohibited.
  - b. Do not pet a service animal without the permission of the partner/handler; petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts it from its duties.
  - c. Do not feed a service animal. It may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill.
  - d. Do not deliberately startle a service animal or attempt to separate the partner/handler from them.
  - e. Employees who require a service animal must notify their supervisor and register the animal with the Human Resources Department. Human Resources may require that the employee submit a prescription/statement from a physician if the need for the service animal is not obvious.
  - f. Employee service animals are subject to the behavior standards required of a facility visitor.
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.7 REQUIREMENTS OF SERVICE ANIMALS, TRAINEES, AND THEIR PARTNER/HANDLERS

Partners/handlers (persons using a service animal at Clallam County) are required to adhere to the following:

- All animals need to be immunized against rabies and/or other diseases common to the type of animal. All vaccinations must be current.
- Animals must wear a rabies vaccination tag.
- The animal must be appropriately licensed.
- Service animals must wear an owner identification tag (which includes the name and telephone number of the owner) at all times.
- Animals need to be maintained on a leash, harness, or other type of restraint in County buildings and public areas. However, exceptions are granted in an emergency situation when the animal needs to perform a task requiring it to travel beyond the length of the restraint or when the partner/handler is unable to restrain an animal due to a disability.
- The partner/handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the service animal is solely the responsibility of the partner/owner.
- The partner/handler is responsible for independently removing or arranging for the removal of the service animal's waste, placing the waste in a closed container, and disposing the container in an outdoor trash bin.
- The partner/handler needs to make sure that their animal is kept as clean as possible so as not to interfere with the work environment. Regular bathing and grooming may be necessary for flea and tick control.

.8 WHEN A SERVICE ANIMAL CAN BE ASKED TO LEAVE

a. Disruption

The partner/handler of an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, running around, and bringing attention to it) may be asked to remove the animal from County facilities. The partner/handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal into County facilities until significant steps to mitigate the behavior are taken, if the improper behavior happens repeatedly. Mitigation can include muzzling a barking animal or refresher training for both the animal and the partner/handler.

b. Health

Ill service animals are not allowed in public areas. A partner/handler with an ill animal may be asked to leave County facilities.

c. Poor Hygiene/Unclean Animals

Partners/handlers with animals that are unclean may be asked to leave County facilities. Partners/handlers are responsible to keep the service animal clean and well groomed even during inclement weather seasons. An animal that becomes wet from walking in the rain or mud or from being splashed by a passing automobile, and is otherwise clean, should be considered a clean animal. Animals that shed in the spring should be groomed to maintain a work environment that is hair free.

.9 PROHIBITED ACCESS FOR SERVICE ANIMALS

a. Mechanical Rooms/Custodial Closets

Mechanical rooms, such as boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electric closets, elevator control rooms, and custodial closets are off-limits to service animals. The machinery, equipment, and/or chemicals in these rooms may be harmful.

b. Areas where Protective Clothing is Necessary

Any room where protective clothing is necessary is off-limits to service animals. Examples include, but are not limited to chemical laboratories, wood shops, and metal/machine shops.

c. Areas where there is Danger to the Service Animal

Any room where there are sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from a surface; where there are hot materials on the floor; where there is a high level of dust; or where there is moving machinery is off-limits to service animals.

d. Access Exceptions

1) Moving Equipment

A manager of an operation/facility with moving equipment may grant permission to a team to enter the area. Admission for each team will be granted or denied on a case-by-case basis. The final decision shall be made based on the nature of the machinery and in the best interest of safety for the team. Example: The machinery in the shop may have moving parts at a height such that the tail of a large dog could easily be caught in it; this is a valid reason for keeping large dogs out.

However, a very small hearing dog may be shorter than any moving part and, therefore be considered for admission.

2) Case-by-Case

The manager may grant access to other designated off-limits areas on a case-by-case basis notwithstanding conflicts with this policy.

3) Approval for Exceptions

To be granted an exception, a visitor seeking admission for their animal to an off-limits area should contact the manager of the office/facility or the Human Resources Director. An employee should submit a written request to the office manager and the Human Resources Director.

## .10 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

When an individual with a disability makes an accommodation request, the County will consider it promptly and grant it when reasonable.

### 10.1 County Reserves the Right to Request Verification

The County reserves the right to request verification of an individual's disability and the need for a service animal based upon the following:

- If the disability is obvious or otherwise known and the need for the service animal is apparent, no request for additional information about the disability or the need for accommodation will be made. For example, a blind person with a guide dog does not need to verify his disability or need for the dog.
- If the disability is known and the accommodation need is not apparent, a request may be made for information necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation. For example, if the individual has a non-visible disability such as depression and travels with a service animal, a request for documentation of the disability-related need for the animal may be requested.
- If neither the disability nor the need is clear, a request may be made for proof of both. For example, if an individual with no obvious disability asks to be accompanied by a service animal, a request that the person document both the disability as defined under law and the need for the disability-related service animal is appropriate.

## 10.2 Who Should Provide Verification

When verification of disability status or disability-related need is appropriate, the County shall require that the individual provide written verification from a doctor, medical professional, or other qualified third party who, in their professional capacity, has knowledge about the person's disability and the need for reasonable accommodation. Written verification shall be provided by someone with sufficient knowledge and training to verify that the individual meets the definition of a person with a disability and that there is a disability-related need for a service animal. The County specifically does not require the provision of details about the individual's disability.

### .11 LIABILITY

Any property damage, destruction, or personal injuries caused by or as a result of a service animal will be the sole responsibility of the service animal's owner/partner/handler. Service animal owner/partners/handlers will hold harmless Clallam County and its agents from any and all claims, causes of actions, damage, cost, loss of service, expense and compensation whatsoever, growing out of consequence with their service animal in or around Clallam County facilities or County grounds.

### .12 EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In the event of an emergency, County staff should understand that a service animal may become disoriented from the crowd, sirens or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The partner/handler and/or animal may be confused by the stressful situation. Staff should be aware that the animal is trying to be protective and, in its confusion, is not harmful. Staff should make every effort to keep the animal with its partner. However, the staff's first effort should be toward the partner; this may necessitate leaving an animal behind in certain emergency evacuation situations.

### .13 GRIEVANCE

Any partner dissatisfied with the decision made concerning a service animal should follow the County's appeal process in Administrative Policy 210, non-discrimination and any grievance procedure within the applicable collective bargaining agreement.