



## Pittsfield Housing Authority

65 Columbus Avenue, Ste 1  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201-5090

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# ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY

## 1. Definitions

- **Service Animal:** A dog that is individually trained to perform specific tasks for a person with a disability. These tasks must directly relate to the individual's disability, such as guiding individuals who are blind, alerting those who are deaf, or providing support during medical emergencies. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), only dogs are recognized as service animals.
  - **Assistance Animal:** This term includes a broader category of animals that provide support to individuals with disabilities, which may include dogs, cats, or other domesticated animals. Assistance animals assist with tasks related to the individual's disability but are not required to undergo specialized training.
  - **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** A type of assistance animal that provides comfort to individuals with emotional or psychological conditions. Unlike service animals, ESAs do not require specific training to perform tasks. Their primary function is to provide companionship and alleviate symptoms associated with the individual's condition.
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## 2. Eligibility and Registration

- **Residents:** Only residents of federally subsidized housing may request to have a service animal, assistance animal, or emotional support animal.
  - **Registration Process:**
    - Residents must submit a request form that includes documentation from a licensed mental health professional or physician that outlines the need for an assistance or emotional support animal.
    - For service animals, no additional documentation is required beyond verification of the animal's status.
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## 3. General Guidelines

- **Behavior and Control:** All animals must be kept under control at all times. Residents are responsible for their animals' behavior and must ensure they do not disrupt other residents.
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## 4. Health and Safety Requirements



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- **Vaccination:** All service animals and assistance animals must be vaccinated in accordance with local health regulations.
  - **Hygiene:** Residents must maintain cleanliness in their units and common areas, including proper waste disposal.
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### 5. Reasonable Accommodations

- **Request Process:** Residents must submit requests for reasonable accommodations for assistance animals or emotional support animals through the housing authority. This includes providing necessary documentation.
  - **Evaluation:** Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The housing authority may consider the following factors:
    - Is the service animal a dog?
    - Is the dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability?
    - The impact of the animal on other residents and the property.
  - **Timely Response:** The housing authority will respond to accommodation requests promptly, typically within 14 days.
  - **Additional Documentation:** Residents may be required to provide further documentation or information if necessary to assess the request.
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### 7. Emergency and Eviction Procedures

- **Emergency Situations:** In emergencies, housing authorities will take necessary actions to ensure the safety of all residents and animals.
- **Policy Violations:** Violations of this policy may result in removal of the animal or eviction proceedings.