

# HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

## SECTION 504/ADA EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION POLICY

Revised April 15, 2015



A Fair Housing and Equal Employment Opportunity Agency. For assistance: Individuals with disabilities may contact the 504/ADA Administrator at 713-260-0353, TTY 713-260-0547 or [504ADA@housingforhouston.com](mailto:504ADA@housingforhouston.com).  
For housing discrimination complaints, call 1-888-560-8913.

## **HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY**

### **SECTION 504/ADA** **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION POLICY**

The Houston Housing Authority (“Authority”), in administering all public and assisted housing programs, is committed to ensuring that applicants, residents, employees, contractors and other members of the public with disabilities have an effective means to communicate. When requested, Authority employees, agents, contractors and private management companies, shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of the programs, services and activities conducted by the Authority. Services to clients with Limited English Proficiency will be provided consistent with the Authority’s LEP Plan. All notifications, including approvals or denials of requests for effective communication referenced in this Policy, will be provided in an alternate format, upon request.

#### **AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES**

Auxiliary aids are services or devices that enable persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, programs or activities conducted by the Authority. For example, auxiliary aids useful for persons with impaired vision include readers, Brailled materials, audio recordings, telecommunications devices and other similar services and devices. Auxiliary aids useful for persons with impaired hearing include telephone handset amplifiers, telephones compatible with hearing aids, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TDD's), qualified sign language interpreters, notetakers, written materials, and other similar services and devices.

#### **REQUEST FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

When an auxiliary aid or service is required to ensure effective communication, the Authority will provide an opportunity for an individual with a disability to request the auxiliary aid or service of his or her choice. All requests for auxiliary aids and services must be made and received by the Authority’s Legal Compliance Officer at least two weeks prior to the date the service is needed. If in emergency circumstances an auxiliary aid or service is needed less than two weeks prior to the date the service is needed, the Authority will take reasonable steps to secure the auxiliary aid or service. The Authority will give primary consideration to the choice expressed by the individual. "Primary consideration" means that the Authority will honor the choice, unless it can show that another equally effective means of communication is available or that use of the

means chosen would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of its service, program, or activity or in an undue financial and administrative burden.

The individual with a disability will submit his or her request for auxiliary aids or services to the Authority's Legal Compliance Officer at the address listed below. All requests shall be dated and time-stamped upon receipt.

Legal Compliance Officer  
The Houston Housing Authority  
2640 Fountain View Drive  
Houston, Texas 77057  
(713) 260-0353 • (713) 260-0547 (TTY)  
504ADA@housingforhouston.com

If a person with a disability has an impairment that impedes him or her from mailing a request, he or she may use any other effective means to request an auxiliary aid or service that is necessary. All requests must include the person's name, address, and phone number.

Upon receipt of the request, the Legal Compliance Officer or designee will consult with the individual with a disability to determine the preferred type of auxiliary aid or service. If the preferred type of auxiliary aid or service is not available or not required, then the Legal Compliance Officer will ascertain whether an alternative means of communication will ensure effective communication. Within seven (7) business days of the receipt of the request, the Legal Compliance Officer will provide the requesting individual with the written notification of the proposed auxiliary aid or service to be provided. If the client or resident needs to reschedule the meeting, a request must be submitted at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

Upon disposition, the Legal Compliance Officer will maintain copies of all requests for effective communication and the Authority's response, including final disposition, for the duration of three (3) years from the date of disposition.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **A. Notice to Applicants**

As part of the application process, a notice will be posted for applicants to contact the Legal Compliance Officer if auxiliary aids or services are needed. This notice will also be posted prominently in the Authority's intake and application offices as well as all site offices.

B. Current Residents' Requests for Auxiliary Aids or Services

Requests for auxiliary aids or services should be made directly to the Authority's Property Manager or the Authority's HCVP Housing Specialist who will forward the request(s) to the Legal Compliance Officer within one (1) business day of receipt. All requests for auxiliary aids and services must be made and received by the Authority's Legal Compliance Officer at least two weeks prior to the date the service is needed.

C. Houston Housing Authority Notices and Correspondence

All Authority letterhead will contain the TTY telephone number. Individuals with disabilities, who request auxiliary aids or services for public events such as public hearings, Board hearings, public meetings, etc., must make their requests and the Authority's Legal Compliance Officer must receive their requests more than two (2) weeks prior to the event.

D. Requests from the Public

Requests from members of the public who wish to participate in the Authority's programs, services and or activities shall submit their requests for auxiliary aids and services to the Authority's Legal Compliance Officer. They must make their requests and the Authority's Legal Compliance Officer must receive the requests more than two (2) weeks prior to the event.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

If the requesting individual with a disability is not satisfied with the Authority's response to the individual's request for an auxiliary aid or service, the individual may file an appeal and request an informal hearing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the Authority's response.

The grievance may be communicated orally or in writing. However, all oral grievances must be reduced to writing and maintained in the Authority's files. In addition, the Authority shall provide assistance to any individual who requests assistance in filing a grievance, including assistance in reducing the individual's grievance to writing. The informal hearing shall be conducted by an impartial hearing officer. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of the informal hearing, the hearing officer shall render a decision and provide a copy to all parties.