

Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation



A guide to requesting reasonable accommodations at work, in housing, and in government services.

Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation

A guide to requesting reasonable accommodations at work, in housing, and in government services.



Disability Rights Vermont

Vermont's Protection and Advocacy System

This guide provides general information and is not legal advice. Individual situations may vary.

What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is a change that helps address a disability-related barrier while allowing the employer, housing provider, or government agency to continue operating its programs and services.

Reasonable accommodations can help people:

- ✓ Apply for a job
- ✓ Perform job duties
- ✓ Access housing
- ✓ Participate in government programs and services
- ✓ Communicate effectively

Examples of Accommodations

- ✓ Modified work schedule
- ✓ Reserved parking space
- ✓ Sign language interpreter
- ✓ Documents in alternative formats
- ✓ Additional time to complete paperwork

 **Important:** You do not need to use special legal language when requesting an accommodation.

When Can I Ask for an Accommodation?

You can request a reasonable accommodation when a disability makes it difficult to access a service, program, activity, benefit, or opportunity.

Common Settings



Employment

Changes that help you apply for a job, perform your work, or access workplace benefits.



Housing

Changes that help you access and enjoy your housing.



Government Services

Changes that help you participate in government programs, services, meetings, and activities.



Tip: Request accommodations as early as possible when you know you will need one. When possible, make your request **in writing**.

Employment Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation at work is a change that helps a person with a disability perform their job or access workplace benefits.

Examples

- ✓ Modified work schedule
- ✓ Additional breaks
- ✓ Remote work or flexible location
- ✓ Assistive technology
- ✓ Leave for medical treatment

How to Ask

1. Tell your employer you need a change because of a disability or medical condition.
2. Explain what barrier you are experiencing.
3. Discuss possible accommodations.

You do not need to specifically say "reasonable accommodation" when making a request.

Housing Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation in housing is a change to a rule, policy, practice, or service that helps a person with a disability have equal access to housing.

Examples

- ✓ Reserved accessible parking
- ✓ Permission for a service or assistance animal
- ✓ Accessible communication methods
- ✓ Additional time to complete paperwork
- ✓ Changes to housing policies when needed because of a disability

How to Ask

1. Contact your landlord or housing provider.
2. Explain the accommodation you need.
3. Provide supporting documentation if requested.

Housing providers may request information that supports your need for an accommodation.

Government Services Accommodations

State and local government agencies must provide equal access to programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

Examples

- ✓ Sign language interpreters
- ✓ Documents in alternative formats
- ✓ Assistance completing forms
- ✓ Accessible voting accommodations
- ✓ Accommodations during court proceedings
- ✓ Accommodations during child welfare or parental rights proceedings
- ✓ Accommodations when accessing public benefits or services

How to Ask

1. Contact the agency, department, court, or program.
2. Explain what accommodation you need.
3. Request accommodations as early as possible.
4. Request in writing whenever possible.

What Happens After I Ask?

1. Review of Your Request

The organization will review your request and determine what accommodations may be available.

2. Discussion About Your Needs

You may be asked questions about the barriers you are experiencing and what accommodations would help.

3. Possible Documentation

In some situations, you may be asked to provide documentation supporting your need for an accommodation.

4. Decision

The organization should let you know whether your request has been approved, denied, or if an alternative accommodation will be offered.

 **Important:** An organization may offer a different accommodation if it effectively addresses your disability-related needs.

What if My Accommodation is Denied?

A denial does not always mean the process is over.

You may be able to provide additional information, request a different accommodation, or ask for further explanation about the decision.

Ask for the reason in writing and keep copies of all communications related to your request.

If you believe you were denied an accommodation because of your disability, the following organizations may be able to provide information, advocacy, or legal assistance.

Vermont Human Rights Commission

 1-800-416-2010

 <https://hrc.vermont.gov/>

Investigates complaints involving unlawful discrimination in state employment, housing, places of public accommodation, and state or local government services.

Vermont Legal Aid (VLA)

 1-800-889-2047

 <https://www.vtlawhelp.org/vlh-intake>

VLA may be able to assist with certain disability discrimination, housing, or civil legal issues.

Tips and Resources

- ✓ **Focus on the barrier** by explaining what is making it difficult to access services.
- ✓ **Request accommodations early** as some can take time to arrange.
- ✓ **Keep records of your requests.** Save emails, letters, forms, and notes from conversations.
- ✓ **Ask questions** if you don't understand a decision. You have the right to ask for an explanation in writing.
- ✓ **Follow up in writing;** sometimes requests can be delayed or overlooked.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

 askjan.org

Provides free information about workplace accommodations.

CVOEO Housing Advocacy Program

 1-800-287-7971

Provides information about tenant rights, housing issues, and fair housing protections.

Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)

 1-800-639-1222

Information, advocacy, and independent living services for people with disabilities.

About Disability Rights Vermont

Disability Rights Vermont (DRVT) is Vermont's designated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system. Established under federal law, Protection and Advocacy systems were created by Congress to protect the rights of people with disabilities and address abuse, neglect, discrimination, and other rights violations.

DRVT is a private, independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization authorized to advocate for and protect the legal and civil rights of Vermonters with disabilities.

Acknowledgment of Support

This publication was produced with support from the Vermont Bar Foundation.

"The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the Vermont Bar Foundation."

Need More Help?

If you believe you have been denied an accommodation or treated unfairly because of your disability, Disability Rights Vermont may be able to help.

Disability Rights Vermont

Vermont's Protection & Advocacy System
89 Main Street, Suite 301
Montpelier, VT 05602

 1-800-834-7890

 1-802-229-1355

<https://www.disabilityrightsvt.org>

info@disabilityrightsvt.org

Copyright © 2026 Disability Rights Vermont. All rights reserved.

This guide is for informational purposes only and does not provide legal advice.