Housing and Residential Life
Middle Tennessee State University Post
Office Box 006
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Office: (615) 898-2971
Email: housing@mtsu.edu

This housing provider complies with the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. § 3601). We acknowledge that under HUD's May 22, 2026, Enforcement Memorandum, requests for untrained Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are no longer categorically presumed reasonable at the federal level. However, we reserve the right to review and approve ESA accommodation requests where a legitimate need is documented. Residents seeking accommodation for an ESA must submit reliable documentation from a licensed medical or psychological professional who has personal knowledge of the resident's specific condition and have a genuine therapeutic relationship (minimum of 4 appointments). The documentation must establish that the resident meets the statutory definition of a disability and that the animal provides accommodation directly related to that disability. Under FHA, a person may keep an Emotional Support Animal in the dorm as a reasonable accommodation if:

- The person has a documented disability.
- The animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the dwelling.
- There is an identifiable relationship or nexus between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

Therefore, if you believe you meet these criteria, you must:

- Provide documentation of a disability;
- Provide documentation of the need for the animal from an appropriate health care provider, and the health care provider must be able to speak to the University by phone;
- Provide documentation that the animal is up to date on shots, etc.;
- Provide written permission for a school health care provider to discuss with your health care provider any equally effective means of addressing your needs to determine whether to grant the requested accommodation.

Below you will find the ESA Request Documentation Packet. You will need to send the packet, the animal's vaccination records, and all other required documents at the same time by fax to: 615-898-5459 or by email to: housing@mtsu.edu. Review of the packet and notification of the decision may take up to 4 weeks. Please remember, you cannot bring the animal to campus until you have been approved by the Housing & Residential Life Office. Any appeals to the process should be sent to the Director of Housing.

If approved, the animal is not allowed in any other buildings on campus including classrooms, libraries, administrative buildings, dining facilities, or any controlled spaces. The animal is to be appropriately confined to the student's assigned living space except for toileting purposes when appropriate. When the animal receives updated vaccinations, the student will need to provide Housing & Residential Life a copy of the animal's updated vaccination records by email at housing@mtsu.edu.

RELEASE AUTHORIZATION EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL
(to be completed by the student)

I hereby authorize _____ to release the medical information requested herein and speak with representatives of Middle Tennessee State University for the purpose of determining my eligibility for an Emotional Support Animal.

Print name: _____ MTSU ID Number: _____

Date of birth: _____ Current date: _____

Signature: _____

The above-named student has indicated that you are the health care provider who has suggested that having an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in the residence hall will have therapeutic benefit in alleviating one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of the student's mental health disability. Generally, we prefer documentation from providers in the State of Tennessee or the student's home state who have personal knowledge of the student, consistent with their professional obligations.

Pursuant to Tennessee State Law (Public Chapter 754, effective July 1, 2024) added a provision to TCA 66-7-111 reliable documentation does not include documentation provided through a website whose primary function is to sell certificates, registrations, licenses or similar documents for service or support animals for a fee. The law requires healthcare providers to have actual knowledge of an individual's disability and must have a genuine therapeutic relationship.

Proposed ESA:

Animal's name: _____ Type of animal: _____

Age of animal: _____

We recognize that having an ESA in the residence hall can be a benefit for someone with a mental health disorder, but the practical limitations of our housing arrangements make it necessary to carefully consider the impact of the request for an ESA on both the student and the campus community.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION LETTER

Federal law defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Documentation of disability must come from a source with sufficient direct personal knowledge of the individual to clarify the need for the ESA and the nexus between the disability and the presence of the animal in housing.

So that we may better evaluate the request for accommodation, please provide a letter documenting the information below on the provider's letterhead, with name, type of license, address, telephone number and email.

Information About the Student's Disability

- What is the nature of the student's mental health diagnosis (that is, how is the student substantially limited?)
- When did you first meet with the student regarding this mental health diagnosis?
- When did you last interact with the student regarding this mental health diagnosis?
- What specific symptoms is this student experiencing, and how will those symptoms be mitigated by the presence of the ESA? For example, a statement that "The animal alleviates anxiety" is too general and does not explain HOW the animal may alleviate the symptoms of this student's disability.
- In your opinion, how important is it for the student's well-being that this specific ESA be in residence on campus? What consequences, if any, in terms of disability symptomology may result if the accommodation is not approved?
- How many times have you met with the student?

Thank you for taking the time to submit a letter for the student. If we need additional information, we may contact you at a later date.