

**Kent County Public Library**  
**Animals in the Library Policy**

**Policy:** The Kent County Public Library considers the safety and health of all of its patrons, the public and library staff to be of utmost priority. Patrons are not permitted to bring animals into any library building with the exception of service animals and service animals in training.

Kent County Public Library recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. Patrons may have service animals, which are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual.

Individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals or service animals in training into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go.

The library may choose to offer educational programs for the public that include various animals. Such animals are permitted in the library building for the duration of the program and must be accompanied by the owner at all times.

**Date Revised:** April 22, 2019

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chole Lewis, President".

**Definitions:** Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. This federal law applies to all businesses open to the public, including restaurants, hotels, taxis and shuttles, grocery and department stores, hospitals and medical offices, theaters, health clubs, parks, and zoos.

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person's disability.

**Procedures:**

All service animals must be under the full custody and control of their handler at all times. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the owner's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the service animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. Owners of the service animals are solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal. Therefore, owners must keep the service animal directly with them at all times.

Staff may ask if an animal is a pet or a service animal required because of a disability and may request appropriate documentation. Owners of service animals or service animals in training will indicate that they are working animals and not pets. Terms used may include assistance, service, guide, hearing or helping animal. Staff may not ask about the owner's disability.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his or her service animal or service animal in training from the library unless the presence, behavior or actions of the service animal constitutes an unreasonable risk of injury or harm to property or other persons. In these cases, library staff should give the person with the disability the option to obtain library services without having the service animal or service animal in training in the building.

Fear of allergies, annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals or service animals in training.

Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from inside the library building or in areas outdoors if they impede anyone's progress into or out of the library.