

ADA Compliance – Examples of Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Accessibility Code both require that entities do all that they reasonably can to remove any physical and programmatic barriers that exist within an agency or service provider. If you receive a request for accommodation, you must inform the Housing & Grants Administrator of the request and how you have addressed it. This ensures that CDBG funded programs are not discriminating on the basis of disability. This also enables the City to be familiar with the situation in the event that a complaint is received.

Some examples include:

1. Facilities are inaccessible due to architectural issues or barriers. Require that the agency provide an alternate accessible location. The ADA requires that a program/service must be made accessible unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the program/service or would cause undue financial hardship. If you feel that either is the case when attempting to serve an individual with a disability, you must provide a written statement to the City explaining your rationale; the statement must be signed by the Executive Director. Any submissions will be reviewed by City staff and you may be asked to provide supporting documentation.

2. Materials not available in alternative format due to cost. If an individual receiving services requests information in an alternative format such as Braille but cost makes this infeasible, your agency is required to work with that individual to agree on an alternative. For example, information provided in printed format could be recorded on a CD or MP3 player, or read aloud to someone with impaired vision. Interpreters for the hearing impaired must be QUALIFIED, which includes having the ability to convey information effectively, accurately and impartially, using any necessary specialized vocabulary, by signing to the individual with the hearing impairment and speaking to the hearing individual. You may not charge disabled clients for the cost of the accommodation. This includes sign language interpreters.

3. Service Animals. It is very important that your staff knows that persons with disabilities are sometimes accompanied by service animals. Remember that service animals are NOT considered pets; they are considered Assistive Devices similar to a cane or wheelchair and are exempt from no-pet policies. Service animals must be allowed to accompany their owners everywhere. If, however, a service animal such as a dog becomes vicious toward others or is causing a disturbance, you may ask the owner to remove the animal until it is calm.

To determine if an animal is a service animal, you may ask the person what task(s) it performs, BUT you may NOT ask the person what their disability is. The person is not required to carry documentation of a service animal. The City of Evanston issues a distinctive tag that signifies if a service animal is registered with the City, but registration is not mandatory. If your staff is unsure of how to handle a situation, the best thing to do is to admit the animal, document your decision and action, and forward a copy of that documentation to the City so there is a written record in case a complaint is received.

This information is provided as a resource and a guide. If you have questions or are unsure if a proposed accommodation is acceptable, please contact the City for assistance.