

FROM (DEPT/ DIVISION): DA

SUBJECT: Emotional Support Animal

<p>Background: The District Attorney would like to integrate an emotional support animal (ESA) into the victim witness program to assist victims of crime during victim meetings, during court proceedings, while providing testimony, or potentially at crime scenes.</p> <p>This animal will undergo specialized training through the Eastern Oregon Corrections program, offering a valuable opportunity to support and give back to victims of crime.</p>	<p>Requested Action: Authorize the Victim Service Emotional Support Animal Policy and the acquisition of this dog from the Joys of Living Assistance Dog program trained through EOCI.</p>
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ATTACHMENTS:

Date: ( 03/17/2025 ) Submitted By: Daniel Primus

\*\*\*\*\*For Internal Use Only\*\*\*\*\*

Checkoffs:

- ( x ) Dept. Head (copy)
- ( x ) Human Resources (copy)
- ( x ) Fiscal
- ( ) Legal (copy)
- ( ) (Other - List:)

To be notified of Meeting: Daniel Primus

Needed at Meeting:

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Scheduled for meeting on: March 26, 2025

Action taken:

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Follow-up:

## **Victim Service Emotional Support Animal**

**Purpose** This policy establishes the guidelines and the directives for integrating an emotional support animal (ESA) into the workplace to assist victims of crime during victim meetings, during court proceedings, while providing testimony, or potentially at crime scenes. It outlines the benefits of therapy animals, care requirements, and employer-provided support to ensure the animal's well-being and effectiveness.

### **Goals**

- To provide emotional support and comfort to victims of crime during stressful and potentially traumatic situations.
- To facilitate a supportive and calming environment for individuals interacting with the judicial process.
- To ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the emotional support animal.

**Benefits of Emotional Support Dogs** Support dogs have been demonstrated to:

- Reduce anxiety and stress in victims and witnesses of crime.
- Enhance emotional stability and comfort for individuals facing challenging legal or emotional situations.
- Foster a sense of safety and calmness for victims of crime during court proceedings or while providing testimony.

**Training and Certification** The emotional support animal will undergo professional training at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institute under the supervision of the Joys of Living Assistance Dogs program. This training ensures the animal meets the necessary behavioral and professional standards required for workplace integration and interaction with victims of crime.

**Health and Veterinary Requirements** To maintain the health and effectiveness of the emotional support animal, the following routine care is mandatory:

- Up-to-date vaccinations as recommended by a licensed veterinarian.
- Regular veterinary check-ups, including annual health examinations.
- Preventative treatments for parasites (e.g., flea, tick, and heartworm prevention).
- Maintenance of a healthy diet and weight.

**Employer Responsibilities** Umatilla County will provide financial support for the care and maintenance of the emotional support animal, including:

- Food and dietary needs.
- Necessary accessories, including a crate, leash, and vest identifying the animal as a therapy dog.
- Routine veterinary care and emergency medical expenses as required.

## **Guidelines for Workplace Integration**

- The handler assigned to this emotional support animal will be: District Attorney, Daniel Primus.
- The emotional support animal will be present in designated areas, ensuring both the animal's comfort and the safety of employees and visitors.
- Interactions with employees and the public will be regulated to avoid overstimulation or distress for the animal. Employees and visitors must:
  - Seek permission from the handler before interacting with the animal.
  - Avoid feeding, teasing, or attempting to handle the animal without prior approval.
  - Respect the animal's need for rest and refrain from distracting it during work duties.
- The handler will ensure the animal has appropriate breaks, rest periods, and access to water.
- Public and employee access to the animal will be managed to prioritize victims' needs and the animal's well-being.

**Monitoring and Evaluation** The placement and integration of the emotional support animal will be reviewed annually to:

- Assess its effectiveness in providing emotional support to victims.
- Ensure compliance with health and training standards.
- Address any concerns or adjustments needed to improve the program.

**Conclusion** This policy underscores the commitment to providing holistic support to victims of crime while maintaining the highest standards of care and respect for the emotional support animal. By incorporating a support dog into the workplace, the organization seeks to create a compassionate and supportive environment that facilitates healing and justice.

## **Program Completion/Retirement**

The program will be ended in the event one of the following occur:

- If the emotional support animal is injured and becomes disabled
- If the emotional support animal becomes unable to complete required training certifications
- If the emotional support animal is no longer able or willing to perform duties
- If the handler departs the agency
- If Umatilla County chooses to no longer continue the canine program

Umatilla County understands the relationship developed between the emotional support animal and handler and the potential issues that could arise from separation or reassignment. Umatilla County will provide the current handler assigned to the emotional support animal with the first right of refusal for continued care of the emotional support animal and ownership until the passing of the animal.

Upon departure of the program/retirement, Umatilla County is freed from any liability for the emotional support animal or the animal's actions on the date of departure.