

## SERVICE ANIMALS

### I. Policy Section

14.0 Risk Management

### II. Policy Subsection

14.10 Service Animals

### III. Policy Statement

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) permits the use of service animals on campus in accordance with applicable state and federal law. Service animals, as defined in this policy, may accompany individuals with disabilities on property owned or controlled by the College where members of the public are normally allowed. The College modifies its policies, practices, and procedures as necessary to ensure access for individuals using service animals, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of a service or program or violate a legitimate safety requirement. GRCC respects the privacy of individuals using service animals and limits inquiries to those permitted under this policy, or as otherwise allowed under applicable laws.

### IV. Reason for the Policy

This policy provides guidance regarding the use of service animals on campus in order to support access to College programs, services, and activities for individuals with disabilities. This policy also ensures compliance with applicable state and federal laws, including, but not limited to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Michigan's Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

### V. Entities Affected by this Policy

All employees  
Students  
Applicants  
College guests  
Independent contractors  
Board of Trustees  
Community and constituencies accessing services  
Volunteers  
Vendors

VI. Who Should Read this Policy

All employees  
Students  
Applicants  
College guests  
Independent contractors  
Board of Trustees  
Community and constituencies accessing services  
Volunteers  
Vendors

VII. Related Documents

Americans with Disabilities Act  
Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act

VIII. Contacts

Policy Owner: Director of Equal Opportunity Compliance  
Program Director of Disability Support Services  
Executive Director of Human Resources and Talent Development

IX. Definitions

A. Service Animal

A service animal includes any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Except as specified further herein, other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to an individual's disability. 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.

Examples of work or tasks that service animals perform include, but are not limited to: assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as books or a telephone, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder during an anxiety attack, and helping

persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

In addition, the college will permit the use of a miniature horse on the same basis as a service animal if the horse has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability and after an assessment of the following factors: the type, size and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features; whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse; whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.

#### B. Service Animal in Training

Service animals in training are permitted on College property when accompanied by an animal raiser or trainer for the purpose of training or socialization, in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

The College does not require documentation, certification, proof of training, or affiliation with a specific training organization for a service animal in training.

A service animal in training must be under the control of the animal raiser or trainer at all times and must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless such devices would interfere with training or socialization, in which case the animal must be otherwise under effective control.

### X. Procedures

#### A. Registration and Reasonable Accommodations

Service animals and service animals in training are permitted within all College facilities where members of the public are normally allowed. Individuals accompanied by a service animal or service animal in training in these areas are not required to register with the College or submit documentation related to the animal.

1. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for assistance with questions, concerns, or additional accommodations related to the use of a service animal or service animal in training on campus.
2. Employees who wish to utilize a service animal or service animal in training in connection with their employment, including in workspaces or areas not open to the general public, should contact Human Resources to initiate the reasonable accommodation process.

Requests to be accompanied by a service animal or service animal in training in areas of campus or College facilities not open to the general public will be evaluated through the reasonable accommodation process on an individualized, case-by-case basis, consistent with legitimate safety requirements.

#### B. Accommodation of Conflicting Access Needs

When an individual with a service animal or service animal in training and another individual with a disability-related need, such as an allergy, must be present in the same space, the College will make reasonable efforts to accommodate both individuals, where possible, without denying access to the service animal or service animal in training. Individuals seeking an accommodation related to allergies or other disability-related needs should contact Disability Support Services (for students) or Human Resources (for employees).

#### C. Permissible Areas for Service Animals

Service animals and service animals in training are permitted in all areas of College facilities where members of the public are normally allowed to go, including public areas of facilities that sell or prepare food, even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.

The College may restrict access to specific facilities or areas of campus only where the presence of a service animal or service animal in training would violate legitimate safety requirements, consistent with applicable law. The following constitutes a non-exhaustive list of areas or facilities will generally be considered off-limits unless an exception is granted:

1. Areas where protective clothing is needed: Any room where protective clothing is required or necessary. Examples of such areas may include chemistry and biology laboratories and job training facilities.
2. Areas where there is danger to the service animal: Any room, including a classroom where there is a threat of injury or harm to the service animal. In many cases, where the threat of injury or harm is to the service animal only, the student or employee will be permitted to make the decision regarding the service animal's presence.
3. Areas where a service animal's presence would be in violation of a legitimate safety requirement necessary for the safe operation of the area.

#### D. Proper Restraint

Service animals must be harnessed, leashed or tethered at all times while on campus, unless such devices would interfere with a service animal's work or

an individual's disability prevents the use of such devices. In cases where a service animal cannot be restrained in accordance with the aforementioned requirements, an individual must maintain control of a service animal through voice, signal or other effective controls. A service animal's handler must maintain control over the service animal at all times.

#### E. Permissible Questions

Except where permissible in cases involving a reasonable accommodation process (as referenced above), GRCC employees may not ask about or for any of the following regarding a service animal: the nature of an individual's disability; medical documentation; a special identification card or training documentation for the animal; or that the animal demonstrates its ability to perform the work or task.

In scenarios when it is not obvious what assistance a service animal provides, employees may only ask two questions: (1) is the animal a service animal required because of a disability; and (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

If an individual declines to answer these questions or if it is not readily apparent whether the animal qualifies as a service animal under applicable law, the individual may be referred to Disability Support Services (for students) or Human Resources (for employees).

Any concerns regarding the application of this policy, including concerns related to potential discrimination or inappropriate questioning, should be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity.

#### F. Criteria for Removal

An individual with a disability may be asked to remove a Service Animal from the premises under the following circumstances:

1. where the animal is not under the handler's control, and the handler does not take effective action to control it; or
2. where the animal is not housebroken.

When a service animal or service animal in training is properly excluded under this section, the College will provide the individual the opportunity to access goods, services, or accommodations without the animal present.

Allergies or fear of animals are not valid grounds to deny access to or require removal of a service animal or service animal in training. Access may not be denied based on breed, size, appearance, assumptions about behavior, or generalized safety concerns that are not based on the animal's actual conduct.

## G. Waste Removal

Individuals utilizing a service animal are required, if physically able, to clean up any waste left behind and properly dispose of it. Individuals unable to do this should use a designated toileting area. This area will be determined based upon the location of the individual on campus (e.g., a student's classes, or an employee's work area). Individuals who require information regarding designated toileting areas may contact Disability Support Services (for students) or Human Resources (for employees) for more information regarding designated toileting areas. GRCC employees are not required or encouraged to provide care or food for a Service Animal.

### XI. Forms

N/A

### XII. Effective Date

December 8, 2004

### XIII. Policy History

February 2016 – Revised to clarify “fundamental alteration” exception, modify definitions, clarify when registration of an animal would be appropriate, and changed policy owner to “Director of Equal Opportunity Compliance”.

February 2018 – Revised to modify “Service Animal” definition for readability and to comply with state of law; added provisions for contacting DSS with miniature horse requests or additional accommodations. Added language regarding Student Code of Conduct and provision for optional registration for Service Animals.

February 2020 – Reviewed

February 2022 – Reviewed

May 2024 – Revised to clarify definitions and procedures.

February 2026 – Updated definitions and procedures

### XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

February 2028