



Assistance Animal Policy and Procedure

Waynesburg University (WU) recognizes the important role that an assistance animal can play in providing support to an individual with a disability. An “assistance animal” is an animal that is specifically designated by a qualified medical or mental health provider as affording an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy campus housing, provided there is a link between the individual’s disability and the assistance the animal provides. Assistance animals include emotional support animals. Unlike service animals (which are covered by WU’s separate Service Animal Policy), assistance animals are not trained to perform work or tasks. Assistance animals are different from regular pets. Students who wish to request to keep a pet on campus should consult the University’s separate pet policy.

The University considers requests for individuals with a disability to be accompanied by an assistance animal on campus on a case-by-case basis. The following Assistance Animal Policy is an agreement between the University and students with assistance animals (hereafter referred to as the “owner” or “owners”).

WU reserves the right to amend this Assistance Animal policy and procedures at any time, as circumstances require.

I. Important Information for Students

Accommodations for assistance animals are reserved for qualified students with disabilities. Disability is defined as an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Documentation to support a request for an assistance animal must meet the following criteria:

- Identify the name and credentials of a licensed third-party medical or mental health professional (e.g., licensed professional counselor, licensed social worker, or physician) who does not have a family or personal relationship with the student;
- Verify that the student is a person with a disability;
- Confirm that the student and provider have an established therapeutic relationship;
- Describe the connection between the student’s disability and the use of the assistance animal, and,
- Explain how the animal being requested is necessary to afford the student, as a person with a disability, an equal opportunity to use and enjoy on-campus housing and other facilities.

Documentation should be current and up-to-date, typically three years old or less. If the student’s disability varies significantly over time, Disability Services may request more recent documentation.

*To minimize delays in processing requests for assistance animals, it is recommended that students submit the **Assistance Animal Information Request Form** to their health providers. Students with any questions about appropriate documentation are encouraged to consult with the Disability Services Coordinator.*

Once documentation is received, the Disability Services Coordinator will meet with the student to engage in the interactive process to determine whether the request can be approved.

Waynesburg University may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is a reasonable accommodation or in assigning housing for individuals with assistance animals:

- The animal would impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the University;
- The animal would fundamentally alter the essential nature of the University's operations;
- The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to safety or health of the individual or others, that cannot be reduced or eliminated with reasonable modifications, such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others, or potential transmission of zoonotic diseases; or
- The animal causes or has caused substantial physical damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear despite any reasonable accommodation that could eliminate or reduce the physical damage.

In most cases, only one assistance animal is permitted per student/housing assignment.

Assistance animals are NOT permitted in University housing at any time without first receiving approval and clearance from the Disability Services Coordinator. Individuals found with unauthorized animals in University housing are subject to disciplinary sanctions.

A. Housing Accommodation Deadlines

Assistance animal requests are subject to the University's priority housing deadlines. Returning students will receive biannual notification of priority housing deadlines through Waynesburg University email.

Waynesburg University Priority Deadlines for Housing Accommodations

Fall, new students – July 1

Fall, returning students – March 1

Spring, new students – November 15

Spring, returning students – November 15

While the University will consider housing accommodation requests submitted at any point, it cannot guarantee housing accommodation for the next semester of occupancy after the established deadlines have lapsed. In some instances, students who qualify for housing accommodations but have submitted requests after priority deadlines may be put on a wait list. Further, housing accommodation requests submitted during high-volume periods (e.g., August and January) may require additional time to process.

II. Assistance Animal Owner Responsibilities

The following are regulations that apply to all approved assistance animals and their owners who live in campus residence. All assistance animal owners are expected and required to abide by these regulations. Any requests for exceptions must be discussed with the Office of Residence Life and Housing and/or the Disability Services Office (DSO).

