



## Federal and local laws protect people with disabilities from discrimination in housing

The Fair Housing Act defines “disability” as a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a person’s major life activities.


Protected disabilities include mental or physical disabilities, emotional disorders, specific diseases (such as AIDS), alcoholism or drug addiction (if not currently using illegal drugs), and more.


Founded in 1968, HOPE Fair Housing Center is the oldest and largest fair housing center in Illinois. HOPE works to create greater housing opportunities for all. We accomplish this through education, outreach, enforcement, training, and advocacy.


HOPE provides free assistance to victims of housing discrimination. (HOPE does not provide legal representation nor legal advice.)




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## Fair Housing for People with Disabilities



## You Have Fair Housing Rights



# Your Right to a Reasonable Accommodation or Modification

If you have a qualifying disability, you have the right to request a reasonable accommodation or modification to allow you to equally use and enjoy your housing.

## Reasonable Accommodation

### DEFINITION

A change in rules, policies, practices, or services.

### EXAMPLE

A tenant with an assistance animal asks for a **Reasonable Accommodation** for an exception from a building's "No Animals" policy.

## Reasonable Modification

### DEFINITION

Physical changes to the structure of the housing, typically done at the tenant's expense.\*

### EXAMPLE

A tenant who uses a wheelchair asks for a **Reasonable Modification** to install a ramp to their unit. The tenant will get building permits and pay for expenses.

\*in federally assisted housing, these expenses are covered by the housing provider

# What Can a Housing Provider Ask You?

If you request a reasonable accommodation or modification, your housing provider may ask for verification of your disability if your disability is not obvious and the need for the accommodation is not obvious. **However**, a housing provider may not ask you or a certifying professional about the nature or severity of your disability.

You may request a reasonable accommodation or modification verbally or in writing.

# Did You Know?

If you live in a multifamily home (excludes townhomes) built after **March 13, 1991**, your building must meet certain accessibility guidelines. To find out more about these construction requirements, visit [HUD.gov](https://www.hud.gov) and search "accessibility first."

# If you think you have faced housing discrimination:

Contact HOPE Fair Housing Center.

Document meetings, phone calls, and requests made with landlords, property managers, real estate agents, and other involved parties.

Save all email, text, mail correspondence, receipts, copies of applications, business cards, and other documents.

# When appropriate, HOPE can:

- Provide resources for requesting a Reasonable Accommodation/Modification
- Advocate on your behalf with a housing provider
- Assist in filing a housing discrimination complaint
- Refer your case to attorneys that are experts in fair housing litigation