



Best Practices for Leasing Accessible Units

FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS



Accessible housing is in limited supply in Detroit, Michigan, and the United States. Because of this, it is important that accessible units are occupied by residents currently living with disabilities. Housing providers can use a wide range of effective marketing and outreach methods to better connect accessible units with the tenants who need them.

This guide offers an overview of current requirements for marketing accessible units and includes additional strategies to help housing providers match these units with the right tenants.

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What Are Affirmative Marketing Requirements?

The federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) and Michigan laws protect people from being discriminated against in housing based on disability, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, marital status, and age. These regulations also encourage housing providers to conduct outreach to people who might not know about available housing opportunities.

Many housing programs in Michigan that get federal or state support must create and follow an Affirmatively Fair Housing Marketing (AFHM) Plan. This plan includes:



Targeting

Identify groups of people who are less likely to apply for housing without extra outreach (for example, people with disabilities).



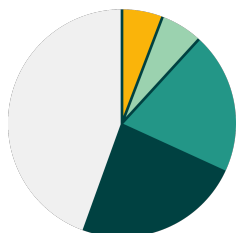
Staff Training

Make sure that sales or rental staff are trained on fair housing laws and affirmative marketing practices.



Outreach

Develop a plan to reach these groups. This means contacting community organizations that serve these groups and getting their help with marketing. It also involves using media advertising, social media, and other platforms to reach these groups.



Collect & Use Data

Determine ways to measure the effectiveness and success of your marketing plan. Track how people learned about your housing and why they chose to apply. Compare the number of units occupied by people considered least likely to apply before and after marketing campaigns are conducted.

Where can I find more information on affirmative marketing requirements?

If you have additional questions about fair housing law, please contact the Fair Housing Center of Metro Detroit 313-579-FAIR (3247), or visit www.hud.gov.

Strategies for Matching Accessible Housing with the Right Residents

Deep Affirmative Marketing

Build strong relationships with organizations that serve people with disabilities and older adults to advertise housing opportunities and recruit more applicants. Begin by reaching out to organizations listed at the end of this resource. Advertise units through methods like email communications, social media outreach, posting fliers at local community centers and businesses, hosting tours, TV and radio ads, and more. Available units can also be listed on the City of Detroit's affordable housing search-and-filter website, Detroit Home Connect, by emailing DetroitHomeConnect@detroitmi.gov.

Track and Advertise Accessible Units

Keep an updated detailed list of all accessible units. When advertising accessible units, include photos and descriptions of the units' accessible housing features so residents know if these homes are right for them. Include information on accessible common areas of the property. Providers should make sure their advertising materials are accessible (including screen-reader compatibility, mobile-friendly formatting, high contrast, subtitles/captions) and offer alternative formats (large print, Braille, ASL).

Give Extended Time for Vacant Accessible Units

When an accessible unit becomes available, conduct longer-term outreach and marketing campaigns before renting it to a non-disabled tenant.

Lease Addendum for Nondisabled Tenants in Accessible Units

Include a requirement in the lease for non-disabled tenants moving into accessible units that says they agree to move to a comparable non-accessible unit if one becomes available. This helps make sure accessible units are available when disabled tenants are looking for them.

Separate Transfer and Waiting Lists

Maintain separate waiting lists for those needing accessible units, or use one list that clearly marks who needs specific accessibility features.

Use Plain Language

Write leases and other documents in plain language. Plain language is writing designed to ensure the reader understands documents as quickly, easily, and completely as possible. It makes communications more accessible, especially for people with cognitive disabilities, lower literacy levels, and English language barriers. Keep documents clear and simple by using plain language tools. [Utilize The Kelsey's Plain Language Reasonable Accommodation & Modifications Policy template online](#) to help you adapt your existing materials.

Disability Etiquette Tips



Interacting with disabled tenants calls for understanding and respect. Disability etiquette goes beyond legal compliance—it’s about creating an inclusive, supportive environment where everyone feels valued. Whether a tenant is moving in, requesting modifications, or moving out, treating them with care helps build a welcoming and empowered community. Follow these guidelines to foster inclusivity and make all tenants feel at home.

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask if someone needs help• Respect someone’s autonomy if they decline your help• Be patient. Recognize people communicate and process information differently• Look & speak directly at the person—not an aid, interpreter, or family member• When appropriate, pull up a chair to be eye level with a wheelchair user if you will be together for more than a few minutes• Treat disabled people like people• Be flexible and provide multiple options to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assume someone needs help• Touch someone or their equipment without their consent• Rush someone or question their request• Treat disabled people like children• Ask invasive, personal questions• Consider disabled people as inspirational heroes• Expect one option or solution to work for all disabled people

Organizations to Connect With in Detroit and Wayne County

The following list of local organizations have close ties to the disability community. Housing providers can work with these organizations to promote available accessible units. You can reach out to these organizations to share fliers, co-host events and open houses, and engage with community members.

The Arc – Detroit

Phone: (313) 831-0202

Detroit Area Agency on Aging

Phone: (313) 446-4444

Detroit Disability Power

Email: info@DetroitDisabilityPower.org

Disability Network of Wayne County - Detroit

Phone: (313) 923-1655

Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

Phone: (517) 241-1100

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute

Phone (Voice/TTY): (313) 577-2654

Phone (Toll Free): (888) 978-4334

Email: middi@wayne.edu

Michigan Division of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing

Phone: (313) 437-7035

Email: DODDBHH@michigan.gov

MI-UCP (Michigan United Cerebral Palsy)

Phone: (800) 827-4843

Email: info@mi-ucp.org

United Community Housing Coalition

Phone: (313) 963-3310

United Way for Southeast Michigan

Phone: 313-226-9200

Email: LiveUnited@UnitedWaySEM.org

Warriors on Wheels of Metropolitan Detroit

Phone: (313) 251-5777

