

Policy Name: **Animals in the Library #10.50**

Adoption Date: August 16, 2023

Supersedes: n/a

BACKGROUND

Tacoma Public Library recognizes that some patrons may have service animals trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The Library recognizes legal rights under applicable federal and state laws regarding the use of service animals. TPL also considers the safety and health of all its patrons, the public, and library staff to be of utmost priority.

POLICY

No animals other than service animals are allowed in the Library. Persons attempting to bring in animals that are not service animals will be asked to remove the animal.

Individuals with service animals may bring those animals into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. Owners/handlers must always keep service animals with them and under their full custody and control. If a service animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, due to disability or interference with the performance of the animal's task(s), it must be otherwise clearly under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means). Owners of service animals are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal while on library property. Staff should attempt to find suitable alternatives to assist the patron in the use of the Library if the patron's service animal is asked to be removed from Library property.

Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government; or a training program; or be identified by a special harness or collar. Staff may legally inquire if 1) if the service animal is required because of a disability, and 2) what work or task is the animal trained to perform. Individuals with a service animal may not be asked to provide documentation of a disability or authorized use of a service animal, nor may staff request documentation of a disability or medical documentation for the use of a service animal.

Staff may request the patron find a location for a service animal to remain while the patron continues to use the Library if the animal's behavior or actions pose an unreasonable risk of injury to persons, or harm to property, or the animal's behaviors unreasonably disrupt other person's use of the library.

Fear of animals, allergies, presumed outcomes, or annoyance on the part of other patrons are not permissible reasons for denying access or for refusing library service to people with a service animal.

This policy supports the following library strategic priorities:

By welcoming and having clear expectations for service animals in the library we are ensuring access to our patrons with different abilities. Accessibility is crucial because it ensures that all individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can fully participate in and utilize Library services and resources.

x	Equity and Access We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma’s diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.	Cultivate and Engage Community We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.
	Learning, Creativity, and Innovation We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.	Responsible and Resilient We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.
	Investment in Youth We believe that youth are the future and will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.	

POLICY HISTORY

Action	Date	Notes
The new policy adopted by the board	August 16, 2023	Resolution #23055