

APPENDIX E: ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

Assistance Animal Policy

GENERAL STATEMENT

It is the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh's ("HACP") policy to provide reasonable accommodation in housing for applicants, residents, employees, and members of the public with disabilities as necessary to provide them with an equal opportunity to use and enjoy HACP housing, programs and access to HACP administration. This policy is in furtherance of HACP's overall goal of providing affordable housing to low-income persons regardless of disability and in compliance with applicable federal, state and local law.

As part of its reasonable accommodation policy, HACP allows applicants, employees, and residents and their guests who have disabilities to be accompanied by their service or assistance animals ("assistance animals"). HACP recognizes and agrees that assistance animals are a means to provide a reasonable accommodation for an individual with a disability; however, there must be a relationship between the person's disability and his or her need for the animal. HACP will verify that the individual requesting the assistance animal is a person with a disability, unless otherwise apparent, and that the animal is needed to assist with the disability. As with all other disability-related inquiries, HACP may not ask about the nature or severity of the resident's disability.

Residents with assistance animals are required to comply with any and all applicable federal, state, or local law or ordinance regarding domestic animals that may apply. This includes proof of inoculations, licensing, and any other regulations relating to the safety and control of animals to prevent injury to others. Residents who are permitted to have assistance animals must also complete the "Assistance Animal Responsibility" and "Assistance Animal Registration" forms that accompany this Policy.

WHAT IS AN ASSISTANCE ANIMAL?

Assistance animals are animals that work, provide assistance, or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or animals that provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability and are permitted as a reasonable accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As such, they are not considered pets and, thus, are not covered by the HACP Pet Policy and residents will not be required to pay a deposit for an assistance animal. Assistance animals, often referred to as service animals, assistive animals, support animals, or therapy animals, perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to the following examples:

- Guiding and alerting individuals who are blind or have low vision.
- Guiding and alerting individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired.

- Providing protection or rescue assistance in an emergency or in case of injury to the assisted person.
- Pulling a wheelchair.
- Retrieving items.
- Assisting a person with a seizure disorder. The animal's service depends on the person's needs. The animal may go for help, or may stand guard over the person during a seizure. Some animals have learned to predict a seizure and warn the person.
- Providing emotional support to persons with disabilities that have a disability-related need for such support.

ASSISTANCE ANIMAL ACCOMMODATION

HACP's Section Disability Compliance Office will review all requests from applicants and residents with disabilities for reasonable accommodations, including requests for an assistance animal accommodation. If requested, the applicant or resident must provide verification of the claimed disability and need for an assistance animal. The information may come from a health care professional, social worker or other person who has knowledge of the requester's physical or emotional needs and the value to that person of an assistance animal. HACP's Section Disability Compliance Office will respond, in writing, to the request within a reasonable time, but not later than thirty (30) days after HACP receives all of the required information.

Assistance animals may be any type of animal or any breed, size or weight. A reasonable accommodation may involve more than one assistance animal, under certain circumstances.

Deposits and Fees

A deposit is not required for an assistance animal that has been approved by HACP's Section Disability Compliance Office. However, tenants who have an assistance animal may be charged a reasonable amount for general cleaning or repair of damage that is attributable to the animal.

Awareness Training

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh will ensure that all employees are properly trained in the Assistance Animal Policy, which includes the following rules:

- Assistance animals are permitted to accompany the tenant, applicant, employee or member of the public in all areas of the property.
- HACP employees shall refrain from touching, petting assistance animals or taking hold of leashes or other harness or control mechanisms attached to the animal, except when clearly warranted, since such actions may distract the assistance animals from their duties.
- HACP employees shall not feed assistance animals, since assistance animals may have specific dietary requirements.
- HACP employees shall not deliberately startle or try to get the attention of assistance animals.

- HACP employees shall not separate or attempt to separate tenants or handlers from assistance animals.
- HACP employees shall keep in mind that not all disabilities are visible. It shall be understood that the nature of a person's disability is a private matter, and that one is not entitled to inquire about details.
- HACP employees shall respond appropriately to inquiries from other people regarding the Assistance Animal Policy's exemption from the HACP Pet Policy.
- Assistance animals are not required to wear any special gear that identifies them as assistance animals such as tags, harnesses, coverings or clothing. Further, assistance animal owners and handlers are not required to carry with them any paperwork documenting the animal as an assistance animal.
- HACP employees shall be aware that the person with the disability or an aide to that person may train the assistance animal and that they are not required to provide any information to HACP employees or other residents, applicants or members of the public about the training or the specific task the animal performs.

