

Introduction

It is the policy of the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) to provide reasonable accommodation in housing for applicants and residents with disabilities where reasonable accommodation is needed to provide an equal opportunity to use and enjoy HAP's housing. HAP's goal is to provide clean, safe, and affordable housing to low and moderate income persons regardless of disability. This guide will provide you with information about this policy and how it works.

Who is a Person with a Disability?

A person with a disability is an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life functions. You can also be considered disabled if you have a record of a physical or mental impairment or people regard you as having such an impairment.

A physical impairment is a disorder or condition that affects one or more body systems. A physical impairment can be caused by illness, disease, a birth defect, injury, age or anything else that disrupts a person's physical ability to function. Some examples of physical disabilities are blindness, hearing loss, or inability to walk.

A mental impairment is a mental, psychiatric or psychological disorder. Some examples are mental illness, developmental disability or specific learning disabilities.

Under HAP policy, you may be considered a person with a disability if your physical or mental condition causes substantial difficulty in performing a major life function. Major life functions include the ability to walk, see, hear, breathe, think, read or care for yourself.

Under some circumstances, alcoholism or a history of drug use may be considered a disability. Current users of illegal drugs are not disabled.

What is a "reasonable accommodation"?

A reasonable accommodation is a change that can be made to an apartment or a procedure that will allow a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to participate in HAP housing programs. Any accommodation considered by HAP cannot result in an undue financial or administrative burden or create a fundamental change in a program. For example, it might be reasonable to lower the cabinets for someone in a wheelchair, put grab bars in the bathroom for someone with a mobility impairment, or put in a fire alarm that flashes for someone who has a hearing impairment. It might also be reasonable to allow a person with a mental disability to have rent payment made by a third party.

It would not be reasonable to prevent children from using the playground because the noise bothers someone or to provide a paraplegic resident with a housekeeper at HAP expense.

How do I apply for a “reasonable accommodation”?

If you need an accommodation in order to apply for, or participate in HAP housing, you should make the request at the Public Housing Intake Office on 4400 N.E. Broadway (for public housing) or at the main HAP office at 135 S.W. Ash for other sites. If you are interested in one of HAP’s Affordable Housing sites, please submit your request to the Rental Office at the site. Some examples of the types of accommodation that might be needed include a sign language interpreter, or having the application materials sent to you. You do not need a request form to obtain this type of assistance.

For any accommodation other than assistance in completing the application, you must ask for and complete a Request for Reasonable Accommodation form. (HAP A-65.)

1. “Request for Reasonable Accommodation” forms are available at HAP’s main office at 135 S.W. Ash. You can also request a form by calling 503.802.8300, or by E-Mailing the 504/ADA Coordinator at ADA@HAPdx.org. If you need assistance in completing the form, ask a HAP staff member for help. If necessary, HAP will provide a reader or sign language interpreter. You will be asked which family member has a disability and what kinds of changes are requested.

You may be asked to provide confirmation about the disability from a medical professional or qualified service provider. The medical professional or qualified service provider may also be asked to certify and explain how the requested accommodation is related to the disability and will be effective in accommodating the disability. It is important that you meet any deadlines for requests for information. Failure to respond in a timely manner may result in your request being delayed or denied. If you need more time to respond, let your site staff know.

2. During the process of evaluating your request you or HAP staff may request a meeting to discuss the requested accommodation. You may have a friend or advocate with you at the meeting. If you are unable to come to an office, the meeting may be held by telephone or, if you are a resident, in your apartment. HAP will provide a reader or sign language interpreter if requested.

Who can I go to if I have questions?

HAP has an ADA/504 Coordinator who can be consulted at any time in the reasonable accommodation process. The ADA/504 Coordinator can be contacted at:

| | | | |
|--------|--------------|---------|--|
| Phone: | 503.735.4220 | TTY: | 503.286.3880 |
| Fax: | 503.289.8853 | E-mail: | ADA@HAPdx.org |

The ADA/504 Coordinator can help determine what kinds of accommodation would work best in HAP’s housing. If you have questions about information that is requested from you, if you don’t understand the procedures or you are not sure what kind of accommodation might be available for your situation, you should contact the ADA/504 Coordinator at one of the above numbers.

