



524 POLICY – Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

524.1 Statement of Policy

Redlands Community College recognizes the importance of Service Animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), and of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), supported by the Fair Housing Act Amended (FHAA).

Emotional Support Animals or “Assistance Animals” are animals that provide comfort and/or emotional support to individuals with disabilities. Assistance Animals are **NOT** Service Animals.

Redlands Community College is committed to providing individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity and is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive work/educational environment, as well as for students residing in college housing. We recognize that Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) can provide significant benefits to individuals with mental health conditions.

524.2 Definitions

The following definitions are applicable to this policy and related procedure.

Disability (42 U.S.C. § 12102): A “disability” is a documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or a record of such an impairment. The Americans with Disabilities Act also protects from discrimination someone who is “regarded as” having an impairment.

- Major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.
- It also includes the operation of major bodily functions, such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.
- Regarded as having an impairment means the individual has been subjected to an action prohibited under the ADA because of an actual or perceived impairment, whether or not it limits a major life activity. This does not apply to impairments that are transitory and minor (lasting six months or less).
- The definition must be construed broadly to provide maximum coverage, and an impairment that substantially limits one major life activity does not need to limit others. Episodic or remission conditions count if they would substantially limit a major life activity when active.



Emotional Support Animal (ESA): An “Emotional Support Animal” (ESA) is a category of animals that may work, provide assistance, or perform tasks to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual’s existing disability. ESAs are not considered service animals under the ADA and no specific certification or formal training of ESAs is required. Any animal may constitute an ESA if its use constitutes a reasonable accommodation in a specific instance.

Service Animal: A “Service Animal” (SA) is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The ADA, as amended in 2008, defines a SA as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” Miniature horses also fall within the ADA’s amended definition of “service animal”. An animal qualifies as a SA if (a) its assistance is required because of the user’s disability; and (b) it has been trained to perform specific work or tasks to provide assistance, even if it has not been certified as an SA by a state or local government. Owners are not required to show documentation that the animal has been trained.

A non-inclusive list of tasks or work performed by Service Animals includes:

- Alerting an individual with diabetes that his/her blood sugar reaches high or low levels
- Calming an individual with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or anxiety
- Detecting the onset of a seizure and then helping the individual to remain safe during the seizure
- Assisting an individual with navigation that has low vision
- Retrieving items or turning on/off light switches
- Providing assistance with stability or balance
- Alerting an individual with hearing loss to the presence of people

Pet: A “pet” is an animal kept for pleasure and companionship. A pet is not considered an SA or ESA and therefore is not covered by this policy and related procedure. Pets are not allowed at Redlands Community College work/educational environment.

Owner: An “owner” is an employee and/or student who has an ESA and who has requested an ESA as an accommodation.

Bedroom/Workspace: This is the area that an ESA is allowed to be present. This includes in Redlands housing, the area you sleep in and is designated the student’s room. The workspace is limited to enclosed offices and does not include classrooms, laboratories, or other areas in which work may be performed.



Animals Owned by Redlands: Animals owned by Redlands Community College that are purchased and cared for by Redlands. These animals have been approved by Administration and may be allowed on authorized college property.

Adopted January 2026



524 PROCEDURE – Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

524.1:1 Statement of Procedure

Redlands Community College is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. The College will consider a request by a qualified individual with a disability for reasonable accommodation from this prohibition to allow an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) that is reasonable and necessary because of a mental health or psychiatric disability. However, the college must be mindful of the health and safety interests of its general community.

This policy and related procedure explains the specific requirements applicable to an individual's approved use of an ESA on college owned facilities, including housing. Any approval under this policy is valid for one academic year. Individuals must submit all new forms for each subsequent year.

