

APPLICANT REQUEST FOR A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION/STRUCTURAL MODIFICATION GUIDE

PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE FIRST BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR APPLICANT REQUEST FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION/STRUCTURAL MODIFICATION FORM.

IT WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH EXPLANATIONS OF YOUR RIGHTS AND SOME EXAMPLES OF WAYS IN WHICH YOU MAY APPLY THEM.

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) operates in accordance with the federal Fair Housing Law and all Civil Rights laws in effect. It does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or familial status. In addition, the CHA has a legal obligation to provide “reasonable accommodations” to qualified¹ public housing applicants and residents with disabilities and their family members.

If you are applying to live in CHA housing and need a reasonable accommodation or structural modification to a unit to permit you to live in CHA housing you should write it on your application for housing.

What is a reasonable accommodation/structural modification?

1. A change to a policy, procedure, or the way the CHA or a Property Manager communicates with you to allow individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in CHA programs. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Providing an oral/sign language interpreter for an individual with a hearing impairment, or written documents in large print or Braille for an individual with visual impairments and
 - Permitting a qualified disabled resident to have an assistive animal in a housing unit with a no-pet policy.
2. Any physical change to a unit, the route to the unit, or common area that allows a person with a disability an equal opportunity to live in a CHA unit. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Adding grab bars, widening doorways, or adding an entrance ramp for a person using a wheelchair and
 - Installing strobe-type flashing light smoke detectors in a unit.

¹ The term “qualified” refers to applicants who are eligible and able to meet the applicant housing selection criteria. This term is taken from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regulations. 24 CFR § 8.3 Definition of “Qualified Individual with Handicaps.”

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Who can qualify for a reasonable accommodation/structural modification?

A person with a disability may qualify for a reasonable accommodation/structural modification.

What is a disability?

A disability is defined as any physical, mental, or emotional impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

How do I ask for a reasonable accommodation/structural modification?

If you or a member of your family have a disability and think you might need or want a reasonable accommodation/structural modification, you may request it at **any time** in the application process or at the time of your interview with the Property Manager. This is up to you. If you would prefer not to discuss your situation with the CHA, that is your right. Any information you provide to us during this process will remain completely confidential.

How Do I Ask For A Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification?

STEP 1 – Request a reasonable accommodation/structural modification by indicating it on your application and/or verbally notifying CHA Occupancy Department staff.

If you or a member of your family have a disability and think you might need or want a reasonable accommodation/structural modification, you may request it at **any time** in the application process. This is up to you. If you would prefer not to discuss your situation with the CHA, that is your right.

STEP 2 – After you have completed your application with the CHA's Occupancy Department and you are meeting with Private Property Management, you may also request a reasonable accommodation and request to complete the Applicant Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form.

Please note that you may request a reasonable accommodation at any time during the application process.

If you are asking for special features in a unit or a specific type of unit because of your disability, you must complete an Applicant Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form.

You may ask property management staff for assistance in reading or completing the form. For example, property management staff can read the Applicant Request for

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Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form to you, give you a copy of the form in large print, or make a sign language interpreter available.

If you are a minor, your parent or guardian must complete the Applicant Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form for you.

By filling out the Applicant Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form, you do two things:

1. You let the CHA know what changes you are asking for based on your disability. **You do not need to tell us the nature or extent of your disability.**
2. You give the CHA permission to contact a knowledgeable professional who is aware of your situation so he/she can confirm that you have a disability and need the requested change.

STEP 3 - Give the Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form to your Property Manager.

What will the Property Manager do with the form I filled out?

The Property Manager will send a Certification of Need for a Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form to the knowledgeable professional you asked them to contact. The Certification of Need for a Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form asks the knowledgeable professional to confirm that you have a disability and that the special features you requested are needed because of your disability. **The Applicant Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form states that the knowledgeable professional should not tell us the nature or extent of your disability or give us your medical records.**

When will the CHA notify me about my request?

Once the knowledgeable professional returns the Certification of Need for a Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form, the Property Manager will notify you, in writing or in an alternate communication, if you have requested it, whether your request is approved or denied within ten business days.

If you have requested that another person help you in this process also be notified, this person will be notified as well of the CHA's decision.

The Property Manager will notify you if the knowledgeable professional did not return the Certification of Need for a Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Form within 30 days of sending it to the requested knowledgeable professional.

What happens if my request is approved?



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If your request is approved, the Property Manager will give you a Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Determination Notice that states what changes will be made.

What happens if my request is denied?

If your request is denied, the Property Manager will give you a Reasonable Accommodation/Structural Modification Determination Notice stating that your request is denied and why it was denied.

If you disagree with this determination, you may request a hearing verbally or in writing with the Occupancy Department within 30 calendar days of receiving this notification of ineligibility. If you do not request a hearing within 30 days of receiving the ineligibility notice, the decision will not be reconsidered.

To schedule a hearing, please contact the Occupancy Department at: 60 E. Van Buren Street, 10th Floor, Chicago, IL 60605 or by calling (312) 747-2796, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

What else should I know?

Any information you provide the CHA or its designee during this process will remain completely confidential and will only be used to determine whether you qualify for a reasonable accommodation/structural modification.

The CHA considers each request for a reasonable accommodation/structural modification separately. Just because one person had a change approved does not mean that all requests for that type of change will be approved. The decision will be made on a case by case basis with the understanding that each person's need and circumstances are unique.

You must follow your lease whether you receive an accommodation/modification or not. You must pay rent, not disturb your neighbors, maintain a clean unit, and not engage in criminal activity. We cannot waive essential lease provisions or disregard CHA's standards because you have a disability. If you cannot comply with your lease because of your disability, the CHA may be able to provide you with an accommodation/modification that will enable you to comply. However, you must tell us that such an accommodation is needed.

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What other remedies exist?

If at anytime you feel your request is not being processed appropriately, you have the right to file a complaint with the CHA's ADA/Section 504 Compliance Department, at (312) 913-7068 or (312) 454-1748 tel./TTY or write to the Occupancy Department at:

Chicago Housing Authority
Occupancy Department
60 E. Van Buren, 10th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60605

In addition, you have a right to seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.