

It's the Law!

Federal, state and local fair housing laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. These laws require provision of disability accommodations and modifications when necessary.

Reasonable Accommodations

A **reasonable accommodation** is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rental rule, policy, practice, or service. Accommodations allow a person with a disability to use and enjoy a dwelling and common use areas. Accommodations are generally low or no cost and are provided by the landlord or manager. Examples:

- provide rental forms in large print
- allow a resident to have a service animal in a "no pets" building
- provide a reserved parking space near a resident's rental
- permit a resident to have a live-in caregiver
- allow a resident with mobility limitations to move to the ground floor
- provide a monthly reminder that the rent is due for a resident with disability-related memory problems
- use non-toxic cleaning and garden products



Reasonable Modifications

A **reasonable modification** is a structural change made to a dwelling or common areas of a community. Modifications are necessary to enable a resident with a disability to have full use of and enjoyment of the housing. Modifications are normally at the resident's expense, unless the housing provider receives federal funding. Examples of modifications the housing provider may need to allow the resident to:

- install grab bars in a bathroom
- add a ramp for access to a primary entrance
- put non-slip color strips on stairs
- lower a door lock or peephole
- widen a doorway
- lower kitchen cabinets to a height suitable for a wheelchair user
- alter a walkway to provide access

Modifications must be done to code and in a professional way. The housing provider may require the resident to set aside a restoration fund to return the rental to its original condition, if necessary.

"Disability" includes people who have a sensory, mental, or physical condition that is medically cognizable or diagnosable, and that seriously impacts one's housing (can be permanent or temporary).

The Request Process

The applicant or resident with a disability makes a request, verbally or in writing. Requests can occur at any time.

The housing provider may request written verification that the person has a disability and a need for the accommodation or modification.



- Request verification when unsure that a disability exists, or that a requested accommodation is necessary. Example: A blind person with a guide dog needs no verification, while someone with no apparent disability who wants reserved parking may need to provide a verification letter.
- Written verification can be provided by a doctor or other medical professional, or other qualified third party who, in their professional capacity, has knowledge about the person's disability and the disability-related need for the requested accommodation.
- Residents do not need to disclose the nature or diagnosis of their disabilities, and housing providers may not ask.

Reasonable requests should be granted promptly. If the housing provider cannot grant the request, discuss other options and grant an alternative accommodation or modification that is reasonable.

It is often necessary for the resident and housing provider to engage in an interactive discussion about the request and how best to meet the resident's disability needs.

What's "Reasonable"?

- The person has a disability and the request is related to disability needs.
- The request does not impose an undue financial and administrative burden for the housing provider.
- The request does not fundamentally alter the nature of the housing provider's operations.



More Information Available

Contact a fair housing agency for information. See the Fair Housing Partners list in this brochure.

Read about fair housing rights and responsibilities. Our publications include guidebooks for renters and housing providers, such as:

- 100 Q&A for Housing Providers
- Reasonable Accommodations & Modifications for Residents with Disabilities
- Sample Policy: Service Animals
- Housing Discrimination & Your Civil Rights

More fair housing resources:

www.kingcounty.gov/exec/CivilRights/FH/FHresources.aspx

FAIR HOUSING AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON STATE

**Washington State
Human Rights Commission**
800-233-3247
TTY 800-300-7525
www.hum.wa.gov

King County Office of Civil Rights
206-263-2446 TTY Relay: 711
www.kingcounty.gov/civilrights

Seattle Office for Civil Rights
206-684-4500
TTY 206-684-4503
www.seattle.gov/civilrights

Tacoma Human Rights
253-591-5151
TTY Relay: 711
www.cityoftacoma.org/humanrights

Fair Housing Center of Washington
253-274-9523 TTY Relay: 711
888-766-8800
www.fhcwashington.org

Northwest Fair Housing Alliance
509-325-2665 TTY Relay: 711
800-200-3247 (in 509 area)
www.nwfairhouse.org

This brochure is available in other formats upon request.

Call 206-263-2446 or TTY 711

February 2016

Accommodations & Modifications for Residents with Disabilities



for Renters and
Rental Housing
Providers



King County

**Office of Civil Rights &
Open Government**