

FAIR HOUSING

CENTER OF WASHINGTON

Embracing Diversity, Advocating Equality

REQUESTING A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OR MODIFICATION

Are you disabled and need your housing provider to change or waive a policy (reasonable accommodation) or allow you to change the structure of your home (reasonable modification) in order to have equal access and enjoyment? If yes, below are steps and materials needed to make your requests.

Before we start:

- There is **no guarantee** that the reasonable accommodation (RA) and/or reasonable modification (RM) request(s) will be granted. You will want to have a back-up plan in case your housing provider denies the request.
- There must be a nexus (connection) between your disability and the RA and/or RM request.
- You must provide verification of both your disability and the need for the RA and/or RM. Verification can take one of the following forms:
 - a) A note/letter written by a qualified third party with knowledge of your disability
Examples: licensed medical professional, social services provider, member of the clergy
 - b) A government document that verifies your disability
Examples: ADA parking placard or SSDI benefits statement
 - c) A visible or obvious disability that clearly shows the need for the request
Examples: use of a wheelchair or seeing-eye dog

ONCE YOU HAVE YOUR VERIFICATION, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

Step 1: Submit a request for reasonable accommodation/modification to your housing provider

- We recommend that the request be in writing with a date and witness or timestamp. A timestamp could be automatically added to an email, or by sending the letter via certified mail and asking for a receipt to guarantee you can confirm they received it.
- While not a requirement under the law, we recommend that the request take the form of a formal letter ([Sample Reasonable Accommodation Client Self-Help Letter](#))
Examples of simplified/less formal requests:
 - a) *I am disabled and rely on my SSDI payments to cover rent. My SSDI payments are paid on the 3rd of each month. Therefore, I am requesting a reasonable accommodation to allow my rent to be paid by the 4th of each month without accruing a late fee.*
 - b) *I am asking for a reasonable accommodation to waive the weight limit for my dog, who is required for my disability. I have included the letter written by my doctor which verifies I am disabled and require a companion dog because of my disability.*
 - c) *I use a wheelchair and am requesting permission to build a ramp out my back door so I can access my backyard.*

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- Give the housing provider about 5 business days to respond
 - a) **If the request is granted**, keep a copy of the approval for your records or ask the landlord to provide you with a written statement verifying your RA/RM was approved.
 - b) **If the request is denied or ignored** (more than 5 days have passed), contact our agency and move to step 3.
 - c) **If you experience retaliation** (harassment, difference in treatment, threats, etc..) because of your request at any time, contact us and move to step 4.

Step 3: We submit a request for reasonable accommodation/modification on your behalf

In order to do this, we need all of the following:

- Completed [Intake Paperwork](#) (be sure to make note of your self-advocacy efforts in your description of the incident).
- Verification of disability (*see “before we start” for acceptable forms of verification*)
- Any additional evidence tied to your RA or RM request, such as:
 - a) Official notices from your housing provider
Examples: 10-day notice, eviction notice, denial letter
 - b) Unofficial correspondences between you and your housing provider about your request
Examples: text messages, emails, voicemails
 - c) Witness statements – must include full name and method of contact

Once we have received your intake paperwork, doctor’s note, and supportive evidence our agency will contact your housing provider to make the reasonable accommodation request.

Step 4: File a fair housing complaint

This is used only if a housing provider ignores a request, denies a reasonable request, and/or retaliates against you for making an RA/RM request. (See [Filing a Fair Housing Complaint](#))