



*The Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County provides a monthly highlight which concentrates on pertinent housing issues affecting our communities*

### ***“Leveling the Playing Field” for People With Disabilities***

**If a person says that they have a disability, can they can get special favors from their landlord that other tenants aren’t allowed to have?**

People with disabilities may have needs that must be met so that they can have full use and enjoyment of their living space - the same as any other tenant. Called “reasonable accommodations & modifications” they are not “special favors” but changes to an existing policy, practice, or service a modification to a structural element to make the space physically accessible. Examples of reasonable accommodations would be allowing a person *to have a service or companion animal* even if there is a “no pets” policy, or allowing a person with a mobility impairment *to have a reserved parking space* close to their unit. A reasonable modification might be to allow a person with a mobility impairment *to build a wheel chair ramp or install grab bars in the shower, widen doorways or lower cabinets in the kitchen.*

**So, a person with a disability just tells the landlord that they want something to be changed and he/she has to do it? Or do they have to hand over medical records?**

Although the person with a disability must provide some verification that a disability exists (if the disability is not immediately obvious) he/she does NOT have to hand over medical records. A person requesting the accommodation/modification must: 1) make the request verbally or in writing; 2) explain the relationship between the request and the disability; and 3) make a “reasonable” request. “Reasonableness” is decided on a case-by-case basis.

**What are some common examples of reasonable accommodations & modifications?**

- ⇒ moving a resident to another floor for easier mobility
- ⇒ waiving parking fees for a visiting nurse/home health aide
- ⇒ installing TTY in rental office;
- ⇒ changing the date when rent is paid to coincide with date of monthly disability payment
- ⇒ putting notices in large print, audio tape, or Braille
- ⇒ providing oral reminders to pay rent
- ⇒ providing doorbell or phone flasher attachments
- ⇒ simplifying indoor & outdoor locks
- ⇒ having meetings at accessible locations
- ⇒ installing anti-skid tape on floors & stairs
- ⇒ adjusting environmental controls
- ⇒ assisting applicant in filling out forms

***For more information call the Fair Housing Council at 215.576.7711 or visit us at [www.fairhousingmontco.org](http://www.fairhousingmontco.org)***