



Saint Joseph County Housing Authority

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Ingrid Reese, Executive Director

Request for Reasonable Accommodation

The St. Joseph County Housing Authority is an equal opportunity provider and does not discriminate against residents with disabilities. Our policy is to provide reasonable accommodations/modifications for disabled participants because the disability needs an exception in our usual rules, practices, or policies.

If you are an individual with a disability, you can request a reasonable accommodation or reasonable modification.

- You can ask anyone who works for our housing authority
- You are not required to make your request in writing, but it can be helpful for you and your housing provider to have a record of the request when it was made, and what happened.
- If needed, a Reasonable Accommodation Form will be provided to assist in the process of your accommodation request.
- If you need assistance in the process, contact our office.

Definition of Disability

The Federal Fair Housing Act defines handicap as a physical or mental impairment substantially limiting one or more major life activities. (The preferred term is “disability”, however, a few fair housing laws use the terms “handicap” and “disability” interchangeably).

The Indiana Fair Housing Act, through the Indiana Administrative Code, similarly defines disability as:

1. A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one (1) or more major life activities;
2. A record of such impairment; OR
3. Being regarded as having such impairment

Examples of Reasonable Accommodation Requests (this is not an exhaustive list)

Use of higher payment standards (either within the acceptable range or with HUD approval of a payment standard outside the PHA range) if necessary to enable a person with disabilities to obtain a suitable housing unit.

Providing time extensions for locating a unit when necessary because of lack of availability of accessible units or special challenges of the family in seeking a unit.

Permitting an authorized designee or advocate to participate in the application or certification process and any other meetings with the HA staff

Reasonable Accommodation and Reasonable Modification Differences in Legislation

The Fair Housing Act

Under the Fair Housing Act, there is a difference between a reasonable accommodation and a reasonable modification.

A reasonable accommodation is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service.

A reasonable modification is a structural change of a housing development or dwelling.

The Fair Housing Act applies to most housing. If a reasonable modification is necessary, a housing provider may require you to pay for the change and require you to pay to undo the change if you move out.

Section 504

Under Section 504, there is no difference between a reasonable accommodation and a reasonable modification. Instead, a change to a policy or a change to a structure are both called reasonable accommodations under this law.

Section 504 applies to housing that is subsidized with Federal funds. This includes, for example, public housing or other affordable housing. Section 504 typically requires more from housing providers than the Fair Housing Act. Generally, under Section 504, you must pay for a reasonable accommodation, and you cannot make the applicant or tenant pay for it. You must offer reasonable accommodations if you know an applicant or tenant is an individual with a disability, even if they have not specifically asked for one.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Like Section 504, there is no difference between a reasonable accommodation and a reasonable modification, but they are called reasonable modifications under this law.

The ADA applies to housing that is funded by a state or local government and might also apply to some parts of other private housing, such as a rental office that is open to the public.