



## **ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY<sup>1</sup>**

One common type of reasonable accommodation is allowing a person with a disability to keep an assistance animal. An assistance animal is any animal that works, provides assistance, performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. RentAmes Property Management ("RentAmes") is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities may keep such animals in their rental housing to the extent required by federal, state, and local law.

An animal that is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability is known as a service animal. It is often readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, such as a dog that guides an individual with a visual impairment. Where it is readily apparent that an animal is a trained service animal, for example, a dog trained to guide an individual with a visual impairment, RentAmes will not inquire about the individual's disability or the animal's training.

In the case of a resident who requests a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal that provides emotional or other assistance that ameliorates one or more symptoms or effects of the resident's disability, RentAmes may require a statement<sup>2</sup> from a health or social service professional<sup>3</sup> indicating:

- i. That the applicant has a disability, and
- ii. That the animal would provide emotional support or other assistance that would ameliorate one or more symptoms or effects of the disability.

In the case of a resident who requests a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal that does work or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, RentAmes may require that the resident provide:

- i. A statement from a health or social service professional indicating that the person has a disability, and
- ii. Information that the animal has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks that would ameliorate one or more symptoms or effects of the disability, or information that the animal, despite lack of individual training, is able to do work or perform tasks that would ameliorate one or more symptoms or effects of the disability.

If an assistance animal both provides emotional support or other assistance that ameliorates one or more effects of a disability and does work or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a physical disability, RentAmes may require compliance with either of the two preceding paragraphs, but not both.

RentAmes may deny a request or require the removal of a particular assistance animal from the premises if the animal poses a direct threat (i.e., a significant risk of substantial harm) to the health or safety of other individuals that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by another reasonable accommodation, considering the health and safety of the other individual(s) and the need for an accommodation, or if the animal would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation. RentAmes will base such determinations upon consideration of the behavior of the particular animal at issue, and not on speculation or fear about the types of harm or damage an animal may cause.

RentAmes may take action against the owner for noise or damages caused by an assistance animal to the same extent that it takes such action against tenants who have caused similar noise or damages.

In any event, a resident who is granted an accommodation to keep an assistance animal in accordance with the above may be requested to sign an animal addendum. Like any other tenant with an approved animal or pet, residents with assistance animals are required to abide by the rules addressed in the animal addendum unless the resident is entitled to a reasonable accommodation inconsistent with any of those rules. Although the addendum may refer to deposits, fees, or monthly rent, RentAmes will not charge these deposits, fees, or monthly rent for assistance animals approved pursuant to this policy.

It is a violation of Iowa law to intentionally misrepresent an animal as a service animal.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy was adapted from the Iowa Civil Right's Commission's Sample Policy, <https://icrc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2017/AssistanceAnimalsSamplePolicy.pdf>, and Sample Guidelines, <https://icrc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2017/AssistanceAnimalsSampleGuidelines.pdf>.

RentAmes will not enforce any part of this policy if it is deemed to be inconsistent with State or Federal law.

<sup>2</sup> The Iowa Civil Right's Commission has a form available that can be used for a healthcare professional statement, [https://icrc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020/Request%20for%20Assistance%20Animal%20in%20Housing%20Health%20Care%20Professional%20Form\\_2020.pdf](https://icrc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020/Request%20for%20Assistance%20Animal%20in%20Housing%20Health%20Care%20Professional%20Form_2020.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> "Health or social service professional" means a person who provides medical care, therapy or counseling to persons with disabilities, including, but not limited to, doctors, physician assistants, psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers.