

## **Service Animals**

### **Purpose**

In order to create an inclusive environment, the Simsbury Public Library (the Library) welcomes service animals and animals invited for special programs to enter the Library building.

### **Definition**

“Service animal” is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as any service dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Service animal is limited to the animals defined under the ADA and does not include any other species of animal, wild or domestic, trained or untrained. Service animal does not include an animal used or relied upon for crime deterrence, emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Library staff has the right to ask the animal’s handler (1) Is this a service animal and (2) what is the animal’s function for them. The handler is not required to provide documentation about the service animal or to prove a disability. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified, or to be identified by a special harness or collar. Service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times, unless the use of a leash or harness interferes with the animal’s effective performance of its task. If the animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be under the handler’s control via voice, signals or other effective means at all times. The animal’s handler is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal and must be in full control of the animal at all times. Therefore, owners must keep the service animal directly with them at all times.

The Library retains discretion to exclude or remove a service animal from Library property if:

- The service animal is out of control and/or the service animal’s handler does not effectively control the service animal’s behavior
- The service animal is not housebroken
- The service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications
- Permitting the service animal would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity

The animal’s handler will be responsible for any damage to Library or personal property and any injuries to individuals caused by the service animal. Anyone using a service animal on Library property will hold the Library and Town of Simsbury harmless and indemnify the Library and Town of Simsbury from any such damages.

*~Reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees February 3, 2025*