

RICHMOND REDEVELOPMENT & HOUSING AUTHORITY

TITLE: SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES	POLICY NO.:
PERSONNEL:	EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/16/2025
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: STEVEN B. NESMITH	SUPERCEDES OR REPLACES POLICY NUMBER/DATED: N/A

I. PURPOSE

The Richmond and Redevelopment and Housing Authority (“RRHA”) is committed to operating all its housing programs fairly and impartially. This commitment includes providing programs in a way that does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. *See* 24 C.F.R. §§ 8.4; 28 C.F.R. 35.130

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, RRHA must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973). *See* 24 C.F.R. §§ 8.2; 35.102. These laws provide that no qualified individual with a disability should, only because of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under RRHA’s housing programs.

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of these Service and Assistance Animal Policy and Procedures, and in accordance with applicable state and federal law and regulation, RRHA shall allow Service and Assistance Animals to those applicants and participants with a disability. Approved assistance or service animals are not subject to RRHA’s Pet Policy, other than approval, care, and handling requirements.

RRHA commits to grant service and assistance animals, unless doing so would create an undue financial and/or administrative burden or result in a fundamental alteration of the relevant program.

II. DEFINITION OF A “DISABILITY”

A person with a disability means an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. *See* 24 C.F.R. §§ 8.3; 28 C.F.R. 35.108.

Major life activities include functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

III. DEFINITION “SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE ANIMAL”

1. Service Animal:

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. *See* 28 CFR 35.104.

A miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability. *See* 28 CFR § 35.136.

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The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

2. Assistance Animal:

Animals that work, provide assistance, or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, as well as, animals that provide emotional support or alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals are not pets.

IV. PROCEDURES

Residents of RRHA with disabilities are permitted to have assistance or service animals. RRHA residents or potential residents who need an assistance or service animal as a reasonable accommodation must request the accommodation in accordance with RRHA's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedures. RRHA may not approve a request if it would impose an undue financial burden or fundamentally alter the program. The request may also be denied if the specific animal in question poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

Requests for assistance or service animals require that the:

1. Person seeking to use and live with the animal has a disability; and
2. Person making the request has a disability related need for an assistance or service animal

Assistance or service animals are not considered pets and thus are not subject to the requirements of RRHA's Pet Policy other than approval, care, and handling requirements, in accordance with 24 C.F.R. §§ 5.303 and 960.705, and as outlined in ACOP Chapter 17 "Pet Policy" Sections E, F and G. In particular, assistance or service animals are excluded from any breed and weight restrictions contained in the RRHA's pet policy. Additionally, RRHA will not require pet fees or deposits for assistance animals or service animals.

RRHA will not request the resident or potential resident to provide supporting documentation that the animal is a service animal, nor require that the animal perform certain tasks, provides assistance, or emotional support with respect to an individual's disability. However, RRHA may request that the resident or potential resident complete a verification of disability form pursuant to RRHA's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedures.

Residents must register their animal with their Property Manager BEFORE it is brought onto RRHA's property, and must update the registration annually (during annual recertification) at the Property Management Office. The registration must include a certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian or a local authority empowered to inoculate animals (or designated agent of such an authority) stating that the animal has received all inoculations required by applicable law. Residents must provide the name, address, phone number of one or more responsible parties who

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can care for the animal if the owner dies, is incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to care for the animal.