Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Information

We recognize that having an ESAs can provide support and comfort for someone with a significant mental health disorder, but the practical limitations of our housing arrangements make it necessary to carefully consider the impact of the request for an ESA on both the student and the campus community.

A student seeking an ESA must make a formal online accommodation request through the Office of Accessibility Services (AS). Once received, AS will forward all of the ESA documentation that is required to continue with your request. The student must:

1. Submit to AS a completed ESA Request for Information form, recently filled out by a qualified professional with whom you have an established clinical relationship (e.g. psychiatrist, psychologist, or other mental health professional) or a letter from the provider that contains ALL of the information asked on the form.
2. Submit to AS a personal statement that explains:
   a. The reason(s) for the ESA
   b. A statement explaining how you will provide appropriate care for the ESA. (for example: regular vet appointments, cleaning the litter box, changing the water bottle, etc...)

**BEWARE:** The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been asked to investigate websites that purport to provide documentation from a health care provider in support of requests for an ESA. The websites in question offer for sale documentation that is not reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and health care professionals who consult with them lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations.

If a recommendation of an appropriate service provider is needed, please contact the AS Office at 330-941-1372.

The University will make every effort to respond to a formal ESA request within thirty (30) business days from the date a completed formal request is submitted. Because it takes time to evaluate ESA requests, students should plan to submit ESA requests more than 30 business days before the student intends to move into the University residence or have the ESA live with the student. If the formal request for an ESA is not completed well in advance of the desire to have an ESA, the University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the student's accommodation needs immediately; the University will attempt to meet needs as quickly as it can.

**Until a student is notified that the student's ESA request has been approved, a student must not bring an animal into their residence or other University housing.**

Once a completed formal request for an ESA has been received, the ESA Approval Committee will review the request for approval or denial (or alteration). The Committee will consider any and all relevant information available to it in making a determination about whether an ESA would be a reasonable accommodation for the requesting student. Among the factors the Committee will assess are:

1. The nature of the qualified professional's recommendation.
2. The Owner's personal statement.
3. The Owner's commitment, and ability, to be a responsible owner of the animal.
4. Whether the ESA's presence would force another individual from their University residence (e.g., allergies, emotional health).
5. Whether the ESA's presence would disturb other individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment.
6. Whether the ESA is housebroken and able to live with others in a healthy, reasonably odor-free manner.

7. Whether the ESA's vaccinations are up to date.

8. The size of the animal relative to the size of the residential space. Large animals should not be confined to small spaces; it is not fair to the animal. Animals less than 25 lbs. tend to be appropriate in most University housing spaces. Animals larger than 25 lbs. will have an additional assessment to determine whether the residential space is appropriate/adequate.

9. Whether the ESA poses, or has posed in the past, a direct threat to the health and safety of persons or other animals. Animals who exhibit aggressiveness are not appropriate for University residences, regardless of whether they have "actually" injured someone. In other words, the University does not have to wait until someone is harmed; aggressive behavior is disqualifying.

10. Legal requirements.

Students will be notified of the Committee’s decision in writing (via YSU email). If an ESA is approved, the student must meet with their respective Housing Director/Manager to review the policy and complete and sign the agreement. Failure or refusal to sign the procedure will be presumed to be an indication that the student does not intend to abide by the procedure and will result in revocation of the approval. It is the student's obligation to ensure that all appropriate documentation of the animal's vaccinations and health is submitted to at the time the agreement is signed. Copies of the animal's documents will be kept on file in the respective Housing Office.

Any approval under this procedure is valid for one academic year. A student wishing to have an ESA for a subsequent year must notify AS of the student's desire to continue utilizing the ESA accommodation when the housing and placement process begins for the upcoming academic year. The University requires an Owner to annually reapply for an ESA to live with them on campus.