1. Students are required to ensure that the animal is well cared for at all times. Any suspected or observed issues related to animal abuse or neglect will be reported to the proper investigatory authorities and may subject the student to WU disciplinary action.
2. Residence Life/Housing staff and university personnel may enter a student's room as needed for maintenance, repairs, and in case of emergency or policy violations. This includes inspections during fire drills, hall closings, and during the academic year with or without notice. Inspections will be conducted as needed to ensure compliance with the assistance animal policy and to investigate any complaints. Animals should be secured in a cage or crate when the owner is not in the room for both the animal's safety and the safety of staff or emergency personnel.
3. Generally, assistance animals should be at least one year old. The student must comply with all state and local laws pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification. Documentation verifying that the animal has received all required vaccinations must be provided to the Disability Services Coordinator prior to bringing the animal to campus. Dogs must have received core vaccines against distemper, adenovirus, parvovirus, parainfluenza, and rabies, and cats must have vaccines against feline herpesvirus, feline calicivirus, and distemper (commonly combined in the FVRCP vaccine) and rabies. All other animals must have had the appropriate vaccination series for that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current. Proof of vaccination must be filed with the Disability Services Office and updated at the beginning of each academic year. If an animal becomes ill, the owner is responsible for ensuring it receives necessary medical attention. It is strongly recommended that assistance animals are spayed/neutered.
4. Assistance animal owners must take reasonable precautions to prevent their pet from flea and tick infestation. Flea and tick infestations must be exterminated promptly through a professional extermination company determined by the college. Housing and Residence Life will coordinate and work through the University pest control operator to provide the service. Students are responsible for all extermination costs required during their residency or upon move-out.
5. All assistance animals must be housebroken. It is the expectation that owners pick up after their animals anywhere on University property. Animal waste must be bagged and disposed of in appropriate/designated receptacles. When cleaning an assistance animal's habitat and waste area, care must be taken to ensure that no bedding, litter, feces, gravel, sand, or cedar chips are dumped in drains in WU facilities. Animal accidents must be cleaned up promptly using appropriate cleaning products. If an animal urinates or defecates in an indoor space outside the student's room, the owner must notify staff and will be responsible for the cost of such cleaning.
6. Owners are financially responsible for all damage caused by their assistance animal. Damage may include but are not limited to bodily injury, property damage (including furniture, flooring, urine and feces stains or odors, etc.), cleaning beyond normal wear and tear, and any repairs that are deemed necessary after the owner and assistance animal have vacated the residence hall. The University shall have the right to bill the individual's account for unmet obligations under this provision.
7. In addition to the provisions set forth in this policy, owners are required to comply with all applicable state and local laws and regulations relating to the health, housing, and maintenance of their assistance animal ESA.

8. Any roommates or suitemates of the owner must sign an agreement that the assistance animal may live in the room. If irresolvable conflicts arise in relation to an assistance animal, either the owner and animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates may be moved to a more suitable location. This will be determined by the Office of Residence Life and Housing and the Disability Services Office.

9. Assistance animals are not permitted in campus building space other than the assigned room of the student with whom they are registered unless express written permission is granted by the Disability Services Office. This includes all residence hall common spaces as well as academic buildings, administrative buildings, offices, suites, and student living spaces. Assistance animals are not permitted in any common space other than for transport in and out of the building. When outside of a student's room for any reason, the animal must be fully under control using a carrier, harness, leash, etc.

10. Assistance animal owners must take reasonable precautions to prevent their animal from escaping their care. Assistance animal owners must notify the Office of Residence Life and Housing as soon as they become aware that the animal has escaped. Assistance animal owners are responsible for any action the University must take to locate/capture a missing animal as well as any damage their animal causes due to their escape.

11. The University provision for assistance animals applies only to currently enrolled students residing in University housing and it only applies to the owner's room. Unless otherwise required by law or permission is granted by the Disability Services Coordinator, guests are not permitted to bring animals into University residences, even if such visits are welcome by roommates and others.

12. The owner must make proper arrangements for the removal and care of an approved assistance animal while the residence halls are closed for breaks/holidays or if the owner becomes ill or unavailable. The need to care for an approved assistance animal is not a valid reason for permission to stay on campus over a break or any other period when University housing is closed.

13. Assistance animals should not be left alone overnight or for any period of time that would require outside assistance with animal care. If the owner must be away, the animal must be cared for off campus or taken with the owner, including overnights and weekends away from campus. The owner may not give access to their room to anyone to care for the animal. The University will not permit other individuals to access the owner's residential space for the purpose of animal care. Owners who cannot easily find casual care for animals while away from campus must contact local or regional kennels and/or boarding facilities. The cost of such boarding the animal is the responsibility of the owner. If an assistance animal owner leaves their animal on campus overnight or for any period of time that would require outside care, the University reserves the right to remove the animal from campus by either relocating the animal to a boarding facility at the owner's expense or relinquishing the animal to a humane shelter.

