

Service Animal Policy

Updated: July 10, 2023

Siena College is committed to compliance with applicable state and federal laws relating to individuals with disabilities. Only service animals, as defined by the American's with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act are allowed in the general campus facilities. Siena College recognizes and supports the assistance that a trained service animal can provide a student or an employee with a disability.

Definitions

Accommodation: A modification or adjustment in policies, procedures, or work/housing/school environment to enable a student to partake in equal opportunities and access to College benefits and services based on a documented disability.

Assistance Animal: This is the umbrella term that encompasses service animals and emotional support animals. Service animals and emotional support animals are not pets; they are animals that provide assistance, perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptom or effects of a person's disability.

Service Animal: An animal that is individually trained (or in the process of being trained) to do work or perform specific tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. The work or tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Examples of a Service Animal includes but is not limited to:

- A dog that is trained to serve as a travel tool for individuals who are blind or have impaired vision.
- A dog that has been trained to alert deaf persons or those with significant hearing loss, to sounds such as knocks on doors, fire alarms, phone ringing, etc.
- A dog that has been trained to assist a person with a mobility or health impairment. Duties include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, assisting a person to get up after a fall, etc.
- A dog trained to assist persons with seizure disorders. Some dogs are trained to predict seizures and provide advance warning.

Emotional Support Animal (ESA): An animal that provides emotional support to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Some, but not all, animals that assist persons with disabilities are professionally trained.

Individual with a disability: For the purpose of this policy, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

The care and supervision of the service animal is the responsibility of the handler. The College will identify safe areas to allow for basic needs of the animal. The animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether unless the handler is unable to use such equipment or it would interfere with the animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the animal must be otherwise supervised (e.g., voice control, signals, etc.). The service animal will be viewed by the campus as an extension of the individual student or employee and therefore subject to the code of conduct of the College in the case of the student and the applicable governing policies in the case of an employee.

Service Animal Accommodation Request Process

1. The Office of Accessibility should be informed of any individual, student or employee, if an individual plans to or has a service animal on campus and recommends registering with the Office of Accessibility.
2. If the animal is residing on campus it is the owners/handlers responsibility to comply with the Town of Colonie's licensing policy. Requirements include current vaccination against rabies at the time of application. Students will be expected to apply for a license with the Town of Colonie even if the animal is registered with another municipality. There is no fee associated with this process for a service animal.
3. The animal should be in good health, well-groomed and care should be taken for flea and odor control. Consideration of others should be taken when providing maintenance and hygiene of the animal.
4. A student may generally only request one (1) service animal for accompaniment. If you need more than one service animal, please contact the Office of Accessibility.
5. The service animal must have all appropriate vaccinations (i.e. rabies shots) and provide documentation of the vaccinations. Updated vaccinations are required to be submitted upon expiration.
6. Requests for a service animal must be made each academic year. Prior approval does not guarantee future approval. For disabilities that are obvious and/or visible, it is not necessary for you to request approval. However, it is advised that you register your service animal with the Office of Disability Services to avoid mis-identification or other problems.
7. While not required, the service animal may wear a vest identifying they are working animal. However, an animal that is not a service animal may not wear a vest, collar or similar accessory identifying it as a service animal.

Steps to Request a Service Animal

1. Register with the Office of Accessibility. Please see our [How to Register Guide](#).
2. Student may choose to submit documentation to help The Office of Accessibility to better understand the student's needs.
3. Veterinarian confirmation that all appropriate vaccinations, including rabies and distemper, have been administered and are up-to-date. Appropriate animal licensure is also required.
4. The Service Animal Emergency Contact Agreement must be signed and submitted to the Office of Accessibility.
5. Once the request and documentation are submitted, the Office of Accessibility will reach out to the student to schedule a meeting to discuss the request, the Service Animal Policy, and the Service Animal Agreement.

The Office of Accessibility will approve or deny the request for a service animal and notify the appropriate parties of the decision within five business days.

An animal will be approved if the student provides sufficient response to the questions below.

Is the animal required because of a disability?
What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Reasons that a request for a service animal may be denied include, but are not limited to:

The service animal would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others.
The service animal is disruptive (e.g. excessive or uncontrolled barking).

