

Sample Verification Letter

Printed on the Healthcare provider's letterhead

(Part I)

Date:

To Whom It May Concern/Housing Provider:

I have been _____ Name _____'s _____ [counselor, nurse, doctor, therapist, psychiatrist, etc.] since _____.

I am aware that the Fair Housing Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act define disability as:

1. A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities, and/or
2. A record of having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities, and/or
3. Being regarded as having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities.

Major life activity includes, but is not limited to: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and/or working.

I affirm that _____ Name _____ has a disability which meets this legal definition.

(Part II)

_____ Name _____ has disabilities that REQUIRE _____*
It is necessary _____ Name _____ be granted _____* as
quickly as possible so _____ Name _____'s disabilities will not be
exacerbated and/or continue to worsen.

Sincerely,

Doctor, Therapist, Social Worker, Psychiatrist,
Independent Living Specialist, etc.

Healthcare Provider's Contact info

***RA** Examples:

a reserved parking space, a tenancy extension of 30-60 days, an assistance animal, a release of lease without penalty, a transfer of units, submission of rent via mail, etc.

***RM** Examples:

grab bar or ramp installation, replacing round door knobs with flat lever door openers, lower counters, widen a door way, put in a roll in shower, etc.



Who is defined as a "Person with a Disability"?

Under the Fair Housing Act, a disability is defined as:

- A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities
- A record of such an impairment, or,
- Being regarded as having such an impairment.

Under RCW 49.60, the Washington State Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), disability is defined to include conditions that are temporary or permanent, common or uncommon, mitigated or unmitigated.



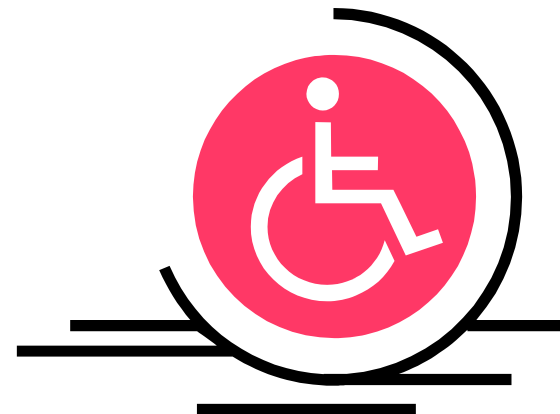
If you think you have been discriminated against in a housing transaction, contact:

Northwest Fair Housing Alliance
25 W Main Ave., Suite 250
Spokane, WA 99201
509-325-2665
1-800-200- FAIR (3247)
Fax: 1-866-6308

NWFHA may be able to advise you of your options and advocate for you. Our services are free. Our office is accessible.

Federal Fair Housing Act

Reasonable Accommodations & Modifications in Housing



Guidance for Tenants with Disabilities



**NORTHWEST FAIR
HOUSING ALLIANCE**

(509) 325-2665
1-800-200-FAIR (3247)
www.nwfairhouse.org

Reasonable Accommodations

A **reasonable accommodation (RA)** is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that allows a person with a disability to use and enjoy housing, including public and common use areas.

Examples:

- Providing rental forms in alternative formats (large print or Braille)
- Assigning a reserved accessible parking space near a dwelling
- Allowing an assistance animal in a “no pets” building
- Transferring to a different unit or being released from a lease without penalty
- Syncing the rent due date with date the disability income is received
- Requesting a tenancy extension at the end of a lease contract



Reasonable Modifications

A **reasonable modification (RM)** is a physical change made to a resident's living space, or to the common areas of a community, which is necessary to enable a resident with a disability to have use and enjoyment of the housing. Reasonable modifications can include structural changes to interiors and exteriors of dwellings.

Examples:

- Installing grab bars in a bathroom
- Adding a ramp and handrails to make a main entrance accessible
- Widening a doorway for a wheelchair
- Lowering kitchen cabinets to an accessible height
- Altering a walkway to provide access to a public or common use area



When Requesting a RA/RM

- A person with a disability, or the person's representative (*a friend, family member, advocacy organization or other representative*) can make the request. There is no specific form or format that must be used for requests.
- Requests can be made verbally. ***It is highly recommended that requests be made in writing.*** Keep a copy of the RA requested for your records.
- The request does not need to disclose the nature or severity of the individual's disability.
- For an accommodation or modification it is necessary to show that there is a need directly related to one's disability
- The requester may be asked to provide a **verification letter** from a reliable third party who knows about the individual's disability (see example on back side of this flap),
- Obvious or visible disabilities **do not** require verification of the disability—but may require verification of the disability related need
- A RA/RM request may be made at any time in one's tenancy (application up to an eviction).
- There is not a limit on the number of RA's / RM's a person may request.

Who pays?

Reasonable Accommodations:

RA's are granted without cost to the resident.

There cannot be extra fees or deposits charged to the person requesting a RA. Any request must be “reasonable” in that it does not place an undue financial and administrative burden on the housing provider.

Reasonable Modifications:

Residents usually pay, unless they live in a federally subsidized unit.

Residents may be asked to:

- Return the premises to its original state at departure and/or
- Agree to pay into an interest-bearing escrow, over a reasonable period, an amount of money not to exceed the cost of the restorations. To avoid misunderstandings or surprises—Get an agreement in writing!

NOTE: As in most tenancies, any damages caused by the tenant or their guests/animals beyond normal wear and tear, may be charged to the tenant.



TIP: Some social service agencies or churches may be able to help with the expense.

Call 211 for a list of charities or services in your local area.