14. Reasonable behavior is expected from assistance animal while on campus. If an animal exhibits unacceptable behavior, the owner is expected to employ appropriate training techniques to correct the situation. If an assistance animal is determined to be out of control, the infraction will be decided on an individual basis. The owner is fully responsible for the actions of the assistance animal. The owner is held to the code of conduct in relation to any behavior caused by the animal. Consequences for misconduct may include, but are not limited to, a plan for correction of disruption

and refresher training for the animal and owner. In cases of repeated or severe policy violations, disturbance, damage, as outlined in Item 15, Waynesburg University reserves the right to remove the animal from campus.

15. Waynesburg University may use the following factors, among others, in making the determination to remove an assistance animal from campus housing:

- a. The animal or the animal's presence create an unreasonable disturbance or interference with the campus community;
- b. The owner fails to keep the assistance animal under effective control;
- c. The approved assistance animal is no longer needed to assist with or provide support for a disability;
- d. The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a campus program;
- e. Failure on the part of the owner to maintain a clean and healthy environment for the animal;
- f. Inhumane treatment of the animal of any kind;
- g. Substantial damage to University property caused by the animal;
- h. The animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
- i. The owner does not comply with the regulations set forth in this policy; or
- j. Waynesburg University discovers that false or misleading information was provided in the owner's application for approval of an assistance animal.

16. Should the animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligation for the remainder of the housing contract.

17. Assistance animal owners are responsible for ensuring that their animal does not interfere with the community or create difficulties for fellow students. Any concerns within the community should be brought to Disability Services or Residence Life staff for discussion and assistance in resolving.

18. The owner must notify the Director of Housing and Residence Life in writing if the assistance animal will no longer be living in the residence hall. If a student wishes to bring a different assistance animal into the residence hall, they must file a new request with the Disability Services Office.

19. If at any time an owner can no longer care for their assistance animal or is no longer permitted to keep the animal in the residence hall, they must find a humane home for it.

20. The owner will provide emergency contact information should the owner be unable to care for the assistance animal at any time. A current university student or University personnel (unless the University personnel are the parents/guardians of the student) are not appropriate choices for an emergency contact.

21. WU personnel are not required to provide care or food for any assistance animal, including but not limited to, removing the assistance animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the assistance animal and may not be held responsible for the care of, injury/death of, or loss of the animal.

22. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal of the assistance animal and a conduct referral to the Dean of Students office.

III. Assistance Animal Request Procedure

Students wishing to request an assistance animal should:

1. Complete the University's [Disability Accommodation Request Form](#);
2. Provide documentation from a licensed third-party medical or mental health professional who does not have a personal relationship with the student (e.g., licensed mental health therapist, social worker, or physician). Documentation may be uploaded to the Disability Accommodation Request Form or direct to the Disability Services Coordinator:

Disability Services Office

Email: dso@waynesburg.edu

Mail: C/O Disability Services Coordinator

Waynesburg University

51 West College Street

Waynesburg, PA 15370

Fax -- 412-218-3705

Documentation to support a request for an assistance animal must meet the following criteria:

- Identify the name and credentials of a licensed third-party medical or mental health professional (e.g., licensed professional counselor, licensed social worker, or physician) who does not have a family or personal relationship with the student;
- Verify that the student is a person with a disability;
- Confirm that the student and provider have an established therapeutic relationship;
- Describe the connection between the student's disability and the use of the assistance animal, and
- Explain how the animal being requested is necessary to afford the student, as a person with a disability, an equal opportunity to use and enjoy on-campus housing facilities.

Documentation should be current and up-to-date, typically three years old or less. If the student's disability varies significantly over time, Disability Services may request more recent documentation.

*To minimize delays in processing requests for an assistance animal, it is recommended that students submit the **Assistance Animal Information Request Form** to their health providers.*

Important: *Occasionally, Disability Services staff may require further information from a student's treating provider to evaluate an accommodation request during steps 2 and 3 of the Assistance Animal request accommodation procedure. The **Assistance Animal Information Request Form** includes an option to authorize the Disability Services Coordinator to solicit additional information from the treating professional who provided documentation. If the student has not signed this waiver, they will be notified and requested to complete a release of information form.*

