

or other reliable social services agency or third party may also provide sufficient verification of a disability. Information concerning your disability must normally be kept confidential by your landlord.

If you reside in public housing, you should ask at the office if they have a request form for you to use in requesting a reasonable accommodation. The form will assist you in highlighting your disability and providing any medical verification that may be required. A landlord is allowed to ask for information about your disability, but it may be illegal for the landlord to deny or terminate your housing after acquiring information about your disability.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP IF MY LANDLORD IS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST ME BECAUSE OF MY DISABILITY?

If you think that your housing status has been threatened because of a disability, you can contact MidPenn Legal Services, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, HUD, or your local fair housing agency.

MidPenn Legal Services Offices

ALTOONA

171 Lakemont Park Blvd.
Altoona, PA 16602
Phone: 814-943-8139
800-326-9177

BEDFORD

232 East Pitt Street
Bedford, PA 15522
Phone: 814-623-6189
800-326-9177

CARLISLE

401 E. Louthier St. Suite 103
Carlisle, PA 17013
Phone: 717-243-9400
800-822-5288

CHAMBERSBURG

230 Lincoln Way E., Ste. A
Chambersburg, PA 17201
Phone: 717-264-5354
800-372-4737

CLEARFIELD

211 E. Locust Street
Clearfield, PA 16830
Phone: 814-765-9646
800-326-9177

GETTYSBURG

128 Breckenridge Street
Gettysburg, PA 17325
Phone: 717-334-7624

HARRISBURG

213-A N. Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 717-232-0581
800-932-0356

LANCASTER

38 N. Christian Street, Ste. 200
Lancaster, PA 17602
Phone: 717-299-0971
800-732-0025

LEBANON

513 Chestnut Street
Lebanon, PA 17042
Phone: 717-274-2834

LEWISTOWN

3 W. Monument Sq., Ste. 303
Lewistown, PA 17044
Phone: 717-248-3099
800-326-9177

POTTSVILLE

315 N. Centre St., Ste. 201
Pottsville, PA 17901
Phone: 570-628-3931
866-638-0606

READING

501 Washington Street, #401
Reading, PA 19601
Phone: 610-376-8656
800-299-6599

STATE COLLEGE

3500 E. College Ave., Ste. 1295
State College, PA 16801
Phone: 814-238-4958
800-326-9177

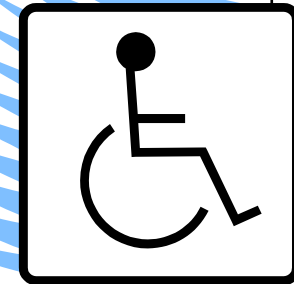
YORK

29 N. Queen Street
York, PA 17403
Phone: 717-848-3605



MidPenn Legal Services

A Disabled Tenant's Rights to A Reasonable Accommodation



MidPenn Legal Services serves residents of Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Mifflin, Schuylkill & York Counties.

This brochure contains general information and not specific legal advice. Although this information is believed to be accurate at the time of preparation, individual situations may require individual analysis, such that it may be advisable to consult with a lawyer. June 2011



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION IN HOUSING

The Fair Housing Act (“FHA”) provides protection for disabled persons from discriminatory practices in all federally subsidized housing and most private housing. The FHA defines a person with a disability as an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, individuals regarded as having an impairment, and individuals with a record of an impairment. This means that any person with an actual disability, or one suffering from severe physical or mental limitations, may qualify for a reasonable accommodation. However, a reasonable accommodation does not protect an individual who creates a direct threat to the health and safety of other individuals or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others.

WHAT IS A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

A reasonable accommodation is any change in the rules or policies of a private landlord, apartment or subsidized housing complex that will assist a disabled individual. A reasonable accommodation is a special change in the rules

to allow a person with a disability to have equal access and opportunity to use and enjoy their housing. A reasonable accommodation must be related to the tenant’s disability. A reasonable accommodation may be requested prior to beginning a tenancy, or during the tenancy. Examples of reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A private landlord changes the guest policy to allow for home health aides to assist a person suffering from prolonged illness or chronic condition;
- A public housing authority allows a tenant with difficulty walking or climbing stairs to relocate from an upstairs apartment to a first floor apartment;
- A rental company agrees to provide a tenant with 24-hour verbal notice to pay rent because forgetfulness is a side effect of medication the tenant needs for a mental health condition;
- A landlord allows a blind tenant to keep a trained guide dog in the home when the general policy restricts pets; and,
- A Section-8 landlord allows a ramp to be constructed on a home to assist a tenant who requires a wheelchair.

Any landlord who receives a federal subsidy on behalf of a tenant must comply with a

reasonable accommodation request. A reasonable accommodation is not required in owner-occupied apartments with four or fewer units, or single-family homes when the landlord owns three or fewer homes. A reasonable accommodation may not be necessary when it imposes an undue financial burden on the landlord.

HOW DO I REQUEST A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

While a request for a reasonable accommodation can be made verbally, it is better to put it in writing. You should write a letter to your landlord requesting a reasonable accommodation. In your letter, be sure to include the accommodation you would like to have made and explain the relationship between the accommodation you are requesting and your disability. You should describe the nature of your disability and the limitations your disability places on your everyday activities. Before giving the letter to your landlord, you should make a copy for yourself.

Your landlord may ask you to prove that you have a disability to ensure that the reasonable accommodation is necessary. In most cases, providing proof that you receive social security or SSI disability benefits may be sufficient, but a letter from a doctor or other medical professional