

# **Piedmont Virginia Community College**

## **Section II – General Administrative Services Policies**

### **II – 20.0 Policy for Service Animals, Service Animals in Training, Assistance Animals, and Comfort Animals**

Effective Date: October 2024

Last Revised: March 2026

Responsible Dept.: Office of Student Accessibility and Accommodations

#### **1. Purpose**

This document establishes the policies governing the presence of service animals, service animals in-training, assistance animals and comfort animals on the College campuses facilities, and applies to faculty, staff, students, and the public who utilize any college-owned or college-leased facility. This document is written in accordance with ADA requirements pertaining to the use of such animals and Code of Virginia, § 51.5.

#### **2. Policy Statement**

Piedmont Virginia Community College (the College) is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA Amendments Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. The College will also comply with the Code of Virginia, § 51.5. Rights of Persons with Disabilities and all state laws pertaining to individuals with disabilities.

##### **2.1 Accepted Service Animals**

- a) The College uses the ADA-approved definition of a service animal as “any 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.”
- b) The College also recognizes service animals in-training as those animals that are being trained for students, faculty, or staff with disabilities and experienced trainers who may or may not be disabled.

PVCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. View the full nondiscrimination statement and find contacts at [pvcc.edu/nondiscrimination](http://pvcc.edu/nondiscrimination).

- c) In addition to the provisions about service dogs, revised ADA regulations have a new, separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds. These service animals shall be permitted in the College's facilities where it is reasonable to do so and where the animal can be accommodated within those facilities.

## **2.2 Assistance Animals and Comfort Animals.**

Assistance animals and comfort animals are not service animals and have no legal protections under the ADA, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Assistance animals and comfort animals of any species, which may provide emotional support to a person but are not trained to perform work or tasks related to a person's disability, are not permitted inside the College buildings and facilities except where permission is granted as a reasonable accommodation for an individual under the ADA by a staff member of Student Accessibility and Accommodations for students or the assigned ADA Coordinator in Human Resources for college staff. These staff members will conduct an interactive process to consider an individual's request to bring an assistance or comfort animal inside the College buildings like any other request for an individual with a disability to have a reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to goods, services, and programs. Those requesting to bring assistance or a comfort animal inside campus buildings and facilities should contact the College's Student Accessibility and Accommodations staff or the assigned ADA Coordinator in Human Resources.

Assistance animals and comfort animals that are leashed, tethered, or held under the control of a custodian are permitted in outdoor areas on and around the College's campuses and facilities. Custodians of assistance animals and comfort animals must always have control of the animal (i.e, cannot keep animal outside while the custodian is inside) and must abide by all rules required under the laws of Virginia and local ordinances. (See Animal Custodian's Responsibilities.)

## **3. Definitions**

N/A

## **4. Applicability**

This policy applies to faculty, staff, students, and the public who utilize any college-owned or college-leased facility.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Faculty and Staff Responsibilities**

The following general rules apply to all services animals:

- a) Do not pet or feed service or guide animals. The animal is working as a part of a team and must not be distracted.
- b) Do not separate or attempt to separate the service or guide animal from their partner.
- c) Allow service or guide animals in all permissible places at the College pursuant to the rules noted below.

When in doubt about whether an animal is either a service animal or service animal in-training, College employees can only ask the following two questions of the person with custody of the animal:

- a) Is this a service animal or service animal in-training required because of your disability?
- b) What job or task has the animal either been trained to perform or is being trained to perform?

With respect to service animals, College faculty and staff cannot request medical documentation, ask about the person's disability, request an identification card, proof of training, or ask the person to make the animal perform the activity for which it either trained or is in the process of being trained to perform. If, after asking the two permissible questions, the employee still has concerns about the animal in question, the employee should contact staff in the Student Accessibility and Accommodations office.

College faculty and staff may not consider allergies or fear in others as a reason to deny access or to deny a service to a person accompanied by a service animal. When a person who is allergic to animal dander and a custodian with a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, both students should be accommodated by assigning the students, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.

### **5.2 Animal Custodian's Responsibilities.**

- a) Custodians are encouraged, but not required, to report their service animal or service animal in-training to the College's Student Accessibility and Accommodations office.
- b) Service animals and service animals in-training must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the custodian must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- c) Custodians must make sure that all requirements for the presence of a service animal or service animals in-training are met. Current vaccinations (to include rabies,

distemper and parvovirus) and identity tags must comply with Virginia requirements and county specific requirements. Dogs must wear their current vaccination tag.

- d) Custodians accompanied by service animals must follow all local ordinances regarding animal feces. If a custodian with a disability cannot pick up the animal's feces, the custodian must make arrangements for cleaning up after the animal.
- e) All service animals and service animals in-training must be in good health and custodians are responsible for their animal's behavior. If the accompanying animal exhibits unacceptable behavior, including but not limited to aggression when not being provoked, the custodian is expected to employ proper training techniques to correct such behavior.
- f) Custodians will be responsible for any extensive damage caused by the animal to any College facilities. This does not include normal wear and tear. Service animals may be asked to wear protective shoes to prevent slippage or damage to floors or to wear protective equipment in environments with potential hazards (e.g., science laboratories).

## **6. Procedures for Implementation**

For general inquiries about this policy, contact the Director of Student Accessibility and Accommodations at (434) 961.5281.

## **7. Sanctions for Violation of Policy**

### **7.1 Fraudulent Representation of a Service Animal**

Under Code of Virginia 51.5-44.1, any person who knowingly and willfully fits a dog with a harness, collar, vest, or sign, or uses an identification card commonly used by a person with a disability, in order to represent that the dog is a service dog or hearing dog to fraudulently gain public access for such dog pursuant to provisions in 51.5-44 is guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.

### **7.2 Reasons for Removing Service Animals from College Campuses or Facilities**

- a) The animal is out of control, and the custodian does not take effective action to control it. This may include but is not limited to, a service animal presenting disruptive behavior such as barking, walking or running around without the custodian, growling, etc. Custodians will be asked to remove the animal from the classroom or premises until the owner takes measures to correct such behaviors.
- b) The animal is not house-broken.
- c) The dog poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. This may include, but is not exclusive to, showing unprovoked aggression, or serious illness.

### **7.3 Complaints**

- a) Any student who is not satisfied with the decision made concerning a purported service animal, service animal in-training, assistance animal, or comfort animal may file a written complaint using the College's Student Grievance Procedure found in the Student Handbook.
- b) Any employee with a disability who is not satisfied with a decision made concerning a purported service animal, service animal in-training, or comfort animal may file a complaint under the College's employee grievance or dispute resolution procedures, found on the College's Human Resources webpage.

### **8. Other General Information**

Service Animal Registration Form is attached to this policy.

**Attachment**

**SERVICE ANIMAL REGISTRATION FORM**

**(Voluntary use only)**

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Mailing Address:

Type of Animal:

Service Animal or Service Animal-in-Training: Description

(breed, color, weight):

Picture of the animal - Attached (optional)

What work or task has the animal been trained to perform:

Attach documentation of vaccinations.

Attach picture of the animal (optional).