

North Valley Public Library Accessibility Policy

The North Valley Public Library District (the “Library”) welcomes individuals with disabilities and strives to provide equal access to the Library facility, activities, and programs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and offers reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet its requirements. North Valley Public Library District does not discriminate based on disability in the admission or access to employment, Library programs, or services. The Personnel Policy addresses employment and ADA compliance.

In accordance with the ADA, the Library will take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

The process of obtaining accommodations is interactive. By law, a customer is not required to identify themselves as having a disability, unless requesting accommodations from the Library. It is the responsibility of the customer to initiate the process by self-disclosing as an individual with a disability to the staff and requesting reasonable accommodation. The Library will make reasonable accommodations in Library policies, practices and procedures when necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless a fundamental alteration in a Library program would result; and operate its services, programs and activities so that, when viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Implementing this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Method of notification

A copy of this policy shall be posted on the library’s website with the Library’s other policies. If a person with visual impairment or other disability inquires about this policy or about the Library’s ADA services, staff shall offer to read the policy and to provide appropriate ADA services.

Programming

The following notice will be posted on the Library’s website, calendar of events, and the Library’s information bulletin board:

Any person who wishes to make an accommodation request for a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to access Library meetings, services, programs, or activities may file a written statement with the Library’s ADA compliance coordinator, or any member of the Library staff at 406-777-5061 or by e-mail at circ@northvalleylibrary, no fewer than five (5) working days prior to the event. (Upon request, the Library will provide alternate means for filing a request, such as a personal interview, tape, or digital recording, to a person with a disability.)

Accommodations to persons with a disability

All Library staff are available to provide reasonable ADA assistance and to assist a customer in the communication of an ADA request, if needed. Staff will assist a customer with a disability in any safe and feasible way needed, including opening doors, carrying, or retrieving Library materials, completing Library forms, reading, or writing out questions from Library staff or instructions given by Library staff. Staff assistance with accommodation assistance will be made in a reasonable time, pending staff coverage. The Library does not provide assistance with reading, writing, keyboarding, or use of the facilities, such as the restroom. A person who is qualified and able to help the patron needing assistance with the use of Library services, facilities and program participation should accompany them.

Despite the Library's best efforts, not all Library materials may be available in accessible formats and not every Library program, service and activity can be made accessible to every disabled person without fundamentally altering the nature of the service, activity, or program. However, the Library does make every reasonable effort to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities upon written request. The Library will provide alternate means for filing a request to a person with a disability, upon request.

Services of a personal nature are not considered reasonable accommodations and are not provided by the Library. Examples of personal services include but are not limited to tutoring, attendant care, transportation, hearing aids, prescription eyeglasses and alternate format material unrelated to interlibrary loan.

Meeting room users

Groups using the meeting rooms and presenters are expected to meet the requirements of the ADA. The Library offers the facility as a service to the community, but has no responsibility for the groups using the room.

Service animals

It is the policy of North Valley Public Library to ensure that individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals wherever members of the public may go. Under the ADA, service animals are dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. No identification or special tags are required for trained animals. Montana law also allows service animals in training if they have identification.

No animals except service dogs¹ or service miniature horses² that meet the Service Animal definition of the ADA are allowed in the Library building.

¹ There are not breed restrictions.

² Miniature horses are 70-100 lbs. and 24-34" to bottom of mane. Ponies or small horses are not service animals.

- Service animals must be housebroken.
- A service dog or service miniature horse is one that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.
- The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. Then the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, or if an animal is not identified, staff will ask the following questions:

1. Is this a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Refusal to answer the questions is cause for denying access to the animal.

The service animal may be asked to leave the Library if:

1. The animal is not under the control of its handler, and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it. Examples of unacceptable behavior are barking, growling at other patrons, jumping on other people, running away from the owner.
2. The animal is not housebroken. (The handler is liable for cleanup charges and damages of an animal that is not housebroken.)

If the animal is asked to leave then the handler must be given the opportunity to participate in any service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

NVPL is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal.

Service animals do not include emotional support or therapy dogs or miniature horses, or other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained, or untrained.

A public notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place that the Library does not allow animals other than service animals and reserves the right to file complaints alleging the misrepresentation of service animals. (MCA § 49-4-221).

The Director or designee may make exceptions allowing animals other than service animals in the Library, dependent upon circumstances (i.e., for a Library program).

Grievance Procedure

Persons who believe they have been discriminated against based on their disability should file a

complaint with the Director. This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

An ADA complaint should be submitted to the Library Director or designee in writing and should contain information about the alleged discrimination, including the name, address and telephone number of the individual filing the claim, and the location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or an audio recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The ADA complaint should be submitted to the Library Director as soon as possible, but no later than **60** calendar days after the alleged ADA violation.

Within 30 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the Library Director or designee will meet with the individual to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions; and within 15 calendar days after such meeting, the Library Director or designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the individual, such as large print or audio recording. The response will explain the position of the Library and offer options for possible resolution of the complaint.

If the response of the Library Director or designee does not satisfy the individual who filed the complaint, that individual may appeal the decision to the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees within 15 calendar days after the individual's receipt of the response. Within 30 calendar days after receiving the appeal, the Library Trustees, the Library Director or designee will meet with the individual to discuss the problem and possible resolutions, and within 15 calendar days after the meeting will respond in writing and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the individual, with a possible final resolution of the problem. To obtain the contact information for the chair of the Library Board of Trustees, visit the State of Montana's website at https://mslservices.mt.gov/ASPeN/Organizations/Organization_Detail?Organization_ID=1255#BoardMembers.

The Library welcomes input from persons with disabilities about ways the Library can more completely serve them, and every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

Designated ADA Compliance Coordinator

Nancy Morrison

406-777-5061

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