POLICY: 6Hx28:02-03

Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President, Administrative Services

Policy Contacts: Chief Human Resources Officer

Specific Authority: 1001.64, F.S.
Law Implemented: 1001.64, F.S.

Effective Date: 12-07-2023

Date of Last Policy Review: 04-16-2026

Animals on Campus

Policy Statement:

I. Valencia College ("College") is committed to affording all individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to access College property, courses, programs, activities and employment opportunities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and Section F.S. 413.081, any individual seeking to bring a service animal onto campus is encouraged to do so freely, without prior approval from the College, or documentation that the service animal is trained to perform its duty. The College, however, reserves the right to ask the individual if: (1) the animal is required because of a disability, and (2) the work or task the animal has been trained or is in training to perform. Should the animal not fall under the definition of a service animal or the handler fails to properly manage the animal as required, the College reserves the right to request that the animal be removed from College property.

II. The College President or designee(s) may adopt procedures to implement this policy. These procedures may also address issues relating to pets, laboratory animals, and emotional support animals.

Policy History:

Adopted 1-19-83; Amended 11-18-92; Amended 9-19-00; Amended 10-16-07; Amended 2-26-20; Amended 12-07-23; Formerly Policy 6Hx28:11-02

Related Documents/Policies:

College Policy 6Hx28:2-01, Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct

College Policy 6Hx28: 02-02 Workplace Accommodations for Applicants and Employees

Procedures:

I. Definitions:

A. Service Animals: As defined by the ADAAA and 413.081, F.S., a service animal is an animal (a dog or a miniature horse) that is trained or is in training to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. The work being performed must be directly related to the individual's disability. Work may include and is not limited to guiding an individual who is visually impaired or blind, alerting an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, assisting with mobility or balance, helping an individual with a psychiatric or neurological disability by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors, reminding an individual with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming an individual with posttraumatic stress disorder during an anxiety attack, or doing other specific work or performing other special tasks. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

B. Emotional Support Animals: An emotional support animal (also known as an assistance, comfort, and/or therapy animal) is an animal that an individual uses solely for emotional support, well-being, or comfort. These animals do not qualify as "services animals" under the ADAAA or this policy because they are not individually trained to perform work or tasks, and are therefore not permitted on College property.

C. Handlers: An individual who is the owner, user, or trainer of a service animal is considered a handler and must comply with applicable state and local laws concerning the service animal. At all times, a service animal must be under the control of its handler. A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means. If the animal is physically out of control including and not limited to barking, demonstrating aggressive or threatening behavior, etc., and the handler is unable to take effective measures to gain control in a timely manner, the College reserves the right to have the animal removed from campus.

II. Restrictions

A. Service animals must accompany their handler at all times and in all public areas of College property, including without limitation to classrooms, restrooms, administrative buildings, meeting areas and dining areas.

Interference in any way with a service animal or the duties it performs is prohibited. The College recognizes that the presence of a service animal in certain areas may pose a health and safety risk to the animal and/or its handler or it fundamentally alters the nature of a program or service being offered. Service animals are restricted from the following areas including without limitation:

1. Research and teaching laboratories (see B. below)
2. Energy or maintenance control areas
3. Areas where protective clothing is required
4. Any other areas in the presence of a service animal would pose a danger to the service animal, handler, or other individuals such as in areas in which heavy equipment or machinery is used
5. Any other areas that are subject to restrictions outside of the control of the College
6. Food preparation areas

B. Service animals are permitted in research and teaching laboratories when arrangements can be made to ensure that the animal's presence poses no health or safety risk. These arrangements may be made between Organizational Development and Human Resources (ODHR), the handler, and the appropriate department leadership, to include, and not limited to, the handler purchasing and the service animal wearing protective gear, booties, goggles, etc. or identifying a location in the lab where the service animal will stay, away from potential spills or other risks.

