

Community Link

Reasonable Modification Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the reasonable modification policy is to ensure that **Community Link** offers equal and effective opportunities and access to transportation services for persons with disabilities and full compliance with the provisions of the Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Policy

Community Link is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities in all programs, services and activities. **Community Link** recognizes that in order to have equally effective opportunities and benefits, individuals with disabilities may need reasonable modifications to policies and procedures. **Community Link** will adhere to all applicable federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable modifications, as necessary, to afford equal access to programs for persons with disabilities. **Community Link** does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, participation in, or receipt of services and benefits under any transit program or activity. **Community Link** will take appropriate steps to ensure that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.

No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of **Community Link** or be subject to discrimination by **Community Link**.

Reasonable Modifications

A reasonable modification is a change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows disabled individuals to have equal access to programs, services, and activities. **Community Link** will make reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures when necessary to ensure access to transit services for qualified individuals with disabilities, unless:

- Making the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the service.
- Making the accommodation would create a direct threat to the health or safety of other passengers.
- The individual with a disability is able to fully use **Community Link**'s service without the accommodation being made.

For the purposes of this section, the term reasonable accommodation shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the term "reasonable modifications" as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II regulations at 28 CFR 35.130(b)(7), and not as it is defined or interpreted for the purposes of employment discrimination under Title I of the ADA (42 U.S.C. 12111–12112) and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR part 1630.

Eligibility Criteria

An individual is eligible to be considered to receive a reasonable modification if that individual has: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such impairment; or been regarded as having such impairment.

Requests for Reasonable Modifications

Community Link shall make information about how to contact **Community Link** to make requests for reasonable modifications readily available to the public through its website and rider policy guidelines. **Community Link** shall follow these procedures in taking requests:

- a. Individuals requesting modifications shall describe what they need in order to use the service.
- b. Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term “reasonable modification” when making a request. Personnel at **Community Link** will determine if the request represents a reasonable modification and proceed in accommodating the request accordingly.
- c. Whenever feasible, **Community Link** requests that individuals make such requests for modifications before **Community Link** is expected to provide the modified service.
- d. Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance management shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request. Management may consult with **Community Link**’s directors before making a determination to grant or deny the request.

Requests for accommodation may be made either orally or in writing. The reasonable accommodation process begins as soon as the request for accommodation is made.

The request can be submitted in any written format. Alternative means of filing a request, such as personal interviews, phone calls, or taped requests, will be made available for persons with disabilities if unable to communicate their request in writing or upon request.

Interactive Process

When a request for accommodation is made, **Community Link** and the individual requesting an accommodation must engage in a good faith interactive process to determine what, if any accommodation shall be provided. The individual and the **Community Link** must communicate with each other about the request, the process for determining whether an accommodation will be provided, and the potential accommodations. Communication is a priority throughout the entire process.

Time Frame for Processing Requests and Providing Reasonable Modification

Community Link will process requests for reasonable accommodation and then provide accommodations, where appropriate, in as short a time frame as reasonably possible. **Community Link** recognizes, however, that the time necessary to process a request will depend on the nature of the accommodation(s) requested and whether it is necessary to obtain supporting information.

Granting a Reasonable Modification Request

As soon as **Community Link** determines that a reasonable accommodation will be provided, that decision shall be immediately communicated to the individual. This notice must be in writing in order to maintain the required information for reporting purposes. Upon request, alternative means of response will be provided.

In choosing among alternatives for meeting nondiscrimination and accessibility requirements with respect to new, altered, or existing facilities, or designated or specified transportation services, **Community Link** shall give priority to those methods that offer services, programs, and activities to qualified individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Denying a Reasonable Modification Request

As soon as **Community Link** determines that a request for reasonable accommodation will be denied, **Community Link** will communicate the basis for the decision in writing to the individual requesting the modification. The explanation for the denial will clearly state:

- a. the specific reasons for the denial;
- b. any alternative accommodation that may create the same access to transit services as requested by the individual; and
- c. the opportunity to file a complaint relative to the **Community Link**'s decision on the request.

Complaint Process

Community Link has a process for investigating and tracking complaints from qualified individuals. These procedures shall be posted on the **Community Link**'s website and will be provided to any individual where the **Community Link** has denied a request for accommodation. The process and any forms necessary to file a complaint are readily available from the web. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews, phone calls, or taped requests, will be made available for persons with disabilities if unable to communicate their request in writing or upon request.

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against in obtaining a reasonable modification may file a complaint by completing and submitting a **Community Link**'s Reasonable Modification Complaint Form. **Community Link** investigates complaints received no more than 30 days after receipt. **Community Link** will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, the complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. If more information is needed to resolve the complaint, **Community Link** may contact the complainant. The complainant has 30 business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to **Community Link**.

If **Community Link** is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within 30 business days, the **Community Link** may administratively close the complaint. In addition, a complaint may be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After **Community Link** investigates the complaint, a decision will be rendered in writing to the complainant. **Community Link** will issue either a Letter of Closure or Letter of Finding.

- a. *Letter of Finding* – This letter will summarize the complaint, any interviews conducted regarding the complaint, and explains what actions will be taken by **Community Link** to address the complaint.
- b. *Letter of Closure* – This letter will explain why **Community Link** has determined that the complaint does not merit accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and that the complaint will be closed.

If the complainant disagrees with the decision of **Community Link**, an opportunity to appeal the decision may be pursued provided the complaint files notice of appeal within 21 days of the initial decision of **Community Link**.

In the event of appeal, the complainant will be granted all due process, including the ability to be present additional evidence, present the case in person during an appeal hearing, and to be represented by counsel.

Designated Employee

Community Link shall designate one official within the organization responsible for processing reasonable modification requests and handling complaints. This individual is:

Name, Title
[Insert name of transit provider]
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Telephone
E-mail

Record Retention

Community Link will maintain all records related to reasonable modification requests and denials for at least three (3) years.

Community Link ADA Reasonable Modification Request Form

Requests for modifications to the policies, practices, or procedures of **Community Link** in order to accommodate an individual with a disability may be made either in advance or at the time of the service. Whenever feasible, requests for reasonable modifications shall be made and determined in advance. A reasonable modification related to the ADA is ***a change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows people with disabilities to have equal access to services***. Fill out this form with details about your modification request and how it relates to your disability.

Modification Request By: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Modification for (Name) _____ Date of Service: _____

Describe the modification request for ADA demand response services including why the modification is necessary:

Signature of ADA Service Recipient or Guardian

Date

Once completed, please mail or email this form to:

Community Link
ATTN: Reasonable Modification
1665 North 4th Street
Breese, IL 62230
Email: info@commlink.org

To request a modification by phone, please call the following number: (618) 526-8800

Requests for reasonable modifications may be denied on the following grounds:

1. It is a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program, service, or activity,
2. It is a direct threat to the health or safety of others,
3. It is not a requirement by the requester to use the service, or
4. The modification creates an undue financial / administrative burden.

Community Link will strive to acknowledge and approve or deny requests within five (5) business days of receipt. All service recipients who are denied a request have the ability to appeal. For a copy of our Appeals Form and the complete Reasonable Modification Policy, please visit www.commlink.org.

All information is kept confidential. All materials are available in accessible format and in languages other than English upon request.