

## LEOMINSTER HOUSING AUTHORITY

### REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Leominster Housing Authority (Housing Authority) does not discriminate against public housing applicants or residents on the basis of disability, either physical or mental. The Housing Authority has an obligation to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, and to make reasonable modifications of existing premises in order to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy those premises and to participate fully in the Housing Authority's programs, activities, or services. A reasonable accommodation is a change that the Housing Authority can make to its rules, policies, practices or services. A reasonable modification is a change the Housing Authority can make to its premises, including physical alterations to a public housing unit or a public housing public or common use area in order to afford persons with disabilities equal enjoyment of those premises and to participate fully in the Housing Authority's programs, activities, or services. The Housing Authority is not required to grant any requested accommodation or modification that would require a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program or impose undue administrative and financial burdens. However, the Housing Authority shall consider all requests for accommodations or modifications based on a disability and shall grant such requests that are reasonable within the meaning of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (commonly known as the Fair Housing Act) and other applicable federal and state fair housing laws.

All applicants for residency and all residents must be able to meet the essential obligations of tenancy. Such obligations include, but are not limited to, the obligation to pay rent, to care for the apartment, to report required information to the Housing Authority and to avoid creating noise disturbances. A reasonable accommodation or modification may be a means by which a resident or applicant for residency is able to meet his or her obligations of tenancy.

#### ***How to Request a Reasonable Accommodation or Modification***

You may request a reasonable accommodation or modification either orally, or in writing. For your convenience, a form entitled "Request for Reasonable Accommodations/Modifications" is available at the Housing Authority's offices. However, you are not required to use this form when making a request. Written requests for a reasonable accommodation or modification may be mailed to: **Leominster Housing Authority, 100 Main Street, Leominster, MA 01453**. You may also submit your written request for a reasonable accommodation or modification by dropping it off at the Housing Authority's main office at **100 Main Street in Leominster**. Finally, you may also relay your request orally to a staff member at either Housing Authority office either in person, or by calling the housing authority Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, Anna Phillips at (978) 537-5300 extension 122.

### ***What to Expect After You Have Submitted a Request for a Reasonable Accommodation or Modification***

After you have submitted a request for a reasonable accommodation or modification, you may be contacted by the Housing Authority and may be required to submit documentation verifying the existence of a disability and/or demonstrating the disability-related need for the requested accommodation or modification. All requests for a reasonable accommodation or modification shall be acknowledged ~~in writing~~ within fourteen days of the Housing Authority's receipt of an oral or written request.

Within thirty days of its receipt, the Housing Authority will make a decision on your request for a reasonable accommodation or modification. If your request is denied, you shall receive a written notice containing the basis for the denial. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may have rights to grievance procedures set forth in Massachusetts regulations. See 760 CMR 6.08. These procedures will be outlined in the response to your request. You may also refer to the complaint policy of the Leominster Housing Authority.

### ***Documentation of Requests for a Reasonable Accommodation or Modification***

When any employee of the Leominster Housing Authority (hereinafter "employee") receives a request for reasonable accommodation or modification, he or she shall promptly forward same to the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director or to the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator. A copy of the request for reasonable accommodation or modification shall be placed in the resident's file, or in the case of an applicant, with his or her application for housing.

If, pursuant to this policy, a resident or applicant orally requests a reasonable accommodation or modification, the employee who receives the request shall reduce it to writing and shall relay it to the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director or to the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, either by e-mail or by means of a written memorandum. A copy of the e-mail or memorandum prepared by the employee shall be placed in the resident's file, or in the case of an applicant, with his or her application for housing. A request sent via e-mail directly from the resident or applicant to the Housing Authority shall be printed and placed in either the resident's file, or with the applicant's application for housing. If the e-mail from the requester is sent to an employee other than the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director or the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, it shall be forwarded promptly by that employee to the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director or to the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator.

The Executive Director or the Assistant Executive Director shall make a decision in writing on the request for a reasonable accommodation or modification within thirty days, and shall place a copy of the decision in the requester's file. Any further written communications between the requester and the Housing Authority relative to the request shall be placed in the requester's file or, if the requester is an applicant, with his or her application for housing. Oral communications relative to the request should be memorialized in writing by the Housing Authority and placed in the requester's file, or if the requester is an applicant, with his or her application for housing. Any communication from the Housing Authority which denies a resident's request for a

reasonable accommodation or modification shall advise the resident of his or her right to make use of the grievance procedures outlined in 760 CMR 6.08.

The Housing Authority shall maintain a list of all requests for a reasonable accommodation or modification filed pursuant to this policy. The list shall include the name, address and telephone number of the person making the request, the date of the request, the nature of the request, whether the request was granted or denied, and, if denied, the reason for the denial.

The Housing Authority shall not impose any additional fees or costs and/or otherwise retaliate against any person who has exercised his or her rights under federal or state laws, including the Fair Housing Act, to make a request for a reasonable accommodation or modification and, if applicable, to receive a reasonable accommodation or a reasonable modification.

Within ten days of the beginning of their residency, all residents of the Housing Authority shall be provided with a copy of this policy. Applicants will also receive a copy of the policy when provided application materials. This policy shall be posted and prominently displayed in the Housing Authority's leasing office, and within the offices of all Housing Authority management officials.