No ESA may be kept on any college owned facility, including housing, at any time prior to the employee and/or student receiving approval pursuant to this policy. Individuals found with unauthorized animals in any college owned facility will be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

524.1:2 Disability Support Services

Redlands Community College has two (2) Disability Coordinators on campus. We have one for employees and one for students. Listed below is their contact information:

Disability Coordinator for Employees (DCE):	Ms. Kim Andrade Office Phone: (405) 422-1267 Email: andradek@redlandscs.edu Office Location: AFCC-114
Disability Coordinator for Students (DCS):	Ms. Kacey Daniels Office Phone: (405) 422-1203 Email: Kacey.Daniels@redlandscs.edu Office Location: SS-005
The Director of Resident Life (DRL) will also assist in situations involving housing.	Mr. Brent Johnson Office Phone: (405) 422-1454 Email: Brent.Johnson@redlandscs.edu Office Location: CCC-116



524.1:3 Requesting an Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

An employee that wishes to use an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) must be registered with the Disability Coordinator for Employees (DCE) at Redlands Community College. A student that wishes to use an ESA must be registered with the Disability Coordinator for Students (DCS) at Redlands Community College. Thus, the employee or student is required to self-disclose their disability and provide appropriate documentation of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The documentation must specifically address the need for and value of an ESA (as further discussed in the steps below). The appropriate Disability Coordinator will review and must approve the request before an employee/student is permitted to bring an ESA onto campus property. Every request is unique and circumstances will be considered on an individualized, case-by-case basis, in light of the documentation provided and any additional information that may be gained through a dialogue between the individual and Disability Coordinator.

The following forms are required to be completed and turned into a Disability Coordinator to request an ESA. The forms to request an ESA for disability accommodations can be found by going to www.redlandsccl.edu/animals.

- Request for Accommodation
- Provider Request for Health Information Form
- Agreement and Release of Information Consent Form
- Animal Registration Form
- Roommate and/or Co-Workers Acknowledgement
- Accommodation Request - Checklist

Redlands Community College will consider requests for reasonable accommodations at any time. However, in order to provide the College the greatest opportunity to accommodate a housing-related request, before the student moves into housing, ESA requests should ideally be received by the deadlines specified below:

- For returning resident students, this request should be submitted to the DCS by March 1 for the upcoming academic year.
- For incoming resident students, this request should be submitted to the DCS by June 15 for the upcoming academic year.
- For current resident students for whom the need for an ESA arises during the course of a semester, this request should be made as soon as possible.

The College does not guarantee housing space availability for a student and their ESA if the request is not submitted by the specified deadlines.

Employees requesting an ESA as a reasonable accommodation should be made as soon as possible. This application process could take up to 20 business days once all



documentation has been turned in to the Disability Coordinator.

The specific steps for requesting an Emotional Support Animal are as follows:

1. For students, a signed housing contract with the applicable housing fee must first be completed and on file with the DRL.
2. For students and employees, a "Request for Accommodations" must be submitted to the appropriate Disability Coordinator.
3. For students and employees, a "Request for Health Information Form" from a qualified provider (treating psychiatrist, psychologist, or other mental health professional) and an "Agreement and Release of Information Consent Form" must be turned into the appropriate Disability Coordinator. This documentation does not need to disclose the specific diagnosis but must establish a direct connection between the student's/employee's disability and the animal. This involves explaining how the ESA provides therapeutic support or alleviates one or more symptoms of the disability.
4. The appropriate Disability Coordinator will notify the individual requesting the ESA in writing about the disposition. They will also communicate with the employee/student if more information is needed or about next steps if an ESA request has been denied.
5. Incomplete applications and documentation are not considered. Questions about the forms or information required should be addressed to the appropriate Disability Coordinator.

524.1:4 Criteria for determining Whether ESA is a Reasonable Accommodation

The determination whether an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) request constitutes a reasonable accommodation for an employee is determined by the Disability Coordinator for Employees (DCE) and for a student is determined by the Disability Coordinator for Students (DCS). If the student is living in the college apartments, then it will be a coordinated effort between the DCS and the DRL. All determinations will be on an individualized, case-by-case basis. The Disability Coordinator will determine if the request for an ESA is reasonable based on the documentation provided. If housing is requested, the DRL will determine if appropriate space is available and will make assignments. If the DCS or DRL have questions, they will reach out to the individual for more information and engage in an interactive process. To ensure that the presence of an ESA does not pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the working or living environment, and to make housing assignments for individuals approved to use ESAs if they are living in campus housing, the College will consider appropriate factors including the following:

