

# Planning for an Emotional Support Animal

If you are considering obtaining an emotional support animal (ESA), there are many aspects to consider. This information is intended to help students consider and prepare for life with an ESA within [University Housing](#). Animals living in a residence hall require unique considerations due to the nature of shared, often unpredictable, busy, and confined university environments. Understanding these considerations is important for the students' success, ensuring the well-being of the animal, and the harmony of the living space.

## Considerations for Animals in Residence Halls

### Identification & Privacy

- Having an ESA within University Housing may result in a non-visible disability becoming more apparent. **Discuss potential impacts with your mental health provider.**

### Noise & Stimulation

- Residence halls are noisy and busy (music, doors closing, fire alarms, people talking loudly, etc.), which can cause stress, anxiety, or behavioral issues in animals. Animals can become reactive to unfamiliar sounds. **Assess and plan methods or strategies to ensure your animal's behavior can be managed under stressful conditions.**

### Space, Enclosures, & Supplies

- Residence hall rooms are typically small and may lack sufficient space for animals to move freely or play. **Consider the size of your animal and assess what space is needed to move and rest comfortably.**
- **Use appropriately sized crates or enclosures, and if sharing a room, ensure that enclosures comfortably fit within your half of the shared bedroom space.**
- Animals often need a quiet, private space to rest or hide when stressed. **Create a designated area in your room for this purpose.**
- Review all items and materials that are not [permitted in residence halls](#) to ensure health and safety standards.

### Routines & Responsibility

- Students' schedules can be unpredictable—classes, social events, late nights. Inconsistent care can harm your animal's health. **Establish a daily schedule to care for the animal (feeding, exercise, toileting, etc.).**

### Financial Responsibility

- Pets necessitate financial resources. **Proactively calculate the cost of having an animal,** including potential adoption fees, vaccinations, veterinary care, food and supplies, animal boarding during weekends or semester breaks, etc.

## Roommate & Community Considerations

- Roommates may have allergies, fears, or cultural concerns about animals. **Before bringing an animal, discuss your plans and potential barriers with roommates or suitemates.**

## Indoor & Outdoor Access

- Most residence halls do not have private outdoor areas for exercise and bathroom use. Dogs need to be walked multiple times a day, even in bad weather or at odd hours. **Plan how your animal will be appropriately exercised, toileted, etc., despite inclement weather and limited enclosed outdoor space.**
- ESAs are only allowed in University Housing- not in academic or public campus buildings. **Plan for how to transport your animal safely in and out of the Residence Hall building.**

## Animal Behaviors & Suitability

- Animals must be friendly, sociable, and house-trained. Students are responsible for managing odors and cleanliness. **Consider how your animal's behavior will be addressed (e.g. barking, scratching, odors, etc.)**

## Emergency & Absence Planning

- Animals must not be left in the care of other students or housing staff. **Have a plan for weekends or unexpected absences and designate an off-campus emergency contact for your animal.**

## Safety & Hazards

- Residence halls contain potential hazards like dropped food or cleaning supplies. Ensure your animal's safety by monitoring the environment closely and **create a plan for disposing of potential hazards (e.g., cleaning chemicals, food scraps, used litter or bedding, etc.)**

## Selecting & Transitioning an Animal

- Newly adopted animals need time to bond. **Have a backup plan if the match is not right.**
- If bringing an animal from home, **consider how the change in environment may affect them.**
- **Plan for veterinary care and identify a local provider.**
- Dogs and cats must be up to date on vaccinations (including rabies), and spayed or neutered.
  - **Confirm your animal meets the University's [Animal Guidelines and Expectations](#) and is approved before bringing it to campus.**