# Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) & Service Animal Policy

# Essential Eligibility Criteria

- Guidelines of the physical and cognitive skills needed for participation in Mountaineers programs.
  - Emphasis on guidelines, not policy.
- Framework to asses requests for accommodations.
- Supplementary to our Clubwide Activity Standards and the Member Code of Ethics.
- Do not deny a request for accommodation without first contacting staff to discuss options and any related considerations.

- Please take a few minutes to review our Essential Eligibility Criteria.

# Trained Aides

- Must also meet the EECs and any activity prerequisites.
- Do not need to be paying members, but should complete a liability waiver.
  - Guest Membership
- Should be included on activity roster, but not required to pay for participation.
- Must be considered in the overall party size.
- The Mountaineers will provide trained aides on a case-by-case basis.
- In the case of ASL interpreters, accommodation may be required under law.
- Do not deny a request without consulting staff!

# Funding

- Committees may choose to fund the services of a trained aide through their committee or branch budget.
- The Mountaineers also has funding available to all committees and branches through a centralized program budget.
- Please inquire with Mountaineers staff before committing funds from The Mountaineers program budget.
  - Staff reserve the right to deny requests from the program budget that are cost prohibitive to the organization.

# How-To Navigate Our EECs

**Trips:** Basic Field-Based EEC + Relevant Activity-Based EEC

**Clinics:** Basic Field-Based EEC + Relevant Activity-Based EEC

**Seminars:** Basic EEC

**Field Trips:** Basic Field-Based EEC + Relevant Activity-Based EEC

**Lectures:** Basic EEC

**Events:** Basic EEC

# "Simple" Requests

- An individual who is hard of hearing who would like to reserve a front row seat for your upcoming lecture.
- An individual who wants to bring their parent, who is physically able but dealing with memory loss, on your upcoming hike.
- An individual with visual impairment who hikes frequently and plans to bring a trained aide along with them to your upcoming hike.
- An individual who independently uses a manual wheelchair and wants to join your hike to a barrier-free trail location.

# "Complex" Requests

- An individual who is deaf would like to register for your evening leadership seminar.
- A long-time member with a history of memory loss who wants to register for your upcoming backpacking trip.
- An individual with visual impairment who wants to register for the Alpine Scrambling Course.
- An individual who independently uses a manual wheelchair and wants to register for the Basic Sea Kayaking Course.

# Service Animal Policy

- Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD).
  - Emphasis on policy, not just guidelines.

- Please take a few minutes to review our Service Animal Policy.

# Defining a Service Animal

- Any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.
- Includes individuals with a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.
- The work or tasks must be directly related to the individual's disability.
- Use of an animal for protection, safety, emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship <u>does not</u> qualify an animal as a service animal.

# Questions & Conversations

Staff and volunteers may ask:

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

These questions may help staff or volunteers better differentiate between a service animal and an emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animal.

# Excluding Service Animals

*May be excluded if:*
- Participation would "fundamentally" alter the nature or safety of the program.
- Out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
- Not housebroken.
- Behavior or actions constitute a risk to property or others.

**Allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals.**

Must offer the opportunity for the person to participate without the service animal.

# Pre-Trip Communication

- Leaders may notify participants that a service animal will be joining the program.
- If another participant chooses to cancel their participation because a service animal will be present, any registration fee will be refunded in full.

# Lodges

- Permitted at all Mountaineers properties, including our three public lodges.
- Guests must be provided the same opportunity to stay in any available bed.
  - May not be restricted to "pet-friendly" rooms or areas of the lodge.

# Questions?

- Please contact Sara Ramsay at [sarar@mountaineers.org](mailto:sarar@mountaineers.org).