

## Frequently Asked Questions from the Stabilizing Housing for Families Part II: Understanding and Navigating Housing Rights Webinar

### General

**Q:** Where can we find the homelessness statistics for our state and city?

**A:** You can access Point In Time (PIT) data using the following link, [HUD PIT and HIC Data](#). Additionally, you can sort the data by Continuum of Care (CoC) using the “Filter By” feature on the webpage.

### Reasonable Accommodations

**Q:** If I need to widen a walkway to the back yard for my walker, would this be covered?

**A:** A reasonable modification is a structural change made to existing premises to afford a person with a disability full enjoyment of the premises. If accessing the backyard affects your ability to fully enjoy the premises, and a walkway must be widened for you to access the backyard, a reasonable modification is appropriate. Remember that in many cases, the tenant is responsible for covering the costs of a reasonable modification (unless the property is federally funded).

**Q:** Is there any assistance for the landlord to help with the accommodation/modification?

**A:** Landlords are responsible for paying for reasonable accommodations, though many common ones are free or low cost. Depending on the circumstances, there may be local resources that can help. Check with your local legal aid, Fair Housing Assistance Program, or Fair Housing Initiative Program to determine what resources may exist in your area.

**Q:** What if the cost of the reasonable accommodation is too much for the tenant?

**A:** There may be funding or specific grants (either federal or private) available depending on the tenant’s circumstances or for specific populations, such as people who are elderly, Veterans, etc. There are also organizations that may help with either completing the modification or funding the modification. Check with your local legal aid, Fair Housing Assistance Program, or Fair Housing Initiative Program to figure out what resources may exist in your area.

### Undue Burden

**Q:** Does the denial of accommodations due to undue financial burden depend on the number of units on a property? (e.g., large complex owner vs. private house renting a room)?

**A:** [From [HUD](#)] The determination of undue financial and administrative burden must be made on a case-by-case basis involving various factors, such as the cost of the requested accommodation, the financial resources of the provider, the benefits that the accommodation

would provide to the requester, and the availability of alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the requester's disability-related needs.

When a housing provider refuses a requested accommodation because it is not reasonable, the provider should discuss with the requester whether there is an alternative accommodation that would effectively address the requester's disability-related needs without a fundamental alteration to the provider's operations and without imposing an undue financial and administrative burden. If an alternative accommodation would effectively meet the requester's disability-related needs and is reasonable, the provider must grant it. An interactive process in which the housing provider and the requester discuss the requester's disability-related need for the requested accommodation and possible alternative accommodations is helpful to all concerned because it often results in an effective accommodation for the requester that does not pose an undue financial and administrative burden for the provider.

There may need to be some back and forth and creativity about options. If you do file a complaint, you will be asked to attempt conciliation, which can include things such as monetary payments, access to housing, or provision of a reasonable accommodation.

**Q:** Is there a threshold for the "undue burden" limit for accommodations?

**A:** See answer above.

### Emergency Housing Vouchers and Fair Housing

**Q:** I am working with families who have Emergency Housing vouchers. They are facing barriers due to having an emotional support animal (ESA). What steps can applicants take when being rejected by landlord who do not accept pets and do not honor the ESA pet status?

**A:** [From [HUD](#)] An assistance animal is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or that provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified effects of a person's disability. An assistance animal is not a pet.

Individuals with a disability may request to keep an assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation to a housing provider's pet restrictions.

Housing providers cannot refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodations may be necessary to afford a person with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

The Fair Housing Act requires a housing provider to allow a reasonable accommodation involving an assistance animal in situations that meet all the following conditions:

- A request was made to the housing provider by or for a person with a disability
- The request was supported by reliable disability-related information, if the disability and the disability-related need for the animal were not apparent and the housing provider requested such information, and
- The housing provider has not demonstrated that:

- Granting the request would impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the housing provider
- The request would fundamentally alter the essential nature of the housing provider's operations
- The specific assistance animal in question would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others despite any other reasonable accommodations that could eliminate or reduce the threat
- The request would not result in significant physical damage to the property of others despite any other reasonable accommodations that could eliminate or reduce the physical damage

If you believe you have been unlawfully denied a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal or have otherwise experienced discrimination in housing, you can file a complaint with FHEO.

### Family Peer Services

**Q:** What services and supports can case managers provide to families with children who have a serious emotional disturbance to help obtain and maintain stable housing?

**A:** Case management is one of the primary services offered to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The [National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors \(NASMHPD\)](#) defines case management as “a range of services provided to assist and support individuals in developing their skills to gain access to needed medical, behavioral health, housing, employment, social, educational, and other services essential to meeting basic human services.” This also includes providing “linkages and training for the patient served in the use of basic community resources and monitoring of overall service delivery.”

Case managers work with people and families experiencing homelessness and those who are at risk of [homelessness](#). Case managers identify households of greatest risk and determine the type of support needed to prevent homelessness. They also help clients develop independent living skills, provide support with treatment, and serve as the point of contact between clients and people in their social and professional support systems. To be successful, case managers need the right skills and adequate community knowledge.

Learn more about case managers and peer advocates [here](#).

**Q:** Are peer supports common practice across the U.S.?

**A:** Peer workers are emerging as important members of treatment teams and are indeed common throughout the United States. National Family Support Technical Assistance Center (NFSTAC) focuses on Family Peer Support. This is a growing industry and can be found in most states as well. Most Family Peer Specialists are housed at a family-run organization. To find out more about peer supports and family-run organizations in your state please go to <https://www.ffcmh.org/our-affiliates>.