



Connors State College

Service And Emotional Support Animal Policy

12-5-25

I. Policy Statement

Connors State College (“CSC”) is committed to providing equal access to programs, services, and physical facilities to those members of the community with disabilities. The College acknowledges that some members of the community with disabilities may require the use of Service Animals or Emotional Support Animals (“ESA”) while at CSC. Guidelines concerning the appropriate use of, and protocols associated with, Service Animals or ESAs are outlined below. CSC reserves the right to amend this policy as needed, with or without prior notice

II. Definitions

- A. **Emotional Support Animal (“ESA”):** An animal that provides necessary emotional support to an individual with a disability that alleviates one or more identified symptoms of an individual’s disability.
- B. **Handler:** An individual with a disability who utilizes a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal, or the owner of a Visiting Therapy Animal.
- C. **Service Animal:** Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), a “service animal” is 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.

- D. **Service Animal in Training:** A dog that is being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of individuals with disabilities. As outlined in this policy, access rights for a Service Animal in Training are governed by Oklahoma law.
- E. **Visiting Therapy Animal:** An animal in the company of its Handler that has been trained to make wellness, stress reduction or therapeutic short-term visits and is made available to members of the college community on a transient basis in specific locations.

III. General Information

- A. Service Animals are allowed to accompany their Handlers anywhere their Handlers are permitted on campus. Exceptions may exist in areas where the animal's presence is prohibited by legitimate safety or health requirements, such as spaces requiring specialized protective equipment or clothing for access, contamination-controlled laboratories, or other regulated environments. If a Service Animal must be excluded, the Handler will still be permitted access to the area or activity without the animal.
- B. All animals under this policy are the responsibility of their Handlers. Animals must always be under the Handler's control. Service Animals must be leashed, harnessed, or tethered unless such devices interfere with the animal's work or the Handler's disability prevents their use, in which case the animal must remain under effective voice or signal control. An animal's behavior is considered the Handler's behavior, and animals are expected to meet the same basic standards of conduct required of members of the CSC community. If an animal is disruptive, out of control, not housebroken, or otherwise inconsistent with community expectations for education, residential, or medical environments—and if the Handler does not take effective action to correct the behavior—the Handler may be asked to remove the animal from the area.
- C. CSC is not responsible for the care, supervision, feeding, cleaning, or control of Service Animals or ESAs, as these responsibilities rest solely with the Handlers.
- D. If you have a concern about your treatment and access when accompanied by your Service Animal or ESA, contact the appropriate ADA coordinator.

IV. Campus Housing

A. General Information

- i. CSC expects all students who plan to bring a Service Animal or ESA into campus housing to provide advance notice to the ADA Coordinator and complete the required housing paperwork. Such requests, with all completed paperwork, must be turned in to the ADA Coordinator by the following deadlines: August 1st for the Fall semester and January 1st for the Spring semester. While CSC will consider requests made after the applicable deadline, housing options may be limited.
- ii. All Service Animals or ESAs must be approved by the ADA Coordinator before being brought into campus housing.
- iii. All students approved to have a Service Animal or ESA in campus housing will generally be assigned to designated animal-friendly rooms, which CSC has prepared for such animals. This housing assignment supports the health, safety, and comfort of all residents and allows CSC to manage animal-related needs effectively. CSC may consider exceptions to this standard housing assignment on a case-by-case basis, as necessary.
- iv. Students may be approved for one Service Animal and one ESA.
- v. The Office of Residential Life, in consultation with the ADA Coordinator, may require removal of a Service Animal from campus housing if:
 - a. The animal is out of control and the Handler does not take effective action to control it;
 - b. The animal is not housebroken; or
 - c. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through reasonable modifications.
- vi. The Office of Residential Life, in consultation with the ADA Coordinator, may require removal of an ESA from campus housing if:

- a. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
 - b. The animal causes substantial property damage;
 - c. The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a CSC program;
 - d. The Handler consistently fails to comply with this policy; or
 - e. The animal creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the campus community.
- vii. Any removal decision may be appealed through the student conduct appeal procedure.

B. Service Animals in Campus Housing

- i. To request approval for a Service Animal in campus housing, students must provide the following to the ADA Coordinator:
 - a. A statement that the student is a person with a disability who will be using a Service Animal;
 - b. A description of the work or tasks the Service Animal has been trained to do or perform; and
 - c. Documentation from a licensed veterinarian identifying the Service Animal and confirming that it is healthy and current on all required vaccinations.

C. Emotional Support Animals in Campus Housing

- i. ESAs, if approved pursuant to the procedure outlined in this policy, are allowed only in the campus housing setting and are not permitted in any other area of campus.
- ii. To request approval for an ESA in campus housing, students must provide a letter from an appropriate licensed medical or mental health provider. The letter must be sent directly from the provider to the ADA Coordinator.
- iii. An appropriate provider is a licensed medical or mental health professional in Oklahoma, the student's home state, or in a neighboring

region, who has a treatment relationship with the student and personal knowledge of the student's disability-related needs.

- iv. The provider's letter must include the following:
 - a. Identify the provider, including name, license, and professional qualifications;
 - b. Identify the student and confirm the student has a disability;
 - c. Identify the animal (e.g., "a standard poodle");
 - d. Explain how the animal alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the disability or supports the student's treatment; and
 - e. Affirm that having the animal in campus housing is necessary for the student to fully benefit from campus residential life.
- v. Students must also provide documentation from a licensed veterinarian identifying the ESA and confirming that it is healthy and current on all required vaccinations.
- vi. Students must schedule an appointment with the ADA Coordinator to complete the reasonable accommodation process.
- vii. A request for an ESA in campus housing may be denied based on insufficient disability documentation, insufficient support for the need for an ESA, or demonstrated concerns regarding the ESA's behavior. Letters purchased online for a set fee, certificates, vests, tags, or identification cards do not establish an animal as an ESA and will not be accepted as documentation.
- viii. If the request is approved, the ADA Coordinator will notify the Director Residential Life and provide any necessary information to support the accommodation.
- ix. All ESAs must be secured in an appropriate animal containment unit/cage or be on a leash when traveling to and from the student's room, and in common areas within the residence. The student must always be in control of the ESA in common areas of the residence. ESAs are not allowed in common residential areas without the student.

- x. All ESAs must always be in an appropriate animal containment unit/cage when the student is not in the residence hall room.

V. Public Areas of Campus

In public areas of campus, Service Animals are permitted consistent with the ADA. Outside the campus housing context, Service Animals are not required to be registered with CSC. Services Animals are not required to wear a vest or display special identification. ESAs are not permitted in public areas of campus outside the campus housing context. Questions regarding Service Animals in public areas may be directed to the ADA Coordinator.

VI. Employment

The rules in this policy for Service Animals in public areas of campus and campus housing and Emotional Support Animals in campus housing do not apply to the employment context. Employees seeking to bring an animal (including a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal) to the workplace as a reasonable accommodation for a disability must contact the Director of Human Resources and make a request through CSC's standard disability accommodation process. Such requests are evaluated individually through the interactive process and may be denied or limited if they pose an undue hardship or direct threat.

VII. Service Animals in Training

Under Oklahoma law, access rights on campus for a Service Animal in Training apply **only** when the dog is accompanied and controlled by "a dog trainer from a recognized training center in the act of training" the dog.

VIII. Visiting Therapy Animals

Visiting Therapy Animals may be allowed access to specific facilities with permission from the program/office occupying the facilities. You can arrange assistance with this process by contacting the Assistant Dean of Students. If you have questions or concerns related to these policies, please contact the ADA Coordinator.