



**CALVERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT GUIDELINE/POLICY/PROCEDURE**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Service Animal Policy</b>		
<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	Board of County Commissioners		
<b>RESPONSIBLE STAFF:</b>	Department of Community Resources – ADA Coordinator		
<b>ISSUE DATE:</b>	08/18/2025	<b>REVISION DATE:</b>	
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state laws by establishing clear guidelines for the presence and use of service animals in County facilities, programs, services, and activities.		
<b>APPLICABLE TO:</b>	All Calvert County Government (CCG) staff, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public.		
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>			

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>GUIDELINE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>POLICY</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>PROCEDURE</b>
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**This document needs to be reviewed/updated:**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Annually</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(Fiscal Year)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(Calendar Year)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other Interval:</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>As needed</b>	<b>Flag for review on:</b>

**1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy ensures that individuals with disabilities who utilize service animals are provided equal access to Calvert County Government programs, services, and facilities, as required by

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq., and implementing regulation 28 C.F.R. § 35.136.

This policy applies to Calvert County Government staff, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public.

## **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

### **2.1 Service Animal**

A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to perform work or tasks for a person with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental health conditions. The work or tasks must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision;
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Pulling a wheelchair or assisting with mobility or balance;
- Retrieving items or opening doors; or
- Interrupting self-harming behaviors or providing reminders for medication.

### **2.2 Miniature Horse Exception**

Under 28 C.F.R. § 35.136(i), a miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability must also be permitted, provided the animal is housebroken, under control, and its type, size, and presence do not compromise legitimate safety requirements or operations.

### **2.3 Emotional Support or Therapy Animals**

Animals that provide emotional support, companionship, or comfort, but are not trained to perform specific tasks, do not meet the ADA definition of a service animal and are not covered by this policy.

## **3.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

Calvert County Government prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and will permit service animals to accompany their handlers in all areas open to the public or participants. Employees shall ensure that individuals with service animals are treated with dignity, respect, and in accordance with federal law.

## **4.0 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 Permitted Inquiries**

When it is not obvious that a dog is a service animal, staff may ask only two questions:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?

2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Staff shall not:

- Ask about the nature of the individual's disability;
- Request documentation, licenses, or certification;
- Require the animal to demonstrate its tasks.

#### **4.2 Behavior and Control**

The service animal must be under the handler's control at all times using a leash, harness, or tether, unless such a device interferes with the animal's work or the individual's disability. In such cases, control must be maintained by voice, signal, or other effective means.

The handler is responsible for:

- The animal's behavior;
- Ensuring it is housebroken;
- Cleaning up waste.

#### **4.3 Staff Interaction**

Staff should not:

- Pet, feed, or distract a service animal;
- Attempt to separate a handler from their service animal;
- Address or interact with the animal instead of the handler.

### **5.0 REMOVAL OF SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service animals may only be excluded if:

- The animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it;
- The animal is not housebroken;
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated.

If a service animal is excluded, the individual with a disability must still be given the opportunity to receive services without the animal present.

### **6.0 MINIATURE HORSE ASSESSMENT**

Requests involving a trained miniature horse must be assessed individually. Staff may consider:

- Whether the horse is housebroken;
- Whether it is under the control of its handler;
- The facility's ability to accommodate the horse's size, weight, and type;
- Legitimate safety requirements specific to the site.

## **7.0 FEES AND LIABILITY**

Notwithstanding the fact that all dogs in Calvert County are subject to County dog licensing requirements under applicable local laws and ordinances, Calvert County Government will not impose any additional pet fees or surcharges for service animals. However, handlers may be held responsible for damage caused by their service animals to County property, to the same extent others are charged for property damage.

## **8.0 COMPLAINTS AND ENFORCEMENT**

Individuals who believe they have been unlawfully denied access or treated unfairly due to the presence of a service animal may contact:

### **ADA Coordinator**

Calvert County Department of Community Resources

175 Main St

Prince Frederick, MD, 20678

Phone: (410) 535-1600 ext. 8802

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm

Written requests can also be emailed to [adacoordinator@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:adacoordinator@calvertcountymd.gov)

For more information, visit <https://www.calvertcountymd.gov/3749/Reasonable-Accommodations-ADA-Compliance>

Complaints may also be filed directly with the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division at <https://www.ada.gov/file-a-complaint/> or by calling 800-514-0301 (Voice) / 833-610-1264 (TTY).

## **9.0 TRAINING AND POLICY REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed as needed or upon updates to federal regulations. The County shall provide ADA training to all relevant staff, including information about service animal rights and responsibilities.