

Shelter Services Committee Agenda

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 9-10:30 AM

Attendance: Melissa Mennig, Fares Fares, Sarah Lim, Victor Kaczynski, Becky Brickert, Jasmine Z, John Adams, Patrick Duffie, Tahkaney Becknell, Rosendo Ortiz, Melissa Sorensen, Jen Ripp, Maureen Quinlan, Bridget Rogers, Nici Hawkins, Carly Soby, Kristin Olgren, Josephine Madondo, Takisha Jordan, Alicia Spry, Becky T, Claire Bergman, Claire Purkis, Shannon Stevens, Sydney Russell, Alicia Henning, DaMontae January, Natalia Garay, Lauren Ward, Andrea Gaines, Jani Koester, Rebecca Hoyt (presenter)


1. Introductions (Question: Favorite Valentine's day treat/candy?)
2. Select Note taker: Sarah Lim
3. Presentation: Service Animal Training- *Rebecca Hoyt; Disability Right and Services Specialist-City of Madison*

Rebecca shared the following topics. See the attached presentation slides for more details.

Training Objectives



- Wisconsin Statutes has more expansive protections than federal ADA. Maximum protections prevail.
- Service animals – accommodated everywhere; Emotional support animal – only entitled to be accommodated in housing. Not other places.
- General requirements for shelter providers: equal access, reasonable modifications/accommodations
- If you need help how to provide accommodation when requested, reach out. You can contact Rebecca at the Cit of Madison



What is a Service Animal?

An animal trained, or being trained, to do a specific task for the benefit of a person with a disability.

1. Are not required to be prescribed or registered.
2. Does not need to be professionally trained.
3. May be trained or in training.
4. Not required to wear a vest or ID if accompanied by its handler.

Wis. Stat. 106.52(1)(fm)

Sample language the City uses:

Addressing Fraud


Service animal fraud harms the disability community. Bringing a pet to a public place is detrimental to the lives of people with disabilities who rely on highly skilled and trained animals for their safety and independence.

Only service animals that are trained or in training and are required due to a disability will be permitted. Any person with animal that is not under the handler's control, is not housebroken, or poses a direct threat to health or safety will be asked to leave.

(By posting something like this, if there are patrons with animals that are not complying, you can point to this policy.)

When it is obvious that a person with a disability is benefiting from a service animal, you should grant access and not ask questions. If it is not obvious, then:

Permissible Questions for Public Accommodations



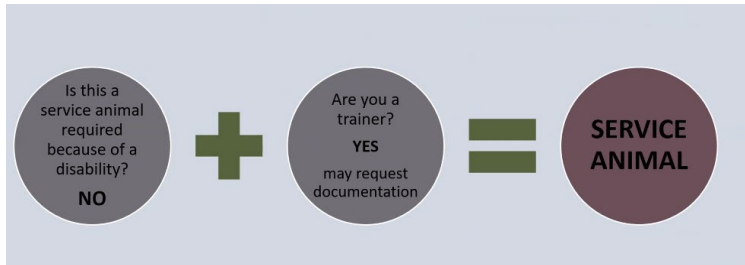
Is this a service animal required because of a disability?
YES

+

Is the animal trained or in training?
YES

=

SERVICE ANIMAL



Do not ask for demonstration.

When is a Service Animal Not Places of Public Accommodations?

1. Not housebroken
2. Not under the control of the handler and the handler is not able to regain control
3. Animal poses a direct threat to health and safety

Cannot be based on type of animal, breed, or past experience with the animal

If these happen, it's important to address it with a handler. Talk to the handler before asking them to leave. There may be more information on why an animal is behaving certain way (I am about to have a seizure when a dog barks, etc.)

Past experience – If the person comes back with a service animal after having to leave the day before, you have to let them in and they can stay until there is a reason again.

What if a patient is in a hospital and can't take care of the service animal? Entities are not obligated to provide food, water, take care. But separating the service animal from the handler is not allowed. Note that service animals serve like a medical equipment. Separating them without consulting the handler can be dangerous.

Discriminatory Practices in Public Places

1. Denying entry
2. Denying full and equal enjoyment
3. Charging a higher rate or deposit
4. Communication that is intended to detour patronage or imply that a person with a disability, service animal, or service animal trainer is not welcome
5. Failing to provide reasonable accommodations or modifications of policies, practices, and procedures
6. Separating the service animal from the handler

Wis. Stat. 106.52(3)(am)

Q: Is it appropriate to have a separate intake for the person with an animal? General intake should work. If it's not apparent that it is a service animal, then you can ask the additional questions above to determine. And if it's not under handler's control, then you can say this is not meeting the requirement for service animal.

Q: Can we require vaccination records? It may be changing in the legislation soon. In housing, you can ask for registration or vaccination records. (Rebecca will follow up and provide the answer.)

If they live in City of Madison, if there is discrimination, then you can contact Rebecca Hoyt at the city. Rebecca can call the facility to clarify. You can also file a complaint with Department of Civil Rights.

What is an Emotional Support Animal?

An animal that provides emotional support, comfort, or companionship for a person with a disability.

1. Is not trained to perform a specific task.
2. Is needed due to disability.
3. State law protects emotional support animals in housing, but not in public places.
4. Could be permitted in other settings if provided as a reasonable accommodation.

Wis. Stat. 106.50(1)(im) and (2r)(bg)

Shelters are not required to but can accommodate emotional support animals.

ESAs in housing

ESAs in Housing

ESA's generally follow the same requirements as service animals except:

- Documentation must be from a licensed health care professional
- At minimum of \$500 fine for a person who intentionally misrepresents a disability or the need for an emotional support animal.
- At minimum of \$500 fine for a healthcare provider who intentionally misrepresents a patient has a disability or the need for an emotional support animal.

