

GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY

Policy Statement

Governors State University will permit Assistance Animals in on-campus housing units as a reasonable accommodation as described below.

Definition

An Assistance Animal is an animal that can be kept lawfully and is required by an individual with a disability as a reasonable accommodation to afford him/her an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University Housing. The individual's disability and the accommodation of an Assistance Animal must be documented by an appropriate healthcare or mental health professional in accordance with university policies and procedures.

Determination

The determination of whether an Assistance Animal will be permitted in University Housing is made on a case-by-case basis, through an interactive process involving the individual requesting the accommodation and relevant university personnel. All requests for Assistance Animals in University Housing are subject to annual review.

In all cases, the needs of the individual are balanced with the impact of an Assistance Animal on other campus residents and patrons.

In order for an Assistance Animal to be considered a reasonable accommodation in University Housing, there must be a current verification of need for the accommodation from a physician, psychiatrist, licensed clinical social worker, or licensed psychologist, provided to the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities which:

1. Verifies that the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. Describes the need for the requested accommodation;
3. Identifies the relationship between the student's disability and the need for an Assistance Animal.

The question in determining if an Assistance Animal will be allowed in University housing is whether or not the Assistance Animal is necessary because of the individual's disability to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University Housing and its presence in University Housing is reasonable. However, even if the individual with a disability establishes necessity for an Assistance Animal and it is allowed in University Housing, an Assistance Animal is not permitted in other areas of the University (e.g. dining areas (including C-store), library, academic buildings, athletic building and facilities, classrooms, labs, etc.).

Process

The following tasks will comprise the process for approval of an Assistance Animal under this policy:

Register with the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities Students with a documented disability must follow the appropriate steps for applying for services outlined on the Office of Disability Services web site at: <https://www.govst.edu/disability-services/> and complete the appropriate documentation requirements to establish the need for an Assistance Animal.

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For all requests for Assistance Animals, Disability Services shall consult with University Housing in making a determination on a case-by-case basis of whether the presence of an Assistance Animal is reasonable. A request for an Assistance Animal may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden; (2) fundamentally alters University Housing policies; and/or (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including University property.

_____ **Meet with University Housing**

If all criteria are met to establish the need for the accommodation, as set forth by staff at the Office of Student Disability Services, a meeting will be arranged between the resident and University Housing personnel to discuss how to best accommodate the student, the Assistance Animal, and the campus community.

_____ **Provide information about the animal**

The resident must provide evidence that the animal is in good health and has been vaccinated against diseases common to that species of animal, as recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Veterinary records must be provided attesting to that fact that the animal is not aggressive or dangerous.

_____ **Review and sign the Assistance Animal Agreement by** initialing each requirement in the Agreement and agreeing to comply with its terms.

_____ **Meet with the building Housing staff** just prior to moving in to discuss any possible issues or concerns.

Exclusions

GSU may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with Assistance Animals:

1. The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
2. The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies);
3. The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
4. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
5. The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
6. The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others; or
7. The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

GSU will not limit room assignments for students with Assistance Animals to any particular type of unit because the individual needs an Assistance Animal.

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Visitors

Assistance Animals accompanying campus visitors are only allowed in areas of campus where domesticated animals are permitted.

Appeals and Grievances

If the student requesting the use of an Assistance Animal is denied, the student has the right to appeal the decision to the Executive Vice President. The student may appeal the decision if: 1) there exists additional evidence that was not available when the decision was rendered, 2) the initial reason why the Assistance Animal application was denied changes in any form (i.e. the animal is brought up to date with vaccinations), or 3) there exists extenuating circumstances that prompts reconsideration. If the Executive Vice President determines an appeal warranted, any decision stemming from the appeal process is final and is not subject to any further appeal.

Parts of this policy and its accompanying agreement were taken from similar policies at the following universities:
Rutgers University and the University of Nebraska-Kearney

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Assistance Animal Agreement

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

GSU ID: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Animal Name: _____ Animal Type: _____

Animal Breed: _____ Hair Length: _____

Veterinarian Name: _____

Veterinarian Phone: _____

Assigned space: _____

Roommates: _____

Please review and initial each requirement indicating you understand and will adhere to the requirement:

Requirements for Residents with Assistance Animal Accommodations

_____ Residents must comply with all state laws and local animal ordinances, as well as all GSU and University Housing policies and guidelines.

_____ Residents must provide appropriate food, water and shelter for Assistance Animal and keep the animal and its shelter clean and free of odors. **The animal must be fed and watered inside the student's assigned bedroom. Food and water may not be left outside of the room at any time, including outside of the building.**

_____ Residents are solely responsible for the care and supervision of the Assistance Animal; University Housing assumes no responsibility for the care of a resident's Assistance Animal.

_____ Routine maintenance of the Assistance Animal is required. For dogs, this includes flea and tick prevention and de-worming. Recommended vaccinations and annual examinations must be completed. University Housing has the right to request updated veterinary verification annually, or at any time during the animal's residency.

_____ Residents must comply with all required state and municipal license requirements, including current identification and vaccination tags. Assistance dogs must wear a current rabies vaccination tag. All animals must be tagged with contact information for the owner.