How is my request processed?

For Individuals in HAP's Housing Programs:

Reasonable Accommodation will be considered for an individual with a verified disability who currently participates in one of HAP's housing programs.

1. You may obtain a request form through any HAP or site office. You may submit a request for reasonable accommodation at any time.
2. After you submit your request, the Site Manager of your development will review the request. If a determination is made that additional information is needed, the Site Manager will notify you in writing. You will have up to 10 working days, to respond.
3. The Site Manager will forward your request to his/her supervisor. The Supervisor will review the request, and may request additional information or may request an informal meeting if any issues are unresolved.
4. The Supervisor will forward your request, and a recommendation on action, to the ADA/504 Coordinator. The Coordinator will notify you, in writing, within 30 days of the decision made regarding your request.
5. If the Coordinator denies your request, you have the right to appeal through the appropriate grievance process.

For Applicants to HAP's Housing Programs:

Reasonable Accommodation will be considered for an applicant with a verified disability who meets basic qualifications for HAP housing. An applicant must meet income guidelines, pass screening criteria for the respective housing program, and be able to meet and agree to abide by provisions of his/her respective lease or contract for assistance.

1. You may obtain a request form from HAP's Intake or any other housing program office. You may submit a request for reasonable accommodation at any time.
2. After you submit your request, the Intake Specialist or Rental Staff will review the request. If a determination is made that additional information is needed, the Intake Specialist or Rental Staff will notify you in writing. You will have up to 10 working days, to respond.
3. The Intake Specialist will forward your request to the Intake Supervisor. The Supervisor will review the request, and may request additional information or may request an informal meeting if any issues are unresolved.
4. The Supervisor will forward your request, and a recommendation on action, to the ADA/504 Coordinator. The Coordinator will notify you, in writing, within 30 days of the decision made regarding your request.
5. If the Coordinator denies your request, you will have an opportunity to meet and discuss the denial.

Reasonable Accommodation Transfer: The review request process includes all reasonable options, including Reasonable Accommodation transfers. The ADA/504 Coordinator and the respective Supervisor will consider this and other options when recommending the alternative that seems to best serve the needs of the individual and of HAP.

Some things to keep in mind

- HAP considers each request for reasonable accommodation as a separate request. Just because one person has a request approved does not mean that all requests of that type will be approved. The decision will be made on a case-by-case basis with the understanding that each person's needs and circumstances are unique.
- Whether your request for reasonable accommodation is approved or not, you must follow the provisions of your lease. You must pay your rent, not disturb your neighbors, and not engage in criminal activity.
- HAP may suggest an alternate accommodation from the one you request. The decision on whether an accommodation is approved will be based on its effectiveness in reducing the barriers to equal housing opportunity and on whether or not it involves a fundamental change to HAP's housing programs or creates an undue financial or administrative burden.

Other Remedies

If at anytime you feel your request is not being processed appropriately, you have the right to file a complaint with HAP's ADA/504 Coordinator by contacting one of the numbers shown on page 4. In addition, you have a right to seek assistance from:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity: | 1.800.877.0246 |
| Legal Aid Services of Oregon | 503.224.4086 |

Important Phone Numbers

| | | |
|--|---------|--|
| HAP's ADA/504 Coordinator | Phone: | 503.735.4220 |
| | Fax: | 503.289.8853 |
| | TTY: | 503.286.3880 |
| | E-mail: | ADA@HAPdx.org |
| Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity | Phone: | 1.800.877.0246 |
| Legal Aid Services of Oregon | Phone: | 503.244.4086 |

Glossary:

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
HAP: Housing Authority of Portland

504: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development