Wis. Stat. 106.50 (2r)(br)5

When is a Service Animal or ESA Not Permitted in Housing

1. The owner/handler does not have a disability, does not benefit from work performed by the animal, or fails to provide documentation
2. Would impose a undue financial and administrative burden (overall financial resources) or would fundamentally alter the nature of services
3. Animal poses a direct threat to health and safety that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation
4. Substantial physical damage to a person's property that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation

Q: Is there a limit on how many emotional support animals? Not in the statutes. Practical purpose is: do they serve different purposes?

Q: Can mental health therapist provide the documentation? Yes.

Also need to think about other people with disabilities -Allergies, PTSD. You may have a different sleeping arrangement, so people with allergies and other sensitivities etc.

Addressing Concerns

1. If you have concerns about the animal, speak directly to the handler and let the handler attempt to address the concerns.
2. Accommodate others if needed.
3. If the handler is not able to gain control of the animal, only then may you ask that the handler remove the animal.
4. You may not deny access to a service animal based on past experiences.

Hypothetical # 1

A person you know has a service dog. They arrive with their service animal. Another patron enters the building and says they are allergic to dogs and asks you to remove the service animal. What do you do?

Provide accommodations to the person with allergy

Hypothetical #2

A person enters your facility using a wheelchair with a capuchin monkey on their shoulder. The monkey is wearing a retractable leash. What do you do?

No need to ask questions. Leash indicates that it is under the control of the handler.

Hypothetical # 3

A person arrives at intake with a small cat in a bag. They report that the cat is an emotional support animal and provide you with a document to that effect. What are your options?

Hypothetical #4

An animal reported to you to be a service animal is hyper, barking, and jumping on other patrons. What do you do?

“Are you okay? We need you to take control of your animal.” If the handler is not able to, then ask them to leave.

Hypothetical #5

A person arrived at your shelter with a service animal. The animal appears dehydrated and thin. What would you do and why?

We try to offer food and water. If there’s anything we can accommodate. What we don’t do is to call Humane Society and separate the animal from the handler.

Q: Is our shelter public accommodation or housing? Need to consult the attorney for specific program, but generally, if it functions more like a hotel, then public accommodation, if you are signing an agreement and they keep the room, then short term housing (under fair housing act).

Q: Do they have to keep the animal with them all times? But

Q: 300+ clients,

Q: Complaint from a handler that people are petting the service animal. “we have service animals here. Please do not pet animals” for part of intake.

Rebecca Hoyt
Disability Rights and Services Specialist
Department of Civil Rights
RHoyt@cityofmadison.com
(608) 266-6511

4. Shelter utilization and other updates

The shelter providers in the committee shared the following updates in the chat:

Patrick duffie 10:21 AM

Re the new CE process. Many staff have done the new training and are set for the new system. Zach began sending out tier-2 invitations yesterday for folks who will need to be assessed and referred to the new list. More info will be coming. Please respond to these requests asap and reach out with any questions. We need to rebuild the lists so that we can begin using the new list to fill housing openings.

Claire Purkis (she/they) Dane County Area Agency on Aging 10:21 AM

Underdog pet rescue has a quarterly free clinic for unhoused folks' animals. And if you stopped by there or called them they probably would help medically and give food etc. For free.

Becky Brickert - The Road Home/LEC (She/Her/Hers) 10:24 AM

Healing House: Two open rooms, however almost at capacity for the house with a family of seven. Could take one family of three that fits HH requirements.

Fares Fares 10:14 AM

Porchlight- Average of 300 plus, things are surprisingly peaceful at shelter, thank you

Jen Ripp 10:15 AM

Briarpatch - We have 4 youth in shelter currently, struggle is finding appropriate options for unaccompanied youth when they need to discharge

rosendo.ortiz 10:17 AM

Salvation Army: Women's Shelter: Numbers as high as 123 / Family Shelter: Numbers 29

Families with 2 families scheduled to arrive this week. We have hired our New Shelter Manager, long time Lead Shelter Advocate Diane Rose.

Nici Hawkins 10:17 AM

Beacon still averaging 250/day with a 50:1 staff to guest ratio. Currently hiring for a Program Manager, if you know anyone send them our way! We have a Neighborhood meeting scheduled for 2/18.

NataliaGaray 10:18 AM

YWCA - We are currently working with TSA regarding people that may be coming up on there discharge date to potentially transfer. As of today I have 7 families and 10 units. Today I requested 2 more referrals from TSA as I have 2 available units for a family of 4 or 5. The challenges I see are many people experiencing barriers to finding housing such as money owed and we don't have the resources to help them pay it back.

Kristin Olgren - DAIS (she/her) 10:16 AM

DAIS - No updates. Shelter is at capacity. Our waitlist is a bit lower than usual right now. We have 18 individuals on the waitlist, both singles and families.

Jasmine Z The Road Home 10:17 AM

What is your capacity

Kristin Olgren - DAIS (she/her) 10:18 AM

14 adults plus children. We normally have around 30 people staying in shelter.

NataliaGaray 10:18 AM

We also have a limited amount of "Affordable Housing"

Jani MMSD 10:28 AM

MMSD identified currently 1040 students, many requests for shelter support and housing navigation. Referring out to community partners and frustrated families with so little movement.

Claire Bergman - Sun Prairie 10:29 AM

Sun Prairie has identified 265 students and similar experience for families from MMSD

5. Miscellaneous/ walk on items

- Family severe weather hotel program is up and running. TSA shelter's regular intake line can refer people to Equus to book a hotel room. Winter overflow has very limited funds, maybe one more month. Melissa will let people know when the funds are depleted.
- No reported ICE presence at the shelters.

Next meeting – Wednesday, April 2nd 9-10:30 AM