



POLICY CHANGE ALERT #16-002F

TITLE: ANIMAL ASSISTANTS

ISSUE DATE: 01/04/2016

EFFECTIVE DATE: EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Summary

Programs Impacted: NA

This Policy Change Alert is being issued to inform staff that the medical expense deduction for service animals is no longer limited to dogs. The Food and Nutrition Service has issued Administrative Notice 16-05, which states, costs associated with any animal specially trained to serve the needs of the elderly or disabled program participants are allowable for purposes of the excess medical expense deduction.

Revision Details

The FAA Policy Manual will be updated to include the information in this Policy Change Alert during one of the next bimonthly revisions. Until then, an alert will be placed in each revised section with a link to this document as a reminder of the policy change.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA4.L07A – ANIMAL ASSISTANTS

The costs to secure and maintain professionally trained service **animals** for assisting participants with a disability in performing normal living activities are **ALLOWABLE** for **NA ONLY**.

Animal assistants include, but are not limited to the following:

- Seeing-eye **animals**
- Hearing-ear **animals**

NOTE This does not include watchdogs used only for protection.

A service animal is defined as an **animal** that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. To determine if the service animal meets the requirements ask the customer to provide a statement with **ONLY** the following two questions:

- Is the service animal required because of a disability
- What work or task has the **animal** been trained to perform



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Staff CANNOT do any of the following:

- Ask the person's disability
- Require medical documentation
- Require a special identification card or training documentation for the **animal**
- Ask that the **animal** demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task

It is NOT a requirement that a physician or medical professional prescribe the need for the animal when the participant meets the [NA disability requirements](#).

Maintenance costs include the following:

- Purchase of animal food
- Veterinary services
- Kennel fees
- Training

NOTE Breeding and whelping fees are not deductible.

Key the expense on EXPC using the ME Expense Code.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA6Q01A.21 – ANIMALS

Animals may be countable or not countable as a resource, self employment, or an expense, depending on their use.

Animals used as assistants are considered as a resource when the animal meets professional training requirements. Such animals include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Seeing-eye **animals**
- Hearing-ear **animals**



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Maintenance costs incurred to care for animals used as assistants may be allowed as medical expenses.

For policy and procedures regarding animals used as assistants, see [Animal Assistants](#).

The following animals are considered resources:

- Animals used for home consumption
- Animals that produce items used for home consumption
- Exotic animals
- Pets

For policy and procedures regarding animals considered resources, see [Livestock](#).

Animals used to produce income through any of the following means are not considered resources, but the income they produce is considered self employment:

- Animals that are raised to sell
- Animals whose products are sold
- Animals that include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Animals used for stud service
- Guard animals
- Racing animals (e.g., horses, dogs)

Please contact the FAA Policy Support Team by phone at (602) 774-5523 or by e-mail at FAAPolicyMgmt@azdes.gov with any questions or concerns regarding this broadcast.

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