

Chicago Housing Authority

Housing Choice Voucher Program

Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

Emergency Transfers

Chicago Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program (CHA HCVP) is concerned about the safety of its HCVP participants, and such concern extends to participants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),¹ CHA allows participants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the participant's current unit to another unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The CHA must review all requests to determine that the participant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and that the relocation would eliminate or substantially reduce the threat to health and safety of the participant.

This plan identifies participants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to participants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal agency that oversees that the Housing Choice Voucher Program is in compliance with VAWA. Information about victims' rights under VAWA are

¹ Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, 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.

provided to participants and applicants at the time the individual is provided assistance or admission, along with any notice of denial or termination.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A participant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as provided in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR part 5, subpart L is eligible for an emergency transfer, if: the participant reasonably believes that by staying in the same unit there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence. If the participant is a victim of sexual assault, the participant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar-day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.

A participant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan.

Participants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

Emergency Transfer Request Documentation

To request an emergency transfer, the participant shall notify the appropriate Regional Office (South, Central or West) and submit a written request for a transfer with continued assistance under the CHA HCVP. This request can be made using CHA's Emergency Request Form. CHA may provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. If not using the Emergency Request Form, the participant's written request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the participant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence by remaining in the same dwelling unit assisted under CHA's HCV program; OR
2. A statement that the participant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the participant's request for an emergency transfer.

Confidentiality

CHA will keep confidential any information that the participant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the participant gives CHA specific written permission to release the information on a time limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the participant, if one is provided, from the person(s) that committed an act(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the participant. For more information about CHA's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, see the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

CHA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. CHA will, however, act as quickly as possible to move a participant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to another unit, subject to availability and safety of a unit.

If a participant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the participant may request an extension to find one that is safe or to port out of the CHAs jurisdiction. If a unit is available, the transferred participant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the lease. CHA may be unable to approve tenancy transfer for a particular unit if the participant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If CHA has no safe and available units within their jurisdiction, CHA will assist the participant in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the participant could move. At the participant's request, CHA will also assist in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are attached to this plan.

Safety and Security of Participants

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the participant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Participants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

Participants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

Please see additional organizations below that can provide services to those who are victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking.

Catholic Charities-312-655-7975 <http://www.catholiccharities.net/>

Salvation Army-312-738-4367 <http://www.salvationarmy.org/>

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 312-641-4140 <http://www.chicagohomeless.org/>

Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline 877-863-6338 <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30275>

Between Friends-800-603-4357 <http://www.betweenfriendschicago.org/aboutus.html>

Family Rescue 773-375-1918 <https://familyrescueinc.org/>

South Suburban Family Shelters <http://www.ssfs1.org/>

Domestic Violence Court House-555 W Harrison, Chicago, IL 60607

Center on Halsted LGBTQ Violence Resource Line (773) 871-CARE (2273)

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law <http://www.povertylaw.org/safehomes>