

SERVICE ANIMALS ON CAMPUS

Service Animals Defined: Federal & State

The term “service animal” refers to a guide dog, signal dog or other animal that is individually trained or is being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Examples of service animal performance tasks include, but are not limited to: guiding a person with impaired vision, pulling a wheelchair, alerting a person with impaired hearing to a sound, and fetching dropped items.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allows service animals to accompany their handlers in public places and businesses. These animals are granted exceptions to pet-related regulations.

Persons with a disability requiring the use of a service animal must be allowed on MPTC’s campus per federal civil rights law, Title III, 28 CFR Sec 36.104. Service animals are defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a dog, or in more limited cases, a miniature horse. The service animal must be individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person’s disability. The service animal must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. Service animals are allowed to go anywhere the general public or student is allowed to go, with few exceptions.

If admitting a service animal fundamentally alters the nature of a service, activity or program, the service animal may be prohibited. In addition, if a service animal is out of the handler’s control or if the service animal is not housebroken, the animal may be prohibited from being on campus property. Service animals must be leashed, tethered or harnessed unless doing so is not possible due to the handler’s disability. In such cases, the handler must use voice, signal or other effective means to maintain control of the animal. The handler is solely responsible for all care of the animal. The service animal must be up to date on vaccinations.

MPTC employees should not inquire about a service animal unless the animal is disruptive, acting dangerous, or otherwise presents a significant health or safety concern. Entities covered by the ADA are only able to ask two questions to those with service animals: “Is the service animal required because of a disability?” and “What task(s) is the animal trained to do?” The entities may only ask these questions if the answers are not readily apparent.

Under federal and state law, there is no requirement that a service animal be documented in an official registry or wear an identifying vest or identification tag. Certification of an animal’s training cannot be requested. A person with a disability has a general right of privacy about the disability and cannot be asked about the nature or extent of the disability. Students with service animals may voluntarily register their service animal with Disability Support Services, but it is not required.

Emotional support, therapy, comfort or companion animals are not service animals and are not allowed inside campus buildings except under specific, college-approved circumstances.

Accommodations:

Any person who uses a service animal may also qualify for accommodations to reduce barriers in attending MPTC courses,

programs, services and activities. Those individuals can request accommodations through Disability Resources.

NOTE: Allergies and fear of animals, such as dogs, are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing services to people who use service animals. If a person has an animal allergy or has a fear of dogs and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same area, both students may be accommodated.