3. Meet with the Disability Services Coordinator to engage in the interactive process, discuss the disability-related need for the assistance animal, and address responsibilities associated with having an animal on a university campus.
4. The Disability Services Coordinator will communicate approval or denial of the requested accommodation to the student in writing and will notify Housing/Residence Life staff of approved animals. When necessary, Housing/Residence Life staff will assist the owner in determining an appropriate residential placement and will communicate with other residential students in close proximity to the approved animal to proactively address any conflicts related to serious allergies or other concerns. If a request for an assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation is denied, the Disability Services Coordinator will engage in the interactive process with the student to identify if there is an alternative accommodation that can be provided.
5. Before the approved animal receives final clearance to live in campus housing, the student must provide the Disability Services Coordinator with up-to-date licensing and vaccination records for the animal as per Section II, Item 2, an Assistance Animal contract signed by the approved student and his/her roommates or suitemates, a digital photograph of the animal, and an emergency contact who may be notified if the student is unable to care for the animal for any reason.
6. The Disability Services Coordinator will notify Residence Life staff when all documentation has been submitted and the student is cleared to bring the animal to campus. No animal may be brought to campus prior to final approval from the Disability Services Coordinator and submission of all appropriate documentation. Students who bring unauthorized animals to campus prior to final clearance are subject to disciplinary sanctions.
7. Previously approved assistance animal owners will be asked to renew accommodations and submit updated veterinary paperwork annually. The Disability Services Coordinator/Office reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify ongoing disability-related need for housing accommodation when necessary.

IV. Grievance/Appeal Procedure

If a student disagrees with the denial of a request for an assistance animal, the student should follow the [Disability Services Appeal and Grievance Policy](#).

V. Owner Signatures

By my signature, I agree that I have read, understand, and will abide by all terms stipulated in Waynesburg University's Assistance Animal Policy/Procedure.

Assistance Animal Owner Name: _____

Assistance Animal Owner Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Assistance Animal Information Request Form

Providers need not use this specific form, but all the information requested here is necessary to consider the request. This form is provided as a convenience.

An "assistance animal" is an animal that is specifically designated by a qualified medical or mental health provider as affording an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy campus housing, provided there is a link between the individual's disability and the assistance the animal provides. Assistance animals include emotional support animals. Assistance animals are not service animals, which are trained to perform specific work or tasks. Assistance animals also are different from regular pets..

1. Student's Name: _____
 Re: Proposed Assistance Animal:
 2. Type of animal: _____ 3. Age of animal: _____

The above-named student has requested that the University allow the student to have their assistance animal reside in University housing as a reasonable accommodation for a disability. So that we may better evaluate the request for this accommodation, please answer the following questions.

Information About the Student's Disability

4. Federal law defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that ***substantially limits*** one or more major life activities. Does the student have a disability, a.k.a., a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or bodily functions? Examples of major life activities include impairments to seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for one's self, learning, speaking, working and other impairments that may substantially limit at least one major life activity or bodily function. If yes, please describe which major life activities or bodily functions are impaired.

5. When did you first meet with the student regarding this disability, and in what context (that is, was it a face-to-face meeting or a virtual interaction)? _____
6. When did you last interact with the student regarding this disability? _____

Information About the Proposed Assistance Animal

7. Does the student need an assistance animal because the animal does work, performs tasks, provide assistance, and/or provides therapeutic emotional support related to the student's disability? If yes, please describe how the assistance animal does work, performs tasks, provides assistance, or provides therapeutic emotional support that reduces the symptoms and/or effects of the student's disability.

8. Is the animal named here one that you specifically prescribed as part of treatment for the student, or is it an animal that you believe will have a beneficial effect for the student while in residence on campus?

9. Is there evidence that an assistance animal has helped this student in the past or currently?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. If we need additional information, we may contact you at a later date. The named student has signed this form (below) indicating written permission to share additional information with us in support of the request.

Please provide contact information, sign and date this questionnaire (below), and return it to:

Disability Services Office

Email: dso@waynesburg.edu

Mail: C/O Disability Services Coordinator

Waynesburg University

51 West College Street

Waynesburg, PA 15370

Fax -- 412-218-3705

Provider Contact information:

Address:

Telephone:

FAX and/or Email address:

By my signature below, I verify that the information provided in this form is my professional opinion and that I have personal knowledge of this student (i.e., knowledge used to diagnose, advise, counsel, treat or provide health care or other disability-related services to the patient/client).

Professional Signature: _____

Type of License/Certification/Degree (if applicable): _____

License #/Certification #: _____

STUDENT (please sign this form before providing it to your medical or mental health provider to complete):

By signing below, I consent to allowing my health care provider to share any information relevant to my need for an assistance animal as an accommodation, as shown on this form, with *(personnel from the Disability Services office)* for the next 60 days.

Signature

Date