

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND THE PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

In accordance with the applicable Federal regulations, the Housing Authority of the City and County of Denver (“DHA”) has an affirmative obligation to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities in all programs and activities. DHA shall ensure that interested persons (including persons with impaired vision or hearing) can obtain information concerning the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities. DHA will furnish appropriate Auxiliary Aids and Services, where necessary, to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, DHA’s programs, services, and activities. Some examples of alternative forms of communication include, but are not limited to, qualified sign language and other interpreters, assistive listening devices, Braille materials, large print documents, audio recordings, and accessible web-based and email communications or having a third party representative (a friend, relative, or advocate) to receive, interpret and explain housing materials and be present at all meetings. In determining which alternative form of communication is necessary, DHA will give primary consideration to the requests of the person with a disability.

DHA is not required to provide an alternative form of communication or Auxiliary Aid or Service if doing so would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity or is an undue financial and administrative burden. If DHA cannot provide a specific request because it imposes such an alteration or burden, DHA will engage in an interactive process with the requester to discuss alternative forms of communication that will ensure effective communication with the requester.

The following guidelines outline the process for ensuring that disabled individuals with these needs will be provided with the appropriate assistance.

(A) Initial Point of Contact. At the initial point of contact with each potential applicant, DHA will inform the potential applicant of the availability of alternative forms of communication. DHA will include the following statement on all interest cards:

“If you have a disability and require an alternative form of communication including, but not limited to, a sign-language interpreter or assistance completing forms, you may make your request at any time during the application process or after admission and DHA will document the preferred form of communication.”

(B) Requests for Alternative Forms of Communication. Individuals requiring alternative forms of communication may make their request either orally or in writing.

(C) Examples of Available Alternative Forms of Communication [Note: This is not an exhaustive list. DHA will give primary consideration to the preferred method of communication requested by an individual].

1. Visually-Impaired. Upon request, DHA will provide a handheld electronic magnifier for individuals who are visually impaired, for use at the Central Office. This handheld electronic magnifier allows the user to read any written material by projecting a magnified version of the text onto a television screen. This handheld electronic magnifier will be stored on the first floor in the Occupancy Department, and may be checked out for use at the Central Office.

2. Hearing Impaired. If a hearing-impaired individual requests a sign language interpreter, an appointment with the interpreter will be scheduled by the department's assigned representative: Occupancy Department – Receptionist; Section 8 – Assistant to the Chief Operating Office – Section 8/Client Services; and Housing Management – Management Specialist.

3. Mentally Impaired. Mentally impaired individuals may request that a third-party representative be allowed to receive, interpret and explain housing materials and be present at all meetings. The third-party representative must be identified by the individual making the request and may be a relative, friend or other advocate, such as a caseworker.

4. Manually-Impaired. Manually impaired individuals may request that a DHA employee assist them in completing all necessary forms.

(D) Utilization of Professional Services.

DHA utilizes the City and County of Denver Office of Sign Language Services (DOSLS) to ensure effective communication which includes the provision of an auxiliary aid or service such as an interpreter, open captioning via Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART), or an assistive listening device (ALD) for sound amplification.

If a paid accessibility professional is used to provide alternative forms of communications, DHA will pay reasonable fees unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity or is an undue financial and administrative burden.