

Animals in the Library Policy

Purpose

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System (MMRLS) recognizes that some patrons may have service animals trained to assist or accommodate with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. MMRLS recognizes legal rights under applicable federal and state laws regarding the use of service animals. MMRLS considers the safety and health of its patrons, the public, and library staff a top priority.

Statement of Policy

No animals other than service animals are allowed in MMRLS libraries. Individuals who bring animals other than service animals into the library will be asked to remove them.

Confirmation of Service Animal Status

To confirm the status of a service animal, library staff may ask the following questions:

1. Is your service animal required because of a disability?
2. What tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government or training program or be identified by a special harness or collar. As such, individuals with a service animal may not be asked to provide documentation of a disability or authorized use of a service animal.

Service Animal Procedure

Individuals with service animals may bring those animals into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. Owners/handlers must always keep service animals with them and under their full custody and control. If a service animal cannot be leashed or harnessed due to disability or interference with the performance of tasks, it must be otherwise clearly under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means). Owners of service animals are responsible for supervising and caring for the service animal while on library property.

If staff observes behavior or actions of a service animal that constitutes an unreasonable risk of injury to persons or harm to property, or behaviors that unreasonably disrupt other person's use of the library or library grounds, a person with a service animal may be asked to find another location for the animal to stay while the person continues to use the library.

Fear of animals, allergies, presumed outcomes, or annoyance on the part of other patrons are not permissible reasons for denying access or refusing library service to people with a service animal.

For more information, visit <https://www.ada.gov/topics/service-animals/>.