

Assistance Animals

In Housing

Guidance for Tenants and Landlords*

An assistance animal is an animal that works, assists, performs tasks, or provides emotional support for the benefit of a person with a disability.

Assistance animals are not limited to service animals that are trained to perform a task. They may include emotional support, comfort, companion, or therapy animals and service animals in training. An assistance animal does not have to be a dog. Other animals can be recognized as assistance animals.

** Different laws apply to places of public accommodation, state/local government programs, air travel, or employment situations.*

An assistance animal may be considered as a reasonable accommodation for a qualified person with a disability living in a housing accommodation where pets are otherwise prohibited. A person with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one of more major life activities.

Tenants

- *With a disability can ask for a reasonable accommodation to a no pets policy in order to have an assistance animal in their unit;*
- *Do not have to pay a fee or deposit for the animal;*
- *Are responsible for damages to the premises caused by the animal;*
- *Can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) if discrimination is occurring*

Landlords/Housing Providers

- *May request documentation from a treating health care or mental health professional, verifying that the person has a disability and that the assistance animal is needed to alleviate one or more symptoms of the person's disability;*
- *Can deny the request if the specific animal poses a direct health or safety threat, an undue financial or administrative burden on the landlord, or if no disability related need is found;*
- *Can establish reasonable restrictions including, but not limited to, observing applicable leash and pick-up laws, vaccination requirements, cleaning up after waste and meeting other minimum sanitary standards.*
- *Can charge tenants for any damages caused by the assistance animal.*



The information provided complies with the Federal Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Missouri Revised Statutes for access to housing.

For more information, go to

<https://disability.mo.gov/serviceanimals.htm>

Governor's Council on Disability

For more information contact gcd@oa.mo.gov