

Oberlin Heritage Center Policies on the Presence of Animals

Policy for Pets

Domestic animals, except for service animals, are not permitted inside any building or public exhibit of the Museum. Domestic animals may be walked outside in the parking lot or on Oberlin Heritage Center grounds but must be leashed, held or caged at all times. It is the owner's responsibility to maintain control of their animal and to respect all City rules and regulations regarding noise, safety, disruption, and cleanliness. The owner is expected to pick up after their animal. Oberlin Heritage Center staff reserve the right to request that an animal be removed from the premises should City rules or regulations be violated or if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. An owner may be charged for damage caused by their animal to Museum property.

Policy for Service Animals

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), defines service animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. In some circumstances, a miniature horse may qualify as a service animal if it has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not recognized as service animals for the purposes of this definition.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to: guiding a person who is blind or who has low vision, alerting a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair or providing balance and stability to a person with mobility impairment, assisting a person during seizure, alerting a person to the presence of allergens, retrieving items for a person in the absence or partial absence of one or more limbs, preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors for a person with neurological impairment, reminding a person with psychiatric impairment to take prescribed medications, calming a person during an anxiety attack. Service animals are working animals, not pets. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort, companionship or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

The Oberlin Heritage Center cannot inquire as to the particular nature or extent of a person's disability nor require documentation such as proof that their dog has been certified, trained or licensed as a service animal. However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a service animal, Oberlin Heritage Center staff are permitted to ask: (1) whether the dog is required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task the dog has been trained to perform.

Service animals will be permitted to accompany individuals with disabilities in all areas of the Oberlin Heritage Center, including its grounds and facilities, where members of the public and other participants in services, programs or activities are normally allowed to go. Service animals must be housebroken (i.e., trained to control waste elimination absent illness or accident) and must be kept under control by harness, leash or tether, unless the specific nature of the individual's disability prevents it or these devices interfere with the service animal's work. In such cases, control of the animal must be maintained through voice, signal, or other effective means.

Allergy and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. However, an individual may be asked to remove their service animal from the premises if: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or (2) the dog is not housebroken. Additionally, a miniature horse may be denied access when (3) the facility cannot accommodate its type, size, and weight, or (4) its presence will compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility. A service animal posing a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services will be requested to be removed from the premises. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, Oberlin Heritage Center staff must offer the individual with disability an opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal present.

Individuals with disabilities are responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of their service animal including: compliance with any laws pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification (e.g., Lorain County law requires that a dog is licensed and wears a tag at all times); respect for all City rules and regulations regarding noise, safety, disruption and cleanliness; keeping the animal under control and taking effective action when it is out of control; feeding and walking the animal; and disposing of its waste. The Oberlin Heritage Center will not require any surcharge or fee for service animals. However, a person with a disability may be charged for damage to Museum property caused by their service animal to the extent that Oberlin Heritage Center would assess any visitor.

Draft by Laura Slocum, M.A., CCC-SLP, OHC Board Member, July 2, 2018

Approved by the Board of Trustees September 5, 2018