

Kelso Public Library

Policy No. 901

Animals in the Library Policy

Purpose of the Animals in the Library Policy

901.1 The Kelso Public Library (hereafter referred to as KPL) recognizes that patrons with disabilities may have service animals that are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability. KPL recognizes legal rights under Federal and State law regarding the use of service animals.

Background and Definitions

901.2 RCW 49.60.040 states that ““service animal" means an animal that is trained for the purpose of assisting or accommodating a sensory, mental, or physical disability of a person with a disability." In Washington State, such animals are limited to trained dogs, and trained miniature horses.

901.3 The effects of an animal's presence as comforting and/or the provision of emotional support, comfort, well-being, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks and such animals are not defined as service animals.

901.4 Service animals are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting, and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability.

Policies

901.5 No pets or animals other than service animals, service animals in training, or animals used for library programs are allowed at KPL. Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from the library.

901.6 Individuals with disabilities may bring their service animal into all areas of the library where the public is normally allowed to go. All service animals must be always under the full custody and control of their handler. Also, all service animals must be always on a leash or harness unless the handler is unable to leash or harness because of a disability or would interfere with the safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If unable to be leashed or harnessed, the service animal must be otherwise under control of their handler at all times (e.g. voice control, signals, or other effective means). Owners of the service animals are solely responsible for the care and supervision of the animal and must always keep the animal with them.

901.7 Owners are required to indicate, if asked by a staff member, that it is a working animal trained to perform a specific service related to its owner's disability. Staff may not ask

about the owner's disability. Staff may only ask the following: (1) is the animal a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work, or task, has it been trained to perform.

901.8 A person with a disability may not be asked to remove their service animal from the library unless its presence, behavior, or actions constitute an unreasonable risk of injury or harm to property or other persons, or the animal is disruptive, and the owner does not take effective action to control it. In these cases, library staff must give the person with the disability the option to obtain library services without having the service animal on the premises. Service animals may not be groomed, fed, or given other types of care that would create a nuisance in the library building.

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

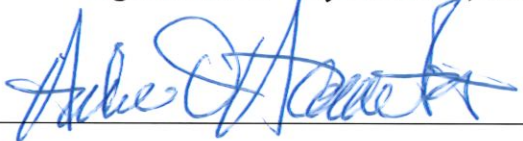
Citations and References:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

RCW 49.60.215 and RCW 49.60.040

Washington State Human Rights Commission

Signed this 24th day of March, 2025



Andrew Hamilton, City Manager



Erik Moser, Library Director