

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Shawn Frederick, Central Services Director

DATE: December 23, 2024

RE: Pet Policy Pilot Project

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

On June 7, 1999 the Board of County Commissioners prohibited staff from bringing pets and other animals into workplaces. This was based on complaints from the public. Exceptions were made for working and services animals.

During the Pandemic, many public and private agencies made reasonable accommodations to allow pets in the workplace under specific criteria. This eased pet care planning and supported staff morale for those working in challenging environments. As a result, the general attitude towards pets in the workplace has changed.

ANALYSIS:

A 6-month pilot project allowing pets in the workplace in limited settings will allow County leadership the ability to assess the viability of a permanent policy revision.

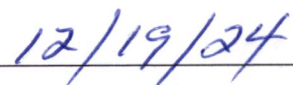
FISCAL IMPACT:

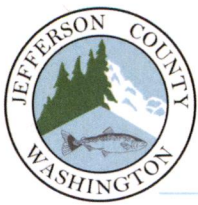
N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend approval of a 6-month pet policy pilot project.

REVIEWED BY:

 
Mark McCauley, County Administrator Date



Jefferson County, WA POLICY

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Port Townsend, WA 98368
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POLICY TITLE: Pets in the Workplace PILOT PROGRAM				
SUBJECT: Resources Provided to Support Employee Mental Health				
ORIGINATED DATE: June 7, 1999	REPLACES DATE: June 7, 1999	EFFECTIVE DATE: December 24, 2024	RENEWAL DUE DATE:	Page: 1 of: 2
CREATED BY:		APPROVED BY:		

I. PURPOSE

The Purpose of this Pilot Policy is to support a positive work experience by allowing pets to occasionally visit the workplace under certain circumstances (Ex: Before/after an appointment, before/after an unexpected event, something unexpected at home, in honor of a special national day, such as national pet day). For the purpose of this policy, a pet is defined as a dog or a cat. This policy recognizes that Service Animals, under the ADA, are accepted in all Jefferson County Buildings. Service Animals are allowed to accompany people with disabilities in county facilities where the public is normally allowed to go.

II. POLICY STATEMENT – COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Jefferson County is responsible for acting as the responsible steward for public funds and for ensuring the health and safety of the public that visits County facilities as well as of all County employees. The privilege of bringing a pet to work is subordinate to the health, safety and comfort of persons who may encounter animals in the workplace. The County also recognizes the important role of pets in the lives of some employees. In certain circumstances, pets can foster a friendlier and happier workplace.

III. SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE PETS IN THE WORKPLACE

Jefferson County strives to be an inclusive workplace committed to creating a productive and engaging environment. In consideration for the general well-being, health and safety of the public and of all employees working in Jefferson County buildings, the following lists detail areas where pets are allowed and restricted areas.

a. Areas where pets are allowed.

- Individual private offices with walls and door. This includes the private office of the pet owner as well as the private offices of colleagues of the pet owner, where advance permission has been obtained from that person. For example, a pet owner may bring his/her pet to a small meeting in a colleague's private office, provided that the colleague has given permission to the pet owner to do so. (Note: see exceptions under "Restricted" section.)
- Outdoors, on a leash, and accompanied by pet owner.

b. Areas where pets are not allowed.

Pets are not allowed in locations or situations other than those noted as allowed in the previous section. Such areas of County facilities where pets are not allowed include:

- Areas that are open to the public and commonly used, such as foyers, bathrooms, copy rooms, lounges, meeting and conference rooms, except as necessary to travel en route to permitted locations.
- Dining and food preparation areas; kitchenettes; breakrooms.
- Health and medical facilities
- Private offices that are essentially public areas due to the frequency with which they are visited by others and used for meetings.
- Computing and telecommunications machine rooms.
- Mechanical and Electrical rooms
- Any area or situation in which another person has raised a legitimate concern for health or other reasons about the presence of a pet, except for designated guide or working animals assisting employees with documented disabilities. Examples include:
 - It causes any person to experience allergic reactions, fear or any other physical or emotional discomfort
 - It distracts any employee from their work or reduces an employees' productivity or quality of work

c. Pet Owner Commitment

- Employees seeking support or accommodation for mental health related issues will be treated with privacy and confidentiality in compliance with regulations.
- Employees are welcome to bring pets into the work environment in accordance with this policy. Pets must be cared for in a responsible manner that ensures the safety of those on county owned property, as well as the safety of the pet. The pet owner will be asked to discontinue bringing their pet to campus, if the relevant policy is not upheld.
- Before Bringing a pet to work, the pet owner will check first with others in the work environment to ensure that there are no concerns, such as allergies, fear, etc. In the event of legitimate health concerns, the pet may not be brought to that area. Otherwise, employees are encouraged to work together to find a reasonable compromise that is acceptable to everyone.

