

SAMPLE POLICY ON ASSISTANCE ANIMALS STAFF GUIDELINES

At _____, it is our duty as a landlord/housing provider to make reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities requiring the assistance of an assistance animal.

Assistance Animals

Please keep in mind: Even though we do not allow pets, we do allow assistance animals. Assistance animals are not pets as pets are animals living with their owners for the purposes of affection and company. Assistance animals, however, are animals “*that work, provide assistance, or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or animals that provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability.*”

There are no restrictions as to what kind of species an assistance animal is, nor are there any height or weight restrictions. Assistance animals may be referred to by the tenant or potential tenant a number of different ways, including, but not limited to:

- **Service Animal**
- **Emotional Support Animal**
- **Guide Animal**
- **Companion Animal**

Assistance animals are used to assist persons with disabilities in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

- **Guiding a person who is blind**
- **Alerting deaf persons to sounds such as the doorbell ringing or a smoke alarm sounding**
- **Alerting a person to an oncoming seizure, as well as protecting that person during the seizure**
- **Opening doors and fetching medicines for persons with mobility impairments**
- **Ameliorating and/or reducing the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or depression**

Reasonable Accommodation

If a tenant or potential tenant requests the use of an assistance animal and has an observable disability (i.e. in a wheelchair) we **do not**:

- Inquire about the severity or nature of a tenant’s disability.
- Require verification of the disability from a health care provider.

If the tenant or potential tenant’s disability is not obvious or you are speaking with that person by phone, we do:

- Require a statement by a health care provider that verifies the person’s disability and explains the need for the assistance animal. Once again, we **do not** inquire about the severity or nature of a tenant’s disability.

Iowa Civil Rights Commission Sample Policy

In either case, *we do*:

- Require a statement from a health care provider that verifies the need for the assistance animal and explains how the animal provides assistance to the tenant or potential tenant.

If a tenant or potential tenant requests a reasonable accommodation regarding their assistance animal, please take the following steps:

- Ask them to fill out an Assistance Animal Request Form
- If the potential tenant makes the request by phone, then you should complete the “Assistance Animal Request by Telephone Form” for the potential tenant and ask the applicant to provide the needed documentation
- Ask the tenant or potential tenant to provide a statement by health care provider indicating the necessity for the assistance animal
- Inform the applicant their request will be reviewed and a written statement approving/denying their request will be issued to them within two weeks
- Inform the applicant additional information may be requested in order to further review the request

NOTE: If you have any comments regarding this policy or the attached form, please speak with _____’s manager/owner as they are informed on the law regarding assistance animals.

For further information, please contact:

Iowa Civil Rights Commission
Grimes Building, 400 E. 14th St.
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
515-281-4121 or 1-800-457-4416
www.state.ia.us/government/crc

HUD – Regional Fair Housing Office
400 State Ave., Room 200
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
913-551-6993 or 1-800-743-5323
www.hud.gov

