

Fair Housing: Assistive Animals

“No Pets Allowed”

The federal Fair Housing Act requires housing providers to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services when needed to give equal opportunity for a person with a disability to use and enjoy the place where they live. Disability is defined under the Fair Housing Act as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

If a property does not allow pets, a person with a disability can give a Reasonable Accommodation request to her housing provider and the housing provider must allow an assistive animal, when needed. This is to allow the tenant an equal use and enjoyment of the property. The person requesting the Reasonable Accommodation may need to show documentation from a qualified professional (e.g., physician, psychiatrist, social worker) to prove they have a need for the assistive animal.

Know Your Rights!

Housing providers cannot ask a tenant who requires an assistive animal to pay a pet deposit or fee for their animal. The housing provider cannot require special training for assistive animals. Finally, the provider cannot inquire about the nature or the severity of the tenant’s disability.

Assistive Animals

Assistive animals help persons with physical or psychiatric disabilities. Assistive animals can include service animals, emotional support animals, or other animals that assist a person with a disability. The terms “service,” “support,” and “assistive” can be used inter-changeably to describe the different roles of assistive animals.



Service animals perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a physical, intellectual, or mental disability. Examples include: seeing eye dogs, an animal pulling a wheelchair, or hearing dogs. Service animals do not need to be

registered with a service animal organization in order to be considered a “service animal.”

Support animals provide therapeutic benefit to a person with a mental or psychiatric disability. Support animals have been shown to be highly effective at reducing the symptoms of disabilities such as PTSD and depression.

Assistive animals do not require special training as it is often just the presence of the animal that benefits the person with a disability.

To learn about fair housing:

Idaho Legal Aid Services Inc.

Statewide Telephone Number:
208-746-7541

To file a fair housing complaint:

Intermountain Fair Housing Council
(208) 383-0695 in Boise or
1-800-717-0695 (toll free)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development (HUD)
1-800-669-9777 or 1-800-927-9275 (TDD)

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