

MONTANA FAIR HOUSING



Montana Fair Housing is dedicated to the elimination of housing discrimination.

Are you and your healthcare provider thinking you might benefit from the assistance of an animal in your home for disability-related needs?

The federal Fair Housing Act and the Montana Human Rights Act allow persons with disabilities to make requests for reasonable accommodations (RAs). These laws apply to housing only. RAs seek a waiver or alteration in a rule, policy or procedure for a disability-related need.

Requests for Accommodations must be **approved by your housing provider PRIOR to implementation.** If you are considering the use of an assistance animal (including those for emotional support), here are some helpful hints!

- 1) Secure a written statement from your local healthcare provider. On-line certifications or statements often do not meet the requirements of current guidances.
- 2) To expedite approval of the request, it is suggested the statement from your healthcare provider include the following:
 - Verify you have a disability of permanent or long-term duration; DO NOT provide diagnoses;
 - A description of the accommodation deemed necessary – *example: Waiver of the no pets policy to allow a 2-year old 45 pound mixed-breed male dog; The dog serves as an assistance animal for emotional support;*
 - Do not refer to the animal as a pet – if needed for a disability-related reason the animal is an assistance animal, including those for emotional support;
 - Description of the major life activities substantially limited by your disability and related to the request (sleeping, working, eating, seeing, walking, etc.);
 - A description of the symptoms that the animal will address to diminish impact on your major life activities and provide you an equal opportunity to housing.
- 3) If your disability is of limited duration, and it is believed an animal remains the best form of treatment, talk with your housing provider about future terms following your recovery.
- 4) Do not bring the animal to the site until you have approval from the housing provider.
- 5) Review local ordinances for limitations and requirements. If those contain requirements you cannot meet for disability-related reasons, you are encouraged to request an accommodation from the city or county office first. *Example: You have a pig and the city prohibits farm animals.*
- 6) Once living in the unit:
 - Animal must be in your control at all times, and cannot be disruptive;
 - You are responsible for cleanup and disposal of feces, and litter from boxes and cages;
 - You are responsible for any damage caused by the animal;
 - You cannot be charged additional rent or deposit for the animal.
- 7) Denials can occur:
 - If someone does not have a disability or disability-related need for the request;
 - If approval would impose an undue financial or administrative burden, or fundamental alteration of operations.

If you have any questions: (406) 782-2573/1-800-929-2611/MT Relay Service: 711