1. Whether the size of the animal is appropriate to the available assigned living and



- working environment.
2. Whether the animal's presence would force another student from individual housing or employee from their workspace (e.g. serious allergies).
 3. Whether the animal exhibits aggressiveness or makes excessive noise, such that its presence jeopardizes other individuals' rights to peace and quiet within the college apartments and/or work space.
 4. Whether the animal is housebroken or is continually contained in a cage/secure habitat and has required vaccinations or licenses pursuant to local law.
 5. Whether the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Dangerous, poisonous/venomous, and/or illegal animals are not permitted.
 6. Whether the animal threatens to cause or historically has caused substantial damage to the property of others, including the College.
 7. Whether permitting the use of the ESA would place an undue hardship or burden upon the College.
 8. Whether the presence of the ESA will fundamentally alter the living or working environment.

Redlands Community College does not promise to place students or employees with Emotional Support Animals in any specific building/office or apartment. However, the size and nature of the animal may affect which housing or office spaces are suitable for them to live or work with the ESA.

524.1:5 Owner Responsibilities for an Emotional Support Animal

The College is not responsible for the care or supervision of an Emotional Support Animal (ESA). The individual utilizing the ESA is responsible for:

- The health, well-being, and cleanliness, which includes the odor/smell of the animal.
- Vaccinations, registration and license as required by local law.
- The cost of any damages incurred as a result of the animal beyond ordinary wear and tear.
- The immediate clean-up after, and proper disposal of, the animal's waste.
- Maintaining full control of the animal at all times.
- Harnessing, leashing, or tethering the animal, unless an individual's disability precludes the use of a restraint or the restraint interferes with the animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks.



Additional responsibilities include, but not limited to:

- Approval – Prior to bringing the ESA on college property, including college apartments, the owner must apply for and obtain approval of use of the ESA using the process set forth in this policy and related procedure. For housing purposes, the student and ESA must be placed in an appropriate housing assignment by the DRL.
- Care – The owner is required to ensure the animal is well cared for and in good health at all times. Any evidence of mistreatment or abuse may result in immediate removal of the ESA and/or discipline for the owner. If the College has reason to believe that an animal is being abused or animal welfare laws are being violated, the College reserves the right to notify appropriate animal control or law enforcement authorities.
- Vaccinations and Licensing – The owner must abide by El Reno, Canadian County, and State of Oklahoma ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the owner's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. Additionally, animals such as dogs, cats, and rabbits must be spayed (for females) or neutered (for males) to prevent reproduction and reduce behavioral issues. For small animals, sterilization may not be medically recommended, but responsible apartment/workspace and care are still required. A current copy of the vaccination certificate must be submitted with the ESA Request for Accommodation Form to the Disability Coordinator, along with the owner's proof that the animal has been spayed or neutered and any applicable license and registration for the ESA has been obtained.
- Identification – Collars and tags must be worn by ESAs at all times so that an ESA may be returned to its owner in the event the owner and ESA become separated. A tag identifying the owner and contact information in case of emergency must be visible at all times. The College is not accountable in the event an ESA goes missing. College staff is not responsible for removing an ESA during emergency evacuation or to aid in search or retrieval if the ESA escapes or becomes lost.
- Control – The ESA must remain in its owner's College assigned room/work space except when the owner is taking the animal out for natural relief. The owner must ensure the animal is on a leash at all times, except when the ESA is located in the owner's room/workspace with the door to the area closed. Small, non-housebroken animals such as gerbils, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc. must be caged and may not be left loose in the owner's room/workspace unless the owner is present. ESAs are not permitted in other student rooms, other employee offices, or buildings without the owner present. ESAs are not permitted in classrooms at any time. If an ESA is found running at large, the ESA



is subject to capture, confinement, and immediate removal from College property. The owner agrees to take the ESA outside during fire drills and/or emergency preparedness procedures. The ESA must remain in a crate/cage or on a leash during this time. If an owner feels that he or she needs to use the ESA outside their current living or work space as a reasonable accommodation, he or she should discuss this with the DRL or DCE/DCS.

