

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS?

A **reasonable accommodation** is a change to the rules, policies, practices, or procedures of a property.

A **reasonable modification** is a change to the physical structure of the unit.

Examples of reasonable accommodations or modifications are:

- giving you an assigned parking space in your apartment's open parking lot
- allowing an assistance animal even if your place has a "no pets" policy
- installing a ramp or grab bars for a person with mobility impairments

How do I request reasonable accommodations or modifications?

Step 1: decide what would help you live at your place with your disability

Step 2: tell your landlord what you need, like an assistance animal or a wheelchair ramp

Step 3: explain why you need the help



You do not need to tell your landlord your diagnosis. The landlord should not ask for more information if your disability is obvious. We suggest you make your request in writing.

Note: If your disability is not obvious, your landlord can ask a reliable third-party to verify it.

- you need a reasonable accommodation/modification
- the accommodation/modification you asked for will help you

To request a reasonable accommodation you are not required to provide:

- a specific form
- a notarized statement
- detailed information about your disability

Who We Are

Legal Aid Society is Tennessee's largest non-profit law firm. Our mission is to enforce, advance, and defend the legal rights of low income and vulnerable people to obtain the basic necessities of life.

Contact Us

We have offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma.

Call 1-800-238-1443 for assistance

In partnership with



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The information provided in this booklet does not and is not intended to constitute legal advice. If you have a legal problem, please call a private attorney or call your local Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Mountains office at 1-800-238-1443.



Housing

HOW DOES THE FAIR HOUSING ACT PROTECT YOU?

IF YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONE ARE ENTITLED TO A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION, AND YOUR WRITTEN REQUEST IS DENIED BY YOUR LANDLORD, CALL LEGAL AID SOCIETY.



LEGAL AID SOCIETY
OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

The federal law called the **Fair Housing Act** says everyone has to be treated the same when they are finding a place to live.



No one can treat you differently because of your:

- race
- sexual orientation
- religion
- gender
- nationality
- disability
- color
- family status
- creed

Using one of these reasons to treat you differently is called **discrimination**. Discrimination for those reasons is against the law.

Under the Fair Housing Act, landlords cannot use the reasons listed above to:

- refuse to rent or sell housing to you
- refuse to negotiate for housing
- make housing unavailable
- set different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale
- provide different housing services or facilities
- falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale or rental
- persuade owners to sell or rent

- deny anyone access to or membership in a facility or service (such as multiple listing service) related to the sale or rental of housing

It is also illegal to:

- threaten, coerce, intimidate, or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise that right
- advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, children, or disability

EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING ACT BASED UPON PROTECTED CLASS MEMBERSHIP ARE:

- lying
- refusal to rent or sell to you
- treating you differently
- discriminatory advertisement
- financial discrimination
- not providing reasonable accommodations that you need because of your disability

DOES THE FAIR HOUSING ACT PROTECT YOU IF YOU ARE DISABLED?

Yes. The Fair Housing Act defines “handicap,” status as:

- a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- a record of an impairment; or
- being regarded as having such an impairment (whether a person has an impairment or not)

Important: You do not need to receive social security money in order to be considered disabled.

Examples of disabilities protected by the Fair Housing Act:



people suffering from Alzheimer’s Syndrome, senile dementia, schizophrenia, and organic brain syndrome



people limited by developmental disabilities



elderly people suffering from chronic illnesses



people diagnosed with HIV infection or other infectious diseases



people who are mobility impaired