

West Ouachita Public Transit

Service Animal and Pet Policy

June 20, 2023

SERVICE ANIMALS AND PETS

Service animals are welcome aboard Valley Transit vehicles. A service animal is any guide dog, or other animal trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Service animals are not pets.

Transit agency may ask:

1. If an animal is a service animal.
2. What tasks the animal has been trained to perform.

Transit agency **may not**:

1. Require a special ID card or harness for animal
2. Ask about the person's disability

They are working animals that are specially trained to provide assistance and must be under control of passenger at all times.

While the US Department of Transportation has not adopted a more specific definition of service animal, the US Department of Justice has provided a more specific definition of service animals to exclude "wild animals (including non-human primates born in captivity), reptiles, rabbits, farm animals (including miniature horses and pigs), ferrets, amphibians, and rodents."

DOJ also distinguishes between psychiatric service animals and comfort animals. Service animals do not include animals whose "sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or promote emotional well-being"

Under control and well behaved are the defining characteristics. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its owner. In addition, customers traveling with animals are subject to the same general rules that apply to all passengers; i.e., any damage or soiling caused by the animal is the responsibility of the customer. If an animal is not under control or if its behavior is disruptive or menacing, Valley Transit can refuse service or ask the person and animal to exit the vehicle. Service animals that are

disruptive, threatening or intimidating will be handled in a case-by-case discipline process.

Because of the small size of the mini-buses, other pets are not allowed on DIAL-A-RIDE unless they are small and can be transported in a suitable pet carrier. Your pet plus the kennel may weigh no more than 25 pounds. Please tell the customer service representative that you are bringing a pet to make sure there is room on the vehicle.