

# ADA Service Animals on AAATA Property - Policy

## March 2025

### Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) Service Animal Policy - Policy Statement

The Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) is committed to providing safe and accessible transportation services to all individuals, including those with disabilities who rely on service animals. This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures regarding the use of service animals on AAATA buses, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Michigan state laws, and other applicable regulations.

#### Definition of a Service Animal

A service animal, as defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. The tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

## General Guidelines

### 1. Access to Buses:

- Service animals are allowed to accompany individuals with disabilities on all AAATA buses.
- No additional fare or fee will be charged for the service animal.

### 2. Identification and Verification:

- AAATA staff may ask only two questions to determine if an animal qualifies as a service animal:
  1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
  2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
- AAATA staff will not require documentation, such as proof of certification or licensing, for the service animal.
- AAATA will not ask the individual to disclose their disability.

### 3. Behavior and Control:

- Service animals must be under the control of their handler at all times. This includes being harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In such cases, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective means.
- If a service animal exhibits disruptive behavior, such as growling, biting, or causing a disturbance, the handler may be asked to remove the animal from the bus. The individual with the disability will still be allowed to use the bus service without the animal.

### 4. Responsibilities of Handlers:

- Handlers are responsible for the care and supervision of their service animals. This includes feeding, grooming, and cleaning up after the animal.
- AAATA is not responsible for providing care, food, or a special location for the service animal.

### 5. Health and Cleanliness:

- Service animals must be clean and free from offensive odors. They should also be in good health and have up-to-date vaccinations as required by local health regulations.
- A service animal may be excluded from an AAATA vehicle if the service animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

### 6. Seating Arrangements:

- Service animals may accompany their handlers in any area of the bus where passengers are normally allowed to sit.
- Handlers are encouraged to position their service animals in a manner that does not obstruct aisles or other passengers' access to seats and exits.

### 7. Emotional Support Animals:

- The ADA doesn't recognize Emotional Support Animals as service animals. AAATA follows the guidelines as such of the ADA, please refer to our pet policy.

#### Compliance with Federal and State Laws

This policy complies with the ADA, which mandates that individuals with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. It also adheres to Michigan state laws concerning the rights of individuals with disabilities and the use of service animals.

#### Training and Awareness

AAATA will provide regular training to its staff on the rights of individuals with disabilities and the role of service animals. This includes understanding this policy, recognizing service animals, and interacting appropriately with individuals who use service animals.

#### Complaint Procedure

Individuals who believe they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against due to their use of a service animal may file a complaint with AAATA by calling 734-973-6500, visiting [TheRide.org](http://TheRide.org), or sending by mail to 2700 S. Industrial Hwy. Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Complaints will be investigated promptly, and appropriate action will be taken to resolve the issue, as necessary.

#### Effective Date

This policy is effective as of March 20, 2025 and will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and the needs of our passengers.

**The Mobility Services Coordinator is responsible for the administration and update of this policy. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Sarina Pankey at: 734-794-1721, or Robert Williams at: 734-794-1702.**