

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.

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.



Misrepresenting a pet as an assistance animal for the purpose of receiving an accommodation under the Fair Housing Act is a violation of Missouri Law.

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, visit disability.mo.gov/serviceanimals.htm or contact the Governor's Council on Disability at 573-751-2600 or gcd@oa.mo.gov