- Supervision – ESAs may not be left overnight in College housing or office space to be cared for by any individual other than the owner. If the owner is to be absent from his/her residence overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the owner. The owner is responsible for ensuring the ESA is contained appropriately (e.g. crate, carrier, kennel) when the owner is not present. This will allow college staff to routinely access the residential/office facilities for maintenance and other tasks without the entry posing risk to the safety of either the animal or the employees.
- Alternate Caregiver – The owner will provide emergency contact information for another individual should the owner be unable to care for the ESA at any time. Neither current College students nor College personnel (unless the College personnel are the parents/guardians of the student) may act as an Alternate Caregiver.
- Cleanliness – The residence room must be kept at a reasonable standard of cleanliness, as set forth in the housing contract, as well as the office area. ESAs must be housebroken and relieve themselves outdoors. Small, non-housebroken animal, such as gerbils, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc., that are kept in cages must be cleaned regularly to prevent foul odors. Owners must immediately retrieve outdoor animal waste, securely tie in a plastic bag, and dispose it in outside trashcans. An ESA must be clean and well groomed, and measures should be taken at all times for flea, tick and other infestations and odor control. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence/workspace will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a college-approved pest control service and the owner may be billed for any such services.
- Damages – The owner bears sole legal and financial responsibility for the actions of the ESA. This includes responsibility for any odors, noise, excess damage, or other ESA conduct that harms others or damages the premises or personal property. Although no routine fees are required for maintaining an ESA in College housing/workspace, the owner is required to pay cleaning fees or fees for repairs should the ESA inflict damage upon others' property or College property beyond reasonable wear and tear. Such issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Residence Life – The owner agrees to abide by all residence life policies. The owner is responsible for assuring that the ESA does not interfere with the operation of the residence, cause undue difficulties for other residents, or



fundamentally alter the living environment. Where an owner fails to abide by residence life policies regarding proper use of ESAs, the College will attempt to resolve the matter without removing the ESA or the owner; but, in aggravated circumstances, failure to comply with this policy and related procedure may constitute grounds for removal of the owner from housing and/or for discipline. Such situations, including questions of the assessment or waiver of fees or penalties, will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

- **Employees** - The owner agrees to abide by all College policies. The owner is responsible for assuring that the ESA does not interfere with the operation of the office, cause undue difficulties for other employees, or fundamentally alter the office environment. Where an owner fails to abide by College policies regarding proper use of ESAs, the College will attempt to resolve the matter without removing the ESA or the owner; but, in aggravated circumstances, failure to comply with this policy and related procedure may constitute grounds for disciplinary actions of the owner and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Roommate Agreement** – All roommates of the ESA owner must sign the agreement form that they agree to live with the approved ESA in the college apartment. If one or more roommate(s) does not approve of the ESA, then a decision will be made on a case-by-case basis which resident(s) will relocate.
- **Conflicting Health Conditions and Aversions** – Students with medical or mental condition(s) affected by animals (e.g. allergies, asthma, respiratory conditions, zoophobia, etc.) or with other concerns about sharing a room with an ESA should contact the DRL. This may, but need not, require providing medical or other documentation of a disability that affects the student's ability to share a room with the ESA. The DRL will work in collaboration with students to resolve any conflicts related to an ESA by considering the needs and/or concerns of all residents involved and will determine on a case-by-case basis whether an alternative housing placement of either student is appropriate. This applies to employees within the College, as well. The DCE will work in collaboration with the employees to resolve any conflicts related to an ESA by considering the needs and/or concerns of all employees involved and will determine on a case-by-case basis whether an alternative office placement of either employee is appropriate.
- **Discontinuation** – The owner must notify the DRL and/or DCE/DCS in writing if the ESA is no longer located in College housing/workspace. To request a replacement of a previously approved ESA, the owner must complete the forms summarized above and file them with DRL and/or the DCE/DCS for approval of the replacement ESA.
- **Consent** – The owner must provide written consent for the DCS/DCE and/or DRL to disclose information regarding the request for, and the presence of, an



ESA to those individuals who have a need to know or who may be impacted by the presence of an ESA. These include, but are not limited to resident life, other residents/employees in the apartment/workspace, public safety, and facilities management. The DCE/DCS will not disclose underlying medical information or documentation except to College personnel on a need-to-know basis.