ASSISTANCE ANIMAL CARE AND SUPERVISION

- ❑ The resident or handler of the assistance animal is responsible for the care and supervision of the animal.
- ❑ The resident or handler of the assistance animal must retain full control of the assistance animal at all times. This generally means that while the animal is in common areas, it is on a leash or other instrument of control, in a carrier, or otherwise in the direct control of the animal's owner or handler.
- ❑ When in the presence of others, the assistance animal is expected to be well behaved.
- ❑ The resident or handler of the assistance animal is responsible for the proper disposal of animal waste.
- ❑ The resident or handler of the assistance animal may not allow the assistance animal to defecate on any property, public or private, unless the resident or handler of the assistance animal immediately removes the waste and appropriately cleans or sanitizes the area where animal waste was deposited.
- ❑ The resident or handler of the assistance animal must always carry equipment and supplies sufficient to clean up the animal's feces whenever the assistance animal is in the common areas or outside of the residents unit.
- ❑ The resident or handler of the assistance animal must properly dispose of waste and litter caused by or due to the animal.

REFUSAL TO PERMIT ACCOMMODATION FOR ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

HACP will NOT permit a resident with a disability to use and live with an assistance animal if at least one of the following conditions exists:

- ❑ There is reliable and objective evidence that the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by a reasonable accommodation;
- ❑ There is reliable and objective evidence that the animal has caused or, in all reasonable likelihood, would cause substantial physical damage to HACP property or to the property of others;
- ❑ The presence of the assistance animal would pose an undue financial and administrative burden on HACP; or

- ❑ The presence of the assistance animal would fundamentally alter the nature of the HACP's duty to provide safe and well-maintained housing accommodation for its residents.

REMOVAL OF AN ASSISTANCE ANIMAL/EVICTION OF TENANT

If an assistance animal becomes unruly or disruptive (jumping on persons, nipping, biting or exhibiting other threatening or harmful behavior, without appearing to be acting in the assistance of its owner), the HACP may ask the resident to remove the animal from the immediate area or, if required because of the nature of the animal's behavior, to remove it from the residence altogether. If it is not necessary to remove the animal from the residence, but the animal's unruly or disruptive behavior occurs again, without provocation, the HACP may take any reasonable actions necessary to protect other residents, HACP staff, or visitors to the community including, but not limited to, removal of the animal from the premises.

Repeated violations of these rules by the resident may be reason for the resident's eviction from the property.

Off-limit Areas to Assistance Animals

Assistance animals are not to be tied outside or left unattended on a patio, deck, porch, hallway, backyard, or on grounds or common areas used by other residents and the community.

Grievance Procedure

If a resident is denied an assistance animal, asked that it be removed, or faces any other adverse action in relation to his or her assistance animal, he or she may file a request for an informal hearing or a grievance hearing within 14 days of the adverse action.

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

ASSISTANCE ANIMAL RESPONSIBILITY FORM

(Must be filled in, signed, and submitted with the Registration Form to Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh at the time of Request for a Reasonable Accommodation):

As an owner of an assistance animal residing in a Housing Authority managed building, the following three (3) local persons have agreed, as indicated by their signatures, to accept the responsibility for removal and/or care of my assistance animal, if I become ill or for any reason cannot care for my assistance animal.

1. Name _____
Address _____
Phones: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)
2. Name _____
Address _____
Phones: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)
3. Name _____
Address _____
Phones: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

The above named individuals have agreed to take care of my assistance animal should I be absent from my apartment for an extended period of time. I agree that, if the above individuals cannot be contacted or do not agree to take care of my assistance animal, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh may contact an animal shelter or kennel to care for my assistance animal and that I will be responsible for all charges for such care.

Owner

Date

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

ASSISTANCE ANIMAL REGISTRATION FORM

As of this date, _____ I _____, of apartment _____, am requesting registration of the following type of assistance animal, a _____, named _____ age _____.

My assistance animal's veterinarian is _____ at _____ (company),
Phone: _____

VETERINARIAN TO FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING:

This animal has had the following inoculations, as required:

These inoculations are effective until _____.

I am certifying that this animal is in good health.

Veterinarian's Signature

Date

As the assistance animal owner, I hereby certify that I have an applicable license for this type of animal and it is in effect until _____. (Copy attached)

As the assistance animal owner, I also have read the Assistance Animal Policy and agree to abide by that Policy.

Signature

Date