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_____ Residents must not allow Assistance Animals to be neglected or abused. If any animal neglect is suspected, University Housing staff will contact the student, GSU PD, and the Humane Society. **In some circumstances, University Housing may allow an animal control officer or humane society representative to enter the student's room/apartment and remove the animal if, in our judgment, the student has: abandoned the animal; left the animal in the room/apartment for an extended period of time without food or water; or failed to care for a sick animal.**

_____ Animals must be housebroken, or caged at all times. The resident is responsible for properly containing and disposing of all animal waste. Indoor animal waste must be placed in a sturdy bag and tied securely before being disposed of in an outside trash dumpster. Outdoor animal waste, such as dog feces, must be immediately retrieved by the owner, placed in a plastic bag and securely tied before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters.

_____ Residents must not leave Assistance Animals unattended in a room or apartment overnight, or for an extended period of time beyond normal working/class hours. Should this occur, University Housing staff will attempt to contact the resident or emergency contact to remove the animal. If this is not successful, the local animal service department will be contacted to have the animal removed. All costs associated with removing the animal shall be the responsibility of the resident.

_____ Assistance Animals cannot be cared for, or left in the rooms or apartments of other on-campus residents.

_____ Residents must effectively control the animal at all times. Those that are taken out of the room or apartment must be leashed at all times. **University Housing staff may pick up unleashed animals and/or report them to the proper authorities. University Housing may impose reasonable charges for picking up and/or keeping unleashed animals.** The animal cannot pose a threat to the health or safety of others. If the resident cannot effectively control the animal, or if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, the permission to keep that particular animal in University housing will be rescinded until such time that the problem is rectified.

_____ Residents must not allow Assistance Animals to disturb, annoy, or cause any nuisance to other members of the campus community.

_____ Assistance Animals are not permitted in any public, common spaces within Prairie Place, including community-shared bathrooms, lounges, c-store, offices, and study rooms, except to enter and exit the hall.

_____ Residents are responsible for any odors, noise, damage, or other conduct of their Assistance Animal if it disturbs others or damages the premises.

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_____ The Resident bears sole financial responsibility for any action of the Assistance Animal that causes bodily injury to individuals or property.

_____ The student is responsible for assuring that the animal does not interfere with the routine of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside in the unit. Sensitivity to residents with allergies and to those who fear animals is important to ensure a positive residential community.

_____ The resident is responsible for instructing others on appropriate interactions with the animal and setting clear expectations.

_____ Roommates will be notified about the animal. The notification will include the type of animal, size and what services the animal performs. Roommates may request a room change if they so desire.

_____ No offspring of the Assistance Animal will be allowed.

_____ Animals may not be tied to any fixed object anywhere outside of the student's room/apartment, including outside of the building.

_____ University Housing reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the Assistance Animal agreement. If such changes are made, University Housing will distribute a written copy of any changes to every resident who has a current Assistance Animal agreement on file.

_____ Any time the resident requires maintenance or custodial services for their apartment or room, he/she is requested to make arrangements with Facilities to ensure that they are present in the room when Facilities staff arrive to complete the work order. At all times when Facilities staff is present in their room/apartment, the student must either cage or leash the Assistance Animal.

_____ The resident is financially responsible for the actions of the Assistance Animal including damage that requires replacement of furniture, carpet, blinds, etc. The resident is expected to cover all costs of returning the unit to the same condition it was in at the time of the move-in. This may include cleaning all carpets and furniture to remove pet odors, dander, hair, etc. This applies to all parts of the room/apartment, as well as landscaping and other outside improvements. If items cannot be satisfactorily cleaned or repaired, the student will be charged for their complete replacement.

_____ University Housing will inspect the residential unit on a regular basis. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the unit will be treated using appropriate methods by the university-approved pest control services. Those costs will be put on the resident's account.

_____ University Housing has the right to reassign the resident to another space if care of the animal, or interactions with others becomes a concern.

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_____ If requested, I will contact my veterinarian to provide to the Director of University Housing or his/her designee, additional medical documentation for my Assistance Animal.

_____ The resident will be assigned a liaison within University Housing who will oversee any moves from one location to another, arrange for staff notifications and trainings, and assist with re-introduction of the animal to a new community.

_____ If the resident violates any provision of this document, he or she may be required to immediately remove the Assistance Animal from University Housing.

I have read and understand the Assistance Animal Policy and Agreement and I agree to abide by the requirements applicable to Assistance Animals. I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements set forth in the Policy, GSU has the right to remove the Assistance Animal and I will be nonetheless required to fulfill my housing, academic, and all other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

I furthermore give permission to the Office of University Housing to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my Assistance Animal (e.g., potential and/or actual roommate(s)/neighbor(s)) that I will be living with an animal as an accommodation. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the Assistance Animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the Assistance Animal.

I further recognize that the presence of the Assistance Animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in University Housing and agree that staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal, and explain that under certain circumstances Assistance Animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature (if student under 18)

Date

Access Services for Students with Disabilities Representative

Date

University Housing Representative

Date