

Landlord Assistance Animal Compliance Checklist

Use this checklist to help ensure fair housing compliance when handling emotional support animal and service animal requests.

Assistance Animal Request Intake

- ■ Respond promptly and professionally to all assistance animal requests
- ■ Treat all residents consistently and fairly
- ■ Document all communications regarding the request
- ■ Keep all disability-related information confidential

Determine the Type of Assistance Animal

- ■ Identify whether the request involves a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal (ESA)
- ■ Remember that assistance animals are not considered pets under Fair Housing guidelines

Questions Landlords May Ask

- ■ For Service Animals: Is the animal required because of a disability?
- ■ For Service Animals: What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
- ■ For Emotional Support Animals: Request reliable documentation only if the disability-related need is not obvious
- ■ Verify documentation is from a licensed healthcare professional

Questions Landlords Should NOT Ask

- ■ Do not ask about the nature or severity of a disability
- ■ Do not request medical records
- ■ Do not require training certificates for ESAs
- ■ Do not ask the resident to demonstrate the animal's tasks
- ■ Do not ask intrusive personal questions

Fees and Deposits

- ■ Do not charge pet rent, pet deposits, or non-refundable pet fees
- ■ Residents may still be responsible for actual property damage caused by the animal

Property Rules and Policies

- ■ Do not apply no-pet policies to legitimate assistance animals
- ■ Do not enforce breed or weight restrictions against assistance animals
- ■ Continue enforcing reasonable health and safety rules equally for all residents

When a Request May Be Denied

- ■ The animal poses a direct threat to others
- ■ The animal causes substantial property damage
- ■ The request creates an undue financial or administrative burden
- ■ The animal is not under control
- ■ Base all decisions on documented behavior — not assumptions or stereotypes

Documentation and Recordkeeping

- ■ Keep copies of all correspondence and accommodation requests
- ■ Maintain consistent policies and procedures
- ■ Train staff on Fair Housing compliance
- ■ Review policies annually for updates and consistency

Best Practices

- ■ Approach every request with professionalism and empathy
- ■ Avoid making emotional or rushed decisions
- ■ Seek guidance when uncertain about compliance requirements
- ■ Use standardized forms and procedures whenever possible

Helpful Resources

- HUD Assistance Animal Guidance – https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/assistance_animals
- ADA Service Animal Requirements – <https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-2010-requirements/>
- All County Property Management – <https://www.allcountyprop.com>

Fair housing compliance is about consistency, professionalism, and understanding the difference between pets and legitimate assistance animals.