

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

In accordance with federal law, service animals that meet the requirements outlined below are permitted in classrooms, public areas, and campus housing. Emotional support animals are not permitted in classrooms or public areas.

Service Animals

A service animal is a dog that has been individually trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disabilities.

Examples of tasks performed by a service animal include:

- Pulling a wheelchair
- Retrieving dropped items
- Alerting a person to sounds
- Reminding a person to take medication
- Pressing elevator buttons

The work or tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service dogs are not required to wear identifying tags, special harnesses, or vests.

Questions or concerns regarding service animals should be directed to the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations.

Service Animals in Training

Texas law permits service animals in training to accompany their trainers in public spaces.

To qualify as a service animal in training:

1. The dog must be at least one year old.
2. The dog must be accompanied by an approved trainer.
3. The dog must meet all behavior and control standards required of service animals.

Certain academic programs may have additional health and safety requirements. Students should contact their program department or the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations for additional information.

Permissible Questions

If it is not apparent that a dog is a service animal, College employees may ask only the following questions:

1. Is the dog required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Employees may not request documentation, require the dog to demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.

Service Animal Handler Responsibilities

The handler is responsible for the care, supervision, and control of the service animal.

Control Requirements

The service animal must be under the handler's control at all times through:

- A leash, harness, or tether; or
- Voice commands, signals, or other effective means when a tether cannot be used because of a disability or would interfere with the animal's work.

Behavior Requirements

The service animal must:

- Be housebroken.
- Behave appropriately in public settings.
- Remain under the handler's control.

Examples of unacceptable behavior include:

- Excessive barking
- Growling
- Jumping on people
- Running away from the handler
- Unwanted sniffing of others

If a service animal is not under control and the handler does not take effective action to correct the behavior, the handler may be asked to remove the animal.

The College is not responsible for caring for, supervising, feeding, or cleaning up after a service animal.

Emotional Support Animals

An emotional support animal (ESA), comfort animal, or therapy animal is not considered a service animal under Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

These animals may provide companionship or emotional support but are not individually trained to perform specific tasks related to a disability.

A letter from a medical or mental health provider does not convert an emotional support animal into a service animal.

Emotional support animals are not permitted in classrooms or public areas.

Emotional Support Animals in Housing

An emotional support animal may be approved in campus housing when a student:

- Has a qualifying disability; and
- Provides appropriate supporting documentation from a licensed professional.

Students requesting an emotional support animal accommodation in housing must submit a Disability Services Application and supporting documentation to the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations.

The documentation should:

- Identify the disability.
- Describe the need for the emotional support animal.
- Be provided by a qualified professional who has an ongoing therapeutic relationship with the student.

Animals in Housing

Requests for service animals and emotional support animals in campus housing must be submitted to the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations.

Once approved, the accommodation information will be forwarded to the Housing Department. The student must then complete and submit the Housing Service Animal Form before bringing the animal into campus housing.

Animals Not Permitted in Housing

An animal will not be approved if it:

- Has not been approved by the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations.
- Has not been approved by the Housing Department.
- Is prohibited by applicable local ordinances.
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Could cause substantial property damage.
- Creates an undue financial or administrative burden for the College.
- Fundamentally alters housing operations.

Animal Care Requirements

All approved service animals and emotional support animals must:

- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- Be properly vaccinated as required by law.
- Meet Housing Department requirements.
- Receive appropriate care and treatment.

Navarro College generally permits one approved animal per resident unless otherwise authorized by the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations