



5 Things You Should Know About Emotional Support Animals in Housing

- 1 An emotional support animal (ESA) is an animal that improves at least one symptom of the person's disability.** An ESA is different from a service or guide animal; unlike service or guide animals, ESAs are not individually trained to perform specific tasks associated with their owner's disability.
- 2 A housing provider is required to modify or make exceptions to its policies governing animals when it may be necessary for a person with a disability to be able to fully use and enjoy the housing.** This means that a housing provider may need to make an exception to a "no pets" policy to permit a tenant with a disability to keep an emotional support animal (ESA). But unlike service or guide animals, ESAs are not automatically exempt from a housing provider's no-pet policies.
- 3 If you live in or are about to move into a building with a no-pet policy, you can request a reasonable accommodation for your ESA.** If your disability and disability-related need for an ESA are not obvious or otherwise known, your housing provider may request reliable documentation from your treating health care professional that you have a disability and that you need an ESA. Your housing provider cannot require that your request be in writing or that you submit documentation in a specific format. Documentation obtained from the Internet that does not come from a treating healthcare professional generally will not be sufficiently reliable to support the need for an ESA.
- 4 Your housing provider must conduct an individualized assessment of your request and may deny your request if allowing an ESA would create an undue burden on its operations.** The inquiry is highly fact-specific and considers whether allowing you to keep an ESA would fundamentally alter the housing provider's operations or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the housing provider.
- 5 Your housing provider cannot require you to pay an additional security deposit or pet fee, or obtain additional renter's insurance, in exchange for allowing you to keep an ESA.** However, your housing provider may require you to pay for any actual damage the animal causes.

To find out more or to file a complaint, go to [NJCivilRights.gov](https://www.njcivilrights.gov) or call **973-648-2700**



NJ Office of the Attorney General
[NJCivilRights.gov](https://www.njcivilrights.gov)



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