

**ANTRIM COUNTY  
SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY**

1. **Purpose:** ANTRIM COUNTY is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and fulfilling its responsibilities under federal and state law. This policy governs the use of service animals in County buildings by persons with disabilities. These guidelines adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (the “ADA”), and ensure that people with disabilities who require the use of service animals receive the benefit of the work or tasks performed by such animal(s).
  
2. **Definitions:**
  - A. **Service Animal** – The term “service animal” is defined as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. This definition excludes all comfort, support, therapy, and companion animals as they have not been trained to perform specific tasks directly related to the person’s disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals under the ADA.
  
  - B. **Miniature Horse** – The County shall make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures if necessary to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability so long as the miniature horse has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability. If such reasonable modifications are made, requirements which apply to service animals shall also be applied to miniature horses. In determining whether such modifications can be made, the County shall consider the following:
    - 1) the type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features;
    - 2) whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;
    - 3) whether the miniature horse is house broken; and
    - 4) whether the miniature horse’s presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.
  
  - C. **Service Animal-in-Training** – Under the ADA, a service animal-in-training is not considered a service animal. Only adult dogs, twelve months of age or older, are considered service animals-in-training under County policy.
  
3. **Clarifying an Animal’s Status:** County employees should not question an individual about an accompanying service animal if the individual’s disability is readily apparent and the function of the accompanying animal is clear. However, when it is not obvious what service an animal provides, the County may only ask the following two questions: **1) Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?** and **2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?**

4. **Requirements:**

- A. **General** – Service animals brought to a County building are required to be in compliance with all state and federal licensure, vaccination, and tagging requirements.
- B. **Handling** – The individual requiring the assistance of the service animal is responsible for providing the service animal with full control, care, and supervision. The individual is also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of all animal waste and for any damage caused by their service animal.
- C. **Identification** – The ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or special harness identifying them as a service animal. The County may not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, as a condition for entry. Mandatory registration of service animals is not permissible under the ADA.
- D. **Restraints** – A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal’s safe and effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal shall be otherwise under the handler’s control.

5. **Removal/Exclusion of a Service Animal from a County Facility:** The County may require the removal of a service animal that is within a County facility, or prohibit a service animal from designated areas within a County facility, if the County determines, in its sole and exclusive discretion, that the service animal: 1) has damaged any real or personal property within the County facility; 2) is a threaten to the health and safety of others; 3) is disruptive (e.g. barking repeatedly, wandering, displaying aggressive behavior) and the problem behavior is outside the duties of the service animal, and the handler fails to take effective action to control the service animal; 4) is ill, unhygienic, and/or unsanitary; 5) is not house broken; or 6) may fundamentally alter the nature of a County product, service, or program. Allergies or fear of dogs are not valid reasons to deny access or refuse service to individuals using a service animal. The County reserves the right to take any further action as otherwise permitted or required by state or federal law. If the service animal is prohibited or removed from a County facility, the individual with a disability will be given the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises in compliance with the ADA.

6. **Interacting with a Service Animal:** Service animals work and perform tasks, and are not pets. Accordingly, County employees must adhere to the following best practices when interacting with service animals: 1) do not touch, pet, or feed a service animal unless invited to do so by the handler; 2) do not deliberately distract or startle a service animal; and 3) do not separate or attempt to separate a service animal from the individual using the animal’s services. A service animal may become stressed during emergency situations involving smoke, fire, sirens, or injury, and exhibit protective behavior. Be aware that service animals may try to

communicate the need for help. In emergency situations, County employees should make every effort to avoid the separating of the individual from their service animal.

7. **Dispute Resolution:** Disputes or disagreements regarding a disability determination, appropriateness of an accommodation, service quality, or an animal restriction should be directed to contact Director of Human Resources Stephanie Murray by telephone at 231-533-3605 or by email at [murrays@antrimcounty.org](mailto:murrays@antrimcounty.org).
8. **Misrepresentation of Animal:** An individual shall not falsely represent that he or she is in possession of a service animal, or a service animal-in-training, in any public place. If a County employee believes an individual has made a false representation, the County employee should bring their concerns to the attention of Director of Human Resources, Stephanie Murray by telephone at 231-533-3605 or by email at [murrays@antrimcounty.org](mailto:murrays@antrimcounty.org). Reported incidents may be submitted to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights for review and investigation.