

# Bethel College Service Animal Policy

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Bethel College recognizes the need for some individuals, due to the nature and severity of their disability, to utilize a service animal while on campus and within campus facilities. This policy defines the context, rules and documentation requirements that must be met prior to the introduction of a service animal on campus and/or within college facilities, and while the service animal is working and/or residing on campus. These guidelines have been developed with the understanding that most service animals working on the college campus will be dogs. If another kind of animal is to be employed as a service animal on campus, the partner (person with a disability) should contact the Office of Student Life at 316.284.5324 or the Director of the Center for Academic Development at 316.284.5333 (if a student), and the Bethel College Business Office at 316.284.5277 (for faculty and/or staff) as soon as possible to explore any additional health or safety concerns.

The following definitions apply to this protocol.

**Partner/Handler:** A person with a service animal. A person with a disability is called a partner; a person without a disability is called a handler.

**Pet:** A domesticated animal that only serves a role in providing leisure companionship to its owner. Pets are not the same as service animals and are NOT permitted inside Bethel College facilities.

**Service Animal:** According to the U. S. Department of Justice, service animals are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, protecting people having a seizure and other special tasks. Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. The most common service animal is a dog but a few other animals have been presented as service animals. Service animals are working animals, not pets. A person with a disability uses a service animal as an auxiliary aid, similar to using a cane, crutches or a wheelchair. Service animals may perform tasks including: guiding wheelchairs, turning lights on and off, retrieving objects from the floor, opening doors, pushing buttons on elevators and helping someone who has fallen from a wheelchair back into the wheelchair.

A service animal is sometimes called an assistance animal (*Disability Compliance for Higher Education 2006 Year Book*.) There are numerous types of assistance animals, including: guide dogs used by persons with visual impairments, hearing dogs, signal dogs for autistic individuals, and seizure response dogs.

**Team:** A person with a disability, or a handler, and her or his service animal. The twosome works as a cohesive team in accomplishing the tasks of everyday living.

**Therapy Animal:** Any animal with a primary role of providing a person with a disability emotional comfort. These animals are not required to undergo specialized training. Therapy animals are not the same as service animals in that they are not individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. A therapy animal does not assist an individual with a disability in the activities of daily living. The therapy animal does not accompany a person with a disability all the time, unlike a service animal that is always with its partner. Under the ADA, "comfort," "therapy," or "emotional support animals" do not meet the definition of a service animal. A request to have a therapy

animal in campus housing is considered a request for accommodation and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**Trainee:** An animal undergoing training to become a service animal. A trainee will be housebroken and fully socialized. To be fully socialized means the animal will not, except under rare occasions, bark, yip, growl or make disruptive noises; will have a good temperament and disposition; will not show fear; will not be upset or agitated when it sees another animal; and will not be aggressive. A trainee will be under the control of the handler, who may or may not have a disability. If the trainee begins to show improper behavior, the handler will act immediately to correct the animal or will remove the animal from the premises.

The College permits use of service animals *only* as defined in this protocol. This means 1) an individual must have a disability as defined by the ADA, and 2) the accompanying animal must be trained to do specific tasks for the qualified individual.

### **Documentation Requirements:**

- **Students** must provide appropriate documentation of their disability that clearly and explicitly explains the need for a service animal and its specific functions to the Office of Student Life. This information will also be shared with the Director of the Center for Academic Development to coordinate necessary classroom accommodations. At least ten (10) business days advance notice is recommended in order to make appropriate plans to meet student/animal needs. Additionally, students requiring a service animal who plan to reside in the residence halls must complete a Request for Consideration and comply with the Bethel College Service Animal Policy.
- **Faculty** should provide their documentation to the Bethel College Business Office
- **Visitors** do not need to submit documentation, but must comply with the Bethel College Service Animal Policy.
- **Animals** must meet license requirements of the town of the animal's residence.
  - **Health** – The animal must be clean and in good health.
  - **Training** – Verification that the animal meets minimum training standards.
  - **Identification** – The animal must wear some type of easily recognized identification symbol (i.e., harness, backpack).

### **Behavior of Service Animals**

The supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of the animal's partner/handler. The animal must be under partner/handler control at all times. The animal must be as unobtrusive as possible. Injuries to or caused by the service animal must be reported to the Office of Student Life within 24 hours.

Bethel College reserves the right to require that the service or therapy animal be removed from campus immediately if the following control requirements are not met.

### **The service animal must ...**

- maintain proper hygiene and be free of odor, and pests (fleas, ticks, etc.)
- not exhibit aggressive behavior

- not sniff people, store shelves, tables in eating areas, or personal belongings of others.
- not initiate contact with someone without the partner's direct permission.
- not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others, such as barking, whining, or growling.
- avoid excessive personal grooming in public settings.
- not block an aisle or passageway.
- be trained to avoid the attraction to food in common areas
- never be fed table scraps while in the cafeteria
- be on a leash at all times and should never be permitted to wander around off leash except if the animal is working.
- must be under the complete and total control of the animal at all times.
- must be as unobtrusive as possible.
- not enter kitchens and food preparation areas.
- not enter areas such as science labs if the lab supervisor has reason to believe the animal's presence would compromise the environment or if the environment posed a physical danger for the animal.

**Exclusion for behavior:** A service animal may be excluded from the campus when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. This may include, but is not limited to: disruption, not under the control of the partner/handler, the service animal not being housebroken, health, cleanliness, and safety or when it would cause a fundamental alteration to standard Bethel College operating procedures. Should the animal be excluded due to being out of control, Bethel College will give the individual who uses the service animal the option of continuing to attend the College without having the service animal on the premises.

**Consequences for behavior:** When an assistance animal is determined to be out of control, the infraction will be treated on an individual basis through the Office of Student Life or the Bethel College Business Office. If the animal poses a threat to the safety of others, the City of North Newton may be part of the collaborative team to determine the outcome of the behavior. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, muzzling a barking dog, refresher training for the animal and its partner, or exclusion from Bethel College facilities.

**Liability:** The partner/handler of an animal is personally responsible for any damages to a facility or sponsored event, and is responsible for cleaning up after the animal, including voided waste. If a person with a disability cannot physically clean up after their service animal, the partner/handler may request an exception to this rule. Exceptions to this rule will be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Areas of Access:** The service animal must be permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas of campus where students, employees, or members of the public are normally allowed to go. An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from others.

However, Bethel College may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health or safety restrictions, where service animals may be in danger, or where their use may compromise the integrity of research due to the presence of chemicals and/or organisms. Such restrictions may include, but are not limited to the following areas: research laboratories, classrooms with demonstration/research

animals, or areas where protective clothing is required. Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

**Residence Hall Conditions:** Students with service animals are not automatically assigned to a private room. Students with service animals will be matched with potential roommates to whom contact has been made to prevent possible incompatibilities such as allergies or other concerns. If a single occupancy room is requested and approved, the standard single occupancy room rate will apply. Any damages caused by a service animal (e.g., room furnishings, roommate belongings, common area carpet, etc.) will be the responsibility of the student/handler.

**Conflicting Disabilities:** If a person has a disabling condition that involves an allergic reaction to animals, they may contact the Office of Student Life or the Bethel College Business Office to report the concern. The person making the complaint must provide supporting medical documentation to support that complaint. Action will be taken to consider the needs of both the complainant and the partner/handler to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

Portions of this document were adapted from information from the following agencies &/or institutions:

- [www.ADA.gov](http://www.ADA.gov)
- Clinton Community College
- Missouri State University
- Stockton College
- The College of Saint Elizabeth