C. Under limited circumstances, the College may ask for the removal of the service animal from College property. Such circumstances include and are not limited to:

1. If the service animal is found by the College to be out of control and the animal's handler does not take immediate and effective action to control the animal.
2. If the service animal is not housebroken.
3. If the service animal is physically ill.
4. If the service animal is unreasonably dirty.
5. If the service animal attempts to enter a place on campus where the presence of the service animal causes danger to the safety of the handler and/or other students/member of campus.
6. If the service animal is, or could be, in danger.
7. If the service animal is left unattended.

The College shall make such determinations on an individual basis. Should the restriction or removal of a service animal be warranted under this policy, the College will work with the handler to determine a reasonable alternative accommodation that will allow the handler equal access to the academic program, activity or employment responsibilities.

D. Under no circumstances should a service animal be left unattended at any time on College property. Should a service animal be found unaccompanied, the animal may be subject to removal by College security, and the handler may be subject to action under applicable College policies.

III. Handler Responsibilities

A. Handlers may not leave the service animal in the care or responsibility of another individual, or tied or tethered to any College property, including and not limited to buildings, railing, bike racks, fire hydrants, fences, sign posts, benches and trees. Service animals may not be left in vehicles, be outside of the control of their handler, and may not be allowed to run freely anywhere on campus.

B. To the extent possible, handlers should mitigate any disruption or interference caused by the service animal to College activities including and not limited to teaching, services or administrative activities.

C. At all times, the well-being of the service animal is the sole responsibility of the handler. The handler is also responsible for properly cleaning up any waste created by the animal and any property damage or injuries caused by the animal. Should the handler not take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury to the College community, the handler may be asked to remove the service animal from College property, and may be subject to action under applicable College policies.

IV. Animals that are not trained to perform a task directly related to a disability, such as emotional support animals, therapy animals and pets, may not be brought onto campus. Exceptions include service animals, service animals in training, laboratory animals, K-9s engaged in training or official duties.

V. Conflicting Disabilities: Allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access to a service animal. Should an individual have a disability that precipitates an allergic or adverse reaction and expects to come into regular contact with the animal, the individual should contact the College's ODHR/Leave and Access Services Department or the Office for Students with Disabilities, as applicable. Any individual seeking accommodations must present appropriate medical documentation related to their disability to the responsible office and action shall be taken to consider the needs of both individuals with disabilities. Note: While the College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to all individuals with disabilities, the removal of the service animal is very unlikely.

VI. Employees

A. Employees, contractors and any individuals performing work on behalf of the College who bring a service animal onto College property do not need to request the College's permission prior to doing so; however, it is recommended that the employee notify ODHR/Leave and Access Services

Department of the service animal's presence prior to reporting to their assigned work location.

B. The employee may be asked whether the service animal is needed because of a disability and what work or task the service animal has been trained or is in training to perform.

C. If an employee's service animal impacts the employee's ability to fulfill all essential functions of the employee's job and/or if an employee needs other reasonable accommodations related to a disability, they should contact the College's Leave and Access Services Department at 407-582-4748 (HR4U) or leaveandaccess@valenciacollege.edu and follow department procedures. For additional information, see College Policy 6Hx28: 02-02 Workplace Accommodations for Applicants and Employees.

VII. Students

A. Students who bring a service animal onto College property do not need the College's permission to do so. However, it is recommended that the student notify the Office for Students with Disabilities of the animal's presence.

B. Students may be asked whether the service animal is needed because of a disability and what work or task the service animal has been trained to perform.

C. If a student needs other reasonable accommodations related to a disability, they should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities and follow department procedures. For more information and/or to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities, see the College website: https://valenciacollege.edu/students/office-for-students-with-disabilities/.

VIII. Appeals and Complaints: Should any person feel that they have been unfairly denied access to College property due the presence of a service animal or have been discriminated against on the basis of a disability, they may file a complaint under College Policy 6Hx28:2-01, Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct, or contact the College's Section 504 Coordinator, at www.valenciacollege.edu/EO.

Procedure History:

Adopted 10-16-07; Amended 02-26-20; Amended 12-07-23; Amended 4-16-26

Date of Last Procedure Review: 04-16-2026