

The Adele Friedman Housing Accessibility Fund



The Adele Friedman Housing Accessibility Fund (the “Fund”) was established in 2016 by the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) for the purpose of providing targeted financial assistance to benefit low and moderate income persons with disabilities who need reasonable modifications made to the housing they occupy to make it accessible.

The Fund can be used for two purposes:

1. To compensate architects, contractors, and/or experts who are retained to evaluate reasonable modification requests made by FHJC clients, inspect housing units to assess and report on the feasibility of the requested modification, and obtain related cost estimates;
2. To pay qualified contractors for work performed to make the requested modifications provided that:
 - a. The housing provider is not legally responsible to pay for the reasonable modification;
 - b. The FHJC confirms the requested modification is both feasible and reasonable;
 - c. The person making the request and the FHJC agree on a contractor who is qualified to perform the work; and
 - d. The work is satisfactorily completed and the modification is provided.

Who can qualify for assistance from the Fund?

In order to qualify for any kind of financial assistance from the Fund, you must:

1. Be a person with a disability (or have a person with a disability in your household) who is requesting a physical modification to a dwelling, building, or complex in which you reside and the need for the modification requested is related to the disability;
2. Complete an intake with the FHJC documenting the need for a modification;
3. Maintain a legal residence in the FHJC service area (which includes all five boroughs of New York City as well Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties.)
4. Have a household income which is *at or below 165% of the New York State median family income*; and
5. Fully cooperate with the FHJC throughout the process including, but not limited to, providing documentation requested and allowing inspections to evaluate the modification sought to determine whether it is feasible and reasonable.

Also, the Fund is not available if:

1. You occupy a single family home owned by you or by other members of your household;
2. You or other members of your household own other real estate that you do not occupy; or
3. The FHJC determines that the modification requested is not feasible or reasonable.

About Adele Friedman

In 2008, Adele Friedman first came to the FHJC after she attempted to purchase a condo in the Bronx. After her offer to purchase had been accepted, a management company and the condo



association denied her request to modify the apartment to make it accessible. With assistance from the FHJC and cooperating law firm Latham & Watkins, Ms. Friedman, a person with a disability who used a wheelchair, filed a federal lawsuit and subsequently settled her claim in 2011. Ms. Friedman joined the Board of Directors of the FHJC in 2011 and served until 2014. Ms. Friedman passed away in December 2014. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the FHJC and a staunch advocate for the civil rights of all people. The fund is dedicated to the memory of our much beloved Board member, Adele Friedman, and it is aimed at assisting income-eligible persons with disabilities who need financial assistance to modify housing to make it more accessible.

What is a "Reasonable Modification"?

A reasonable modification is a physical alteration to a dwelling unit or the common areas in a building or complex that may be necessary to enable a person with a disability to use and enjoy the housing. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair may need a ramp to overcome two steps at the entrance to a common area that all building residents use. A Deaf person may need a light installed that flashes when someone rings the doorbell. An elderly person with mobility impairments may need grab bars installed in order to use the bathtub. Whatever the nature of the request, once the request is made to a landlord or housing provider, it should initiate a “dialogue” between the parties to try to figure out how the modification can be made. Also, a person making a request for a reasonable modification should be able to describe how the need for the modification is related to his or her disability.

Who pays for a modification if I request physical changes be made to my apartment or common areas in my building to make it more accessible?

If you are a person with a disability and you need to modify a physical feature in your existing apartment or in the common areas of your building or complex to make it accessible for you, please contact the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) for advice and assistance. Local, state, and federal fair housing laws vary in their requirements of who must pay for a modification and under what circumstances the property will need to be restored to its previous condition when you leave the unit. The FHJC can provide information on your rights and responsibilities under local, state, and federal fair housing laws and assist you to request the modification being sought.

Specifically, how does the FHJC assist with reasonable modifications?

If you are a person with a disability who needs to request a reasonable modification, please contact the Fair Housing Justice Center. The FHJC will assist you to:

1. Make the request for a reasonable modification;
2. Document the housing provider’s response to your request; and
3. Assist you to exercise your fair housing rights should your request be denied.

All of the services listed above (1-3) are provided to persons with disabilities residing in the FHJC service area at no charge and with no income requirements. The FHJC service area includes the five boroughs of New York City as well as Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties.

In addition, some financial assistance may be available to assist income-eligible low and moderate income households to make reasonable modifications to their existing housing through FHJC’s Adele Friedman Housing Accessibility Fund (AFHAF). Please see the other side of this flyer for more details on the Fund.

To request a reasonable modification or to find out if you qualify for assistance through the Adele Friedman Housing Accessibility Fund, contact the FHJC today:

Phone: 212-400-8201 Email: fhjc@fairhousingjustice.org

Learn more online at: www.fairhousingjustice.org/AFHAF

ABOUT THE FAIR HOUSING JUSTICE CENTER

The Fair Housing Justice Center is a non-profit civil rights organization that operates a full-service fair housing program in the New York City region. The mission of the FHJC is to eliminate housing discrimination; promote policies that foster open, accessible, and inclusive communities; and strengthen the enforcement of fair housing laws. Learn more at www.fairhousingjustice.org.