



Holyoke Housing Authority

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AGENCY
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 475 MAPLE STREET, Ste 1
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Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act¹, To all Participants, Tenants and Applicants

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT NOTICE. PLEASE HAVE IT TRANSLATED.

Este es un aviso importante. Sírvase mandarlo traducir.

Summary:

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA protections are not only available to women, but are available equally to all individuals regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that Holyoke Housing Authority (HHA) is in compliance with VAWA. This notice explains your rights under VAWA. A HUD-approved certification form is attached to this notice. You can fill out this form to show that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and that you wish to use your rights under VAWA.

Protections for Applicants:

If you otherwise qualify for assistance under HHA's program, you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Protections for Tenants:

If you are receiving assistance under HHA's program you may not be denied assistance, terminated from participation, or be evicted from your rental housing because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Also, if you or an affiliated individual of yours is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a member of your household or any guest, you may not be denied rental assistance or occupancy rights under HHA's program solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household:

HHA may divide (bifurcate) your lease in order to evict the individual or terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If HHA chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, HHA may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the evicted abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, HHA must allow the tenant who is or has been a victim and other household members to remain in the unit for a period of time, in order to establish eligibility under the program or under another HUD housing program covered by VAWA, or, find alternative housing. In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, HHA must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, HHA may, but is not required to, ask you for documentation or certification of the incidences of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Moving to Another Unit:

Upon your request, HHA may permit you to move to another unit, subject to the availability of other units, and still keep your assistance. In order to approve a request, HHA may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, HHA may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

¹ Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

² Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.###