**Responsible Official: Executive Director**

**Responsible Office: Research and Public Service**

**Effective Date: June 01, 2016**

**Revision Date:**

Reason for the Policy:

**Animals in the Workplace Policy**

**Overview/Policy Statement**

It is The West Virginia State University Research and Development Corporation’s policy to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and visitors. In accordance with this, animals are prohibited from all facilities and premises with the exception of authorized service animals and working animals as defined below.

"**Facility**" means any owned or leased facility, including the associated parking lots, grounds and common areas.

"**Service Animals**" refers to animals (primarily dogs) used to guide or provide assistance to persons with disabilities in the activities of independent living. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. If an animal meets this broad definition, it is considered a service animal.

"**Working Animals**" refers to those animals engaged in authorized service to the corporation (e.g., guard dogs, pest control animals, police dogs).

**Rationale**In addition to providing a professional and conducive work environment, this policy responds to concerns for the health and safety of employees and animals. Further, it limits potential distractions and disturbances in the workplace.

**Scope**This Policy shall apply to all employees, contractors and visitors of The Corporation. This Policy shall cover all areas and businesses of The Corporation’s operations.

**Applying the Policy**

This policy provides for the health and safety of employees and Corporation’s facilities by restricting animals in the workplace as follows:

* Unauthorized animals are not permitted in any area within the workplace, including the parking lots and grounds.
* Employees and visitors are reminded that bringing a pet to work and leaving them in a car is neither appropriate, nor safe and is prohibited in some jurisdictions. It will be the responsibility of security to report to the appropriate local authorities, any animal left in a vehicle or otherwise unattended. If the vehicle can be identified as belonging to a specific employee, Security will attempt to reach that person prior to contacting authorities.

In order to accommodate individuals with disabilities, service animals are expressly permitted in all areas in the workplace. Employees who are in need of a service animal must:

* Obtain authorization through the job modification process prior to bringing the animal to the worksite.
* In all cases, only clean, trained, well-behaved, non-aggressive animals are allowed, and they are to be leashed and kept under control at all times.
* It is the animal owner's responsibility to ensure that animals relieve themselves outside and owners should not call upon co-workers or facilities staff.

Individuals are reminded not to touch, feed or pet a service or working animal when the animal is working as it distracts the animal from the task at hand.