**TEMPLATE LETTER TO REQUEST A REASONABLE ACCOMODATION**

**FROM YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT**

 [YOUR NAME]

 [YOUR ADDRESS]

[CHIEF OF POLICE]

[CITY/TOWN] Police Department

[ADDRESS]

 [DATE]

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the victim of [CRIME] and would like to file a police report. I am disabled, and sometimes have a hard time communicating. So that I am able to clearly explain what has happened to me**, I would like to request a reasonable accommodation** from the [CITY/TOWN] Police Department that [DESCRIBE REASONABLE ACCOMODATION REQUEST HERE. Examples include: a friend or family member accompanies me; I provide a statement in writing; I have an ASL interpreter or other auxiliary aid present; the Police Department allot me extra time to communicate; the meeting takes place in a room with limited sounds or distractions. You can request more than one reasonable accommodation].

Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ‘‘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 a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance makes clear that police departments fit within the statutory definition of a “public entity” and that Title II “affects virtually everything that officers and deputies do.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Under Title II, state and local government entities must provide reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures and take appropriate steps to communicate effectively with people with disabilities.

The [CITY/TOWN] Police Department therefore has an obligation under Title II of the ADA to ensure that people with disabilities like me are treated equally in the legal system and afforded equal opportunity to benefit from safe, inclusive communities.

Allowing me to have [WHATEVER ASSISTANCE YOU REQUESTED ABOVE] to facilitate communication while filing a police report is a reasonable accommodation. See *In re: McDonough* 457 Mass. 512 (2010). It would not be an undue burden to the police department because [EXPLAIN WHY IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT, UNSAFE, AND/OR EXPENSIVE FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE THIS ACCOMODATION]

If the [CITY/TOWN] Police Department denies my reasonable accommodation, I respectfully request that this denial be provided to me in writing.

Thank you,

[NAME]

1. 42 USC § 12132. A qualified individual is an individual with a disability “who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.” 42 USC § 12131(2). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Commonly Asked Questions About the Americans with Disabilities Act and Law Enforcement (Last Revised Feb. 25, 2020), available at [https://www.ada.gov/q&a\_law.htm](https://www.ada.gov/q%26a_law.htm). (“Law enforcement agencies are covered because they are programs of State or local governments, regardless of whether they receive Federal grants or other Federal funds. The ADA affects virtually everything that officers and deputies do, for example: receiving citizen complaints; interrogating witnesses; arresting, booking, and holding suspects; operating telephone (911) emergency centers; providing emergency medical services; enforcing laws; and other duties.”) This guidance is attached in its entirety for ease of reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)