

REASONABLE ACCOMODATION POLICY

Goal

The Housing Commission's goal is to provide stable, quality affordable housing to low and moderate income persons regardless of disability.

Summary of Reasonable Accommodation

It is the policy of the Housing Commission of Talbot to provide a reasonable accommodation(s) in housing for participants with disabilities where a reasonable accommodation is needed to provide an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the Housing Commission's programs and/or premises.

What 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 impairment.

A physical impairment is a disorder or condition that affects one more body systems. A physical impairment can be caused by illness, disease, a birth defect, injury, age or anything else which 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, mental retardation or specific learning disabilities.

Under regulations, you may be considered a person with 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 considered disabled.

What is a "reasonable accommodation?"

A reasonable accommodation may be, but is not limited to a request for:

- a physical change made to the inside or outside of a unit or area,
- a change of unit size for medical/health reasons and/or apparatus or,
- the request for a live-in aide and subsequent change of unit size;
- a request for a voucher extension beyond 120 days, provided that the family is able to justify the need for an extension and provided current income verification.

which will allow a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to take advantage of the Housing Commission's housing program(s). Any accommodation considered by the Housing Commission cannot result in an undue financial or administrative burden or, create a fundamental change in a program. For example, in the public housing program it might also be reasonable to allow a person with a mental disability to have rent payments made by a third party but; 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 HCAAC expense.

Under the Housing Choice Voucher Program physical changes or improvements would be referred to the landlord, as this would not be the responsibility of the Housing Commission.

How do I apply for a "reasonable accommodation?"

If you need an accommodation, you should make your request to the Manager or Director of the Housing Program, of which you are an applicant or participant; examples of accommodations could include needing a language interpreter or the reading of program materials.

For any accommodation, you must complete a reasonable accommodation form.

1. You may be asked to provide confirmation about your disability from a health professional or qualified service provider. The health professional or qualified service provider may also be asked to certify and explain how the accommodation you have requested is related to your 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, contact your housing specialist.
2. During the process of evaluating your request, you or the Manager/Director may schedule a meeting to discuss the accommodation. The meeting will be held at a location that is accessible to you; a representative or advocate may accompany you for the meeting. You may also request an interpreter and one will be provided by HCT. If you are unable to come to an office, the meeting may be held by telephone.

How will your request be handled?

All program participants must meet the basic qualifications.

1. The Manager/Director will review your request for a reasonable accommodation. If additional information is needed, you will receive a written request for that information. You should be careful to follow the deadlines in the letter. If you have problems or questions, you should call the associated housing program office immediately.
2. The decision regarding your request will be made within 10 business days from the date all of the required documents/information are received. If the Housing Commission does not

receive the required documents/information requested within 30 days, of its request, a decision will be determined based upon the information provided. Whether your request is approved or denied, you will be notified in writing.

All decisions with approvals for a requested change of unit size, will increase the bedroom size of the unit effective the first of the month immediately following the date all required documents/information are received.

If the addition of a live-in aide is requested and approved, the bedroom size will increase the first of the month immediately following the date all required documents/information are received. You will have 60 days from the date of the approval letter to add an eligible live-in aide. The live-in aide eligibility will be determined once an application for the live-in aide is completed and submitted along with a government issued photo ID, Social Security card and birth certificate. If a live-in aide is not successfully added to the household within 60 days, the bedroom size will be decreased effective the first of the month immediately following the 60-day period.

3. If your request is denied, you have the right to grieve that decision in accordance with the grievance procedures set forth in the Housing Commission's Administrative Plan.

Some things to keep in mind

- The Housing Commission considers each request for reasonable accommodation as a separate request. The decision will be made on a case-by-case basis with the understanding that each person's needs and circumstances are unique.
- The Housing Commission may suggest an alternate accommodation from the one you requested. The decision depends on whether an accommodation will be effective in reducing the barriers to equal housing opportunity and whether or not it involves a fundamental change to the housing programs or creates an undue financial or administrative burden.
- The Housing Commission may from time-to-time re-evaluate your accommodation to determine if the need still exists.