



DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - KINGSVILLE

MSC 112, 700 UNIVERSITY BLVD. KINGSVILLE

drc.center@tamuk.edu · (361) 593-3024

Disability Resource Center

Guidelines for Students Requesting an Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

Students requesting accommodation for an emotional support animal (ESA) in campus housing must submit documentation that establishes a disability and that the requested accommodation is reasonable and necessary to afford the student equal opportunity to use and enjoy their assigned housing. The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of *significant* impairment in one or more major life activities. Merely submitting evidence of a diagnosis is not sufficient to establish the reasonableness and necessity of the requested accommodation.

The Verification Form for Students Requesting an Emotional Support Animal is provided to standardize the accommodation request process and make an individualized assessment more efficient and effective. If the information requested in the form is left blank or is incomplete, it may delay or prevent DRC from completing the accommodation request process.

A licensed healthcare provider with experience and expertise in the area related to the student's disability should provide the documentation. Furthermore, an established therapeutic relationship between the provider and student requesting the ESA should be evident. The provider cannot be related to the student.

1. *Disability Determination*

Documentation should identify the disability or disabilities that is/are the basis for the accommodation request and describe how the symptoms cause significant impairment of a major life activity. The date of initial clinical contact with the student, date of most recent office visit, and approximate number of sessions with the student provide evidence of an established therapeutic relationship. Because conditions may change over time, current and future evaluations are critical in assessing reasonable and necessary accommodations. In addition, depending on the nature of the disability, evaluations may need to be updated on a semester-by-semester or yearly basis.

2. *Emotional Support Animal Assessment*

Documentation should identify the specific ESA being recommended and include information about the ameliorative effects that the ESA provides. There must be a direct link between the recommended ESA and the use and enjoyment of the assigned campus housing that establishes the necessity of the requested accommodation. To be necessary, the requested accommodation must be indispensable and essential to achieve ameliorative effects on the disability.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required. All documentation must be submitted on the official letterhead of the professional providing documentation, be dated and signed

by the provider, and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the provider, including information about license or certification. The Disability Resource Center will review the Verification Form for Students Requesting an Emotional Support Animal and other relevant information provided as part of an individualized assessment to make a determination regarding whether the requested accommodation is reasonable and necessary. Students should remain in contact with DRC while a decision is being made about their accommodation request.

A request for or grant of accommodation for an emotional support animal may be refused or revoked if the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. An individualized assessment of the animal may be required before an accommodation request is granted. A student with an accommodation for an ESA is responsible for the care and maintenance of the animal, including feeding, providing veterinary care, and controlling the animal. Failure to do so will be grounds for removal of the animal from campus housing. If an ESA is required to be vaccinated, documentation of current vaccination status must be provided to Residence Life before an accommodation request will be granted.

Please do not hesitate to contact DRC at (361) 593-3024 if you have any questions.

All documentation submitted to DRC is considered confidential.

Documentation should be sent to the following address:

Texas A&M University – Kingsville
Student Health and Wellness
Disability Resource Center
MSC 112, 700 University Blvd.
Kingsville, Texas 78363
Phone: (361) 593-3024