

Emotional Support Animals & Housing

People who need an **emotional support animal** (ESA) because of a disability are protected from housing discrimination. This means a landlord **cannot treat you differently because you have an ESA**.

An **Emotional Support Animal** (ESA) is an animal that helps a person with a disability feel safe, calm, or supported. The animal does **not need special training**.

Asking for an ESA

You must ask your landlord for a **reasonable accommodation**. This means asking for permission to keep your ESA in your home.

It is best to ask in writing. Keep a copy for your records.

Your landlord may ask for a letter from a doctor, therapist, counselor, or other licensed provider. The letter should state that the animal helps with your disability.

Rules Your Housing Provider May Have

A landlord may still have reasonable rules. For example, they may require:

- The animal to be under control
- The animal to be on a leash in common areas
- Dogs to have a valid local license

They may deny the animal in limited situations, such as if the animal is dangerous or causes serious damage.

Can I be charged extra?

No. Your landlord cannot charge pet rent, pet fees, or pet deposits for an approved ESA. But you may have to pay for any damage caused by the animal.

Need More Help?

Contact **Disability Rights Rhode Island**: Call 401-831-3150 or email info@drri.org.