- Liability - Redlands Community College is not liable for any animal that becomes missing, is injured, or dies while on property; owner assumes full responsibility while on campus. College staff is not responsible for removing a SA during emergency evacuation or to aid in search or retrieval if the SA escapes or becomes lost.

524.1:6 Removal of an Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

The College may require an owner to remove the animal from College property, including housing for the following reasons:

1. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage;
2. The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of the living environment;
3. The owner does not comply with the owner's responsibilities set forth in this policy and related procedure; or
4. The Emotional Support Animal (ESA) or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the college community.

Should an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) be denied or removed from the premises for any reason, the College will, as further discussed below, engage in an interactive process with the owner about alternate accommodation; however, the owner may be expected to fulfill his/her remaining housing obligations notwithstanding removal of the ESA for failure to comply with this policy and related procedure and may be assessed fees or penalties as determined on a case-by-case basis.

524.1:7 Denial of Accommodation/Available Appeal

A request for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) may be denied if the documentation does not clearly support the need for an ESA, or correlation between the functional limitations of the disability and the support the ESA would provide. A request for an ESA may be denied if it is determined to be unreasonable. An ESA may be removed for violation of the policy and related procedure set forth above, or if the presence of the ESA does any of the following:

1. Imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden;



2. Fundamentally alters college policies and/or;
3. Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including College property.

If a request for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is denied or an ESA is removed from campus for reasons outlined in this policy, the following steps will occur:

1. Interactive Process - Upon denial or removal, the College will engage in an interactive process with the individual, at their request with the appropriate Disability Coordinator, to explore alternative reasonable accommodations. This process ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related regulations.
2. Filing a Grievance - An individual may appeal the decision by submitting a written grievance to the appropriate Administrator within 10 business days of the denial or removal decision.
 - Students: Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - Employees: Executive Vice President

The grievance must include:

- A statement of the decision being appealed.
- The basis for the appeal (e.g., why the decision is believed to be incorrect or inconsistent with policy).
- Any supporting documentation.

3. Grievance Review
 - The designated Administrator will review the grievance in consultation with the Disability Coordinator and other relevant personnel.
 - The review will consider whether the denial or removal was consistent with policy, ADA requirements, and whether alternative accommodations were adequately explored.
 - The Administrator may request additional information or schedule a meeting with the individual to clarify concerns.
4. Decision and Notification
 - A written decision will be issued within 15 business days of receiving the grievance.
 - The decision will state whether the denial/removal is upheld, modified, or reversed, and outline any next steps or accommodations approved.



5. Status During Grievance

During the grievance process, the Emotional Support Animal must remain off campus until a final decision is rendered.

6. Further Appeal

If the individual is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may pursue additional remedies by submitting an appeal to the Redlands Community College Board of Regents within 10 business days of receiving the Administrator's decision. The Board of Regents will review the appeal and all supporting documentation and issue a final determination. The decision of the Board of Regents shall constitute the final decision of the College.

523.1:8 Confidentiality

The Disability Coordinators will maintain as confidential (1) requests for use of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs); (2) documentation and information exchanged regarding student/employee disabilities and accommodation requests; and (3) other documents, notes, or information generated during an accommodation request, interactive process, or appeal. Only College representatives with a need to know will have access to underlying medical information or documentation about requests for accommodation, student/employee disabilities, or emotional support animals.

523.1:9 Non-Retaliation

Redlands Community College will not retaliate against any individual because that individual has used an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) on campus, requested use of an ESA or used an ESA within a college apartment/workspace, or otherwise requested or received a reasonable accommodation.

523.1:10 Vaccinations

The care and wellbeing of emotional support animals used to support students or employees with disabilities, as well as the health and safety of the entire college community is of the utmost importance.

To ensure proper care for animals and to prevent the spread of zoonotic disease, in addition to rabies vaccinations, which are required by law for both dogs and cats in Canadian County, animals are recommended to have the following species-specific vaccination and disease prevention treatments. External parasites such as fleas and ticks should also be included in disease prevention for each animal.



Dogs: Distemper; Adenovirus; Kennel Cough; Spay/Neuter; Parvovirus; Parainfluenza; Leptospirosis; Heartworm.

Cats: Panleukopenia; Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis; Calici virus; Chlamydia; Spay/Neuter.

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