Student Responsibilities

I agree to the following:

1. By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements outlined here and in the College's Service Animal Policy.
2. I am aware that it is my responsibility to notify the residents of my room, wing, floor or townhouse that an exception to the Community Living Guidelines has been granted and a Service Animal has been approved to live in their community. I give Siena College permission to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my Service Animal (e.g., Community Living staff, potential and/or actual roommate(s)/neighbor(s)) that I will be living with a Service Animal as an accommodation. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the Service Animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with its presence. I further recognize that the presence of the Service Animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in College housing and agree that College staff may acknowledge the presence of my Service Animal, and explain that under certain circumstances, individuals with disabilities are permitted to Service Animal in residence halls. I will hold Siena College harmless from any liability for disclosing such information.
3. I acknowledge that there will be an "Animal Working" marker on the door of my specific room/ suite/ house letting the Community Living staff and community members know there is a working animal inside the room.
4. I acknowledge that if I require service by the Facilities Department in my room, suite or house, I must arrange a time when I can be present for the service to occur.
5. I will maintain appropriate documentation of vaccinations for the animal as required by law, and will provide documentation of same to the College. Once my animal's vaccinations expire I understand it is my responsibility to provide the Office of Accessibility with updated vaccination records.
6. The animal must be fully housebroken. I will be responsible for cleaning up after the animal outside and inside. It is expected that the Service Animal will be walked outside to relieve themselves. All waste will be disposed of immediately, if outside, or daily, if inside, in the dumpster outside the building.
7. When I take my Service Animal out of my room, it must be under my physical control at all times.

8. The health and safety of the animal is my responsibility. I will provide appropriate food, water and waste handling.
9. I am responsible for instructing others on appropriate interactions with my Service Animal and setting clear expectations of behavior. If I encounter resistance of others to comply with my provided instructions, I will notify the Office of Accessibility and seek assistance resolving this concern.
10. The animal will not create a nuisance or disturb other community members including, but not limited to, noise, such as excessive barking and odors.
11. I am responsible for any damage or injuries the animal may (intentionally or unintentionally) cause. Any excessive damage or cleaning in the room due to the animal will be treated under our "damage billing" procedure.
12. I understand that my animal must be on a continuous flea and tick prevention. If a flea and/or tick outbreak is detected in my room, wing, floor or townhouse, I will be responsible for the cost of eradication.
13. The animal may not remain in the room during breaks and other times when the College is closed. I am responsible for finding suitable housing off campus for the animal during these times if I am not approved to be on campus.
14. I may not leave the animal unattended in my room for more than a reasonable number of hours (12 hours). Additionally if I am going to be away from campus overnight I am responsible for finding care for the animal off-campus. I understand that I cannot leave my animal with my roommate or friend.
15. I understand that if I am unable to take care of my animal (hospitalization, etc.) my emergency contact will be notified to come remove the animal until I am back on campus. My emergency contact has signed and submitted the Service Animal Emergency Contact Agreement.
16. The College is not responsible for the illness, injury or death of my Service Animal while the Service Animal is on campus.
17. I understand that my faculty will be notified via my accommodation letter of my Service Animal.
18. I will notify Accessibility if there are any issues regarding classroom behavior and Accessibility will promptly handle the situation.

Violations of the Service Animal Policy and Service Housing Agreement

Out-of-control Behavior: A student may be directed to remove a Service Animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking excessively, running around, jumping onto people, exhibiting aggressive behavior, damaging property, etc.) and the student is unable to take effective action to control the Service Animal. Repeated instances of such behavior may result in exclusion from College facilities until the student is able to demonstrate effective control of the Service Animal.

Unkempt Animal: A student must also ensure that the Service Animal is kept clean and well-groomed. Although a Service Animal may become ill unexpectedly, the College recommends that a sick Service Animal should not be brought into housing.

Misrepresented documentation: If it is determined that documentation provided by the student misrepresented any material facts, the Service Animal may be barred from College housing.

Violating Agreement: If any provision of this policy or the related Service Animal Agreement is violated, the student may be required to immediately remove the Service Animal from College housing.

Complaints

Any reports of noise, odor, or behavioral issues will be given to the Office of Accessibility. The office will work with the student in conjunction with Community Living to rectify the situation. If it is deemed that the Service Animal Policy or Service Animal Housing Agreement was violated the student will receive a warning letter and will be required to meet with the Office of Accessibility. On the second report of a violation of the Service Animal Policy or Service Animal Housing Agreement the Office of Accessibility in conjunction with Community Living will determine if the removal of the animal is necessary.

Should the animal be removed from College Housing the student has the right to appeal this decision .The student must submit a written notice of appeal to Lois Goland (lgoland@siena.edu/ 518-782-6673) within 5 days.