

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-105083](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

HUD is responsible for enforcing federal civil rights laws that require housing providers to make reasonable accommodations for households with disabilities. HUD serves many of these households through its rental assistance programs.

GAO was asked to review HUD's rental assistance to low-income households with disabilities. This report examines (1) what data are available on reasonable accommodations provided to HUD-assisted households with disabilities and (2) how HUD oversees compliance with requirements for reasonable accommodations in its rental assistance programs.

GAO analyzed HUD documentation, including reporting requirements; reviewed relevant laws and regulations; surveyed a generalizable sample of 756 PHAs operating in urban areas or entire states that administer HUD programs; and interviewed officials at HUD headquarters and all 10 regional offices.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that HUD systemically collect household data and develop a strategy for its oversight of compliance with reasonable accommodation requirements. HUD neither agreed nor disagreed with GAO's recommendations, but noted challenges to addressing the recommendations, including resource constraints. GAO maintains the recommendations are warranted and notes HUD has flexibility in determining how to collect and analyze data, including leveraging existing systems.

View [GAO-23-105083](#). For more information, contact Alicia Puente Cackley at (202) 512-8678 or cackleya@gao.gov.

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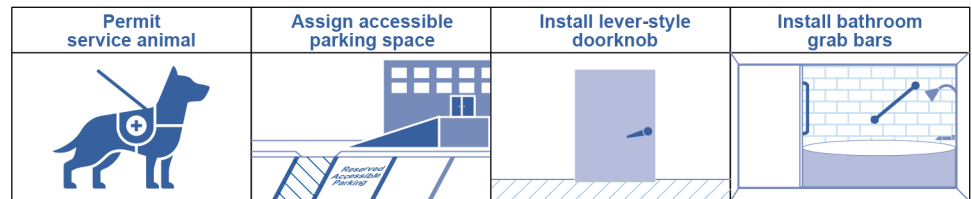
HUD RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Enhanced Data and Strategy Could Improve Oversight of Accessibility Requirements

What GAO Found

Federal civil rights laws require housing providers to make reasonable accommodations to help ensure that households with disabilities have equal opportunities to use and enjoy their homes. These requirements apply to public housing agencies (PHA) and other housing providers that administer rental assistance programs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations



Sources: GAO presentation of Department of Housing and Urban Development information; Marc/stock.adobe.com (service animal image). | GAO-23-105083

HUD does not collect certain key data on households with disabilities that participate in its three largest rental assistance programs. Although HUD collects information on a household's disability status, the agency does not systematically collect data on requests for reasonable accommodations. Doing so would make HUD more aware of whether the needs of assisted households were met. Moreover, many PHAs already collect data that HUD could use. For example, GAO surveyed PHAs that administer HUD rental assistance and estimates that over 83 percent (plus or minus 9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval) collect information on a household's accessibility needs during application and generally annually thereafter.

HUD also does not have a comprehensive, documented strategy for its oversight of compliance with reasonable accommodation requirements. HUD prioritizes its oversight on investigating complaints, which it is legally required to do. Because of the high volume of complaints, HUD is able to conduct only a limited number of discretionary compliance reviews of HUD-assisted housing providers. To target these reviews, officials said they consider factors such as complaints, press articles, and various data sources to assess risk. But HUD does not have basic assisted-household data to help support identification of potential noncompliance. HUD also does not document the criteria it uses to assess risk. Developing a comprehensive strategy for prioritizing and planning reviews, including policies for using assisted-household data, would allow HUD to proactively address compliance issues rather than respond after complaints are filed. Doing so also might reduce the number of complaint investigations, potentially freeing up resources for other fair housing-related activities.