d. Pet Owner Will

- Obtain and follow the pets in the workplace policy.
- Check with others in the work environment before bringing a pet to ensure that there are no concerns, such as allergies. In the event of health concerns, the pet may not be brought to that area unless it is required for disability accommodation.
- Care for the pet in a responsible way that ensures the safety of those in County buildings, as well as the safety of the pet.
- Have the pet regularly checked by a veterinarian, with current vaccinations and documentation.
- Keep the pet on a leash at all times, except when the pet is in a private office of the employee and the door to the office is closed.
- Move the pet in and out of buildings using the most expeditious route, minimizing time in areas where pets are not allowed.
- Clean any indoor and outdoor messes immediately. Call Facilities Management with any questions about appropriate cleaning techniques.
- Provide a mat or small rug for the pet in the private office of the employee to protect the carpet.
- Post a sign on the employee's door indicating that a pet is inside.

- Perform periodic thorough cleaning of office to remove hair and smells associated with the pet, including at the time pet owners transfers the office to another employee.
- Keep pets home if they are sick or if there is an infestation of fleas, ticks, or worms.
- Be responsible for any undue wear or damage to Jefferson County property that may be caused by the pet.
- Not leave the pet unsupervised in a vehicle in a vehicle if it creates a health risk to the animal.

e. Pets Will

- Be well socialized, housebroken, and in clean, groomed, healthy condition with no fleas.
- Up to date on all vaccinations.
- Be licensed according to applicable law, with current identification tags.
- Not interrupt the work of the employee or others by barking or otherwise causing a disturbance.
- Have no history of aggressive behavior or biting.
- Be controllable and restrained while on County property.

f. Additional Information

- An employee who brings a pet to a County facility is completely and solely liable for any injuries or any damage to personal property caused by the pet.
- Any repair or cleaning/maintenance costs incurred by the pet will be charged in full to the owner.
- Loud, repetitive barking or noises will not be tolerated.
- The County may, at its discretion, require the pet owner to maintain a liability insurance policy covering damage or injuries caused by the animal while at a County facility. The County may specify minimum coverage amounts under such a policy and may require the owner to pay for such coverage.
- The County shall not be liable for loss of, or injury to, any pet brought to a County facility.
- A release form for each pet must be completed, signed and submitted to the HR Director, along with the supporting current veterinary records, at least five (5) business days prior to a visit.
- There may be times when we will restrict pets being on site. We expect employees to comply with those instructions. In cases when the number of pets in the office becomes excessive, we will restrict them to set a schedule.

IV. Complaint Process

- Talk to the pet's owner in case they can resolve the problem immediately.
- Reach out to their supervisor explaining their issues.
- Consult with HR Department, if they don't get a satisfactory response.
- If the complainant has a medical or personal issue (e.g. allergy, phobia), the pet owner will be asked to discontinue bringing the pet to work.

V. REFERENCES

Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) - The County has a general duty to create a safe and healthful working environment for employees.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - The County must provide reasonable accommodations for employees and students with documented disabilities as defined by law. This policy recognizes that Service Animals, under the ADA, are accepted in Jefferson County buildings. Service Animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Service Animals are not defined as "pets." The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs or animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Service Animals 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. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. Service Animals are allowed to accompany people with disabilities in all areas County Buildings where the public is normally allowed to go.



1820 Jefferson Street
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Port Townsend, WA 98368

Dan Harpole, District 1

Glen Huntingford, District 2

Richard Wojt, District 3

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Departments

FROM: Board of Commissioners

DATE: June 7, 1999

SUBJECT: POLICY, Pets or other animals in public workplaces of Jefferson County

We have received a number of complaints from the public concerning pets or other animals in public workplaces. The Board of Commissioners is charged with the care of County property and the health and safety of employees and the public. We have determined that it is not appropriate to bring pets or other animals into public workplaces. The exceptions to this policy are service animals (ie. Seeing Eye dogs) that are required to accommodate a bonafide employee disability, dogs used to investigate bomb threats, and the Jefferson County Animal Shelter.

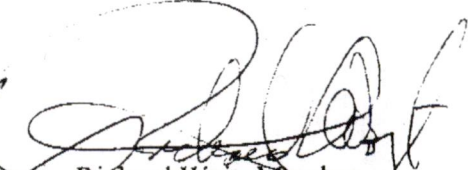
Effective June 21, 1999 no employee pets or other animals are allowed in the public workplaces of Jefferson County, except service animals required to accommodate a bonafide employee disability. The public is also prohibited from bringing animals into public workplaces of Jefferson County, with the exceptions noted above.

For those employees who have brought a pet to work, the effective date of this policy is June 21, 1999 to provide sufficient time to make other arrangements for pet care.

We thank you for your cooperation with this policy.


Dan Harpole, Chairman


Glen Huntingford, Member


Richard Wojt, Member