

Reading Housing Authority Admissions & Continued Occupancy Policy excerpt - Chapter 16

PART VII: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

16-VII.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence against Women Act (VAWA) provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the public housing program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those apply in conjunction with VAWA.

- Although the VAWA 2022 statute does not specifically include human trafficking in the list of victims protected under VAWA, in 2022 HUD began including human trafficking as part of the list of victims protected under VAWA (as seen in Notices PIH 2022-06, PIH 2022-22, and PIH 2022-24). In the absence of a final rule implementing VAWA 2022 and to mirror HUD's recent usage, this policy includes human trafficking in addition to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking anywhere such a list appears.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and PHA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and PHA policies are located in Chapter 3, "Eligibility" (sections 3-I.C and 3-III.F); Chapter 5, "Occupancy Standards and Unit Offers" (section 5-II.D); Chapter 8, "Leasing and Inspections" (section 8-I.B); Chapter 12, "Transfer Policy" (sections 12-III.C, 12-III.F, and 12-IV.D); and Chapter 13, "Lease Terminations" (sections 13-III.F and 13-IV.D).

16-VII.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, FR Notice 8/6/13]

As used in VAWA:

- The term *affiliated individual* means, with respect to a person:
 - A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that person stands in the position or place of a parent; or
 - Any individual, tenant or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- The term *bifurcate* means, with respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members' lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.
- The term *dating violence* means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - The length of the relationship
 - The type of relationship
 - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

- The term *domestic violence* includes felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant funding, and in the case of victim services, includes the user or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who is:
 - The current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or person similarly situated to a spouse or intimate partner of the victim.
 - A person who is cohabitating or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner.
 - A person with whom the victim shares a child in common.
 - A person who commits acts against an youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction
- The term *economic abuse* means behavior that is coercive, deceptive, or unreasonably controls or restrains a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources to which they are entitled, including using coercion, fraud, and manipulation to:
 - Restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information.
 - Unfairly use a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, for one's own advantage.
 - Exert undue influence over a person's financial and economic behavior or decisions, including forcing default on joint or other financial obligations, exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship, or to whom one has a fiduciary duty.
- The term *sexual assault* means:
 - Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent.
- The term *stalking* means:
 - To engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.
- The term *technological abuse* means an act or pattern of behavior that occurs within domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and is intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor another person, except as otherwise permitted by law, that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to:
 - Internet enabled devices
 - Online spaces and platforms
 - Computers

- Mobile devices
- Cameras and imaging programs
- Apps
- Location tracking devices
- Communication technologies
- Any other emergency technologies

16-VII.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a)]

Notification to Public

The PHA adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its public housing program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

RHA Policy

RHA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its website. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it.

A notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to public housing program applicants and participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (Form HUD-5380, see Exhibit 16-1)

A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation (see Exhibit 16-2)

A copy of RHA's emergency transfer plan (Exhibit 16-3)

A copy of HUD's Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking, Form HUD-5383 (Exhibit 16-4)

The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) (included in Exhibit 16-1)

Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers.

Notification to Applicants and Tenants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)]

PHAs are required to inform public housing applicants and tenants of their rights under VAWA, including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, when they are denied assistance, when they are admitted to the program, and when they are notified of an eviction or termination of housing benefits.

The PHA must distribute a notice of VAWA rights, along with the VAWA self-certification form (HUD-5382) at each of these three junctures.

RHA Policy

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notices in Exhibit 16-1 and 16-2.

RHA will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance and at the time of the eligibility interview when such a claim is made by the applicant. RHA will also include such information in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.F).

RHA will provide all tenants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 8-I.B) and at annual reexamination. RHA will also include such information in all lease termination notices (see section 13-IV.D).

Completed self-certification forms (HUD-5382) that are received from Applicants or Tenants will be forwarded to the Director of Programs upon receipt. The Director of Programs shall serve as the Single Point of Contact for the ensuring organizational compliance, assessing the need for additional information, reaching disposition and determining methods for communications with persons who are exercising their rights under VAWA. In the absence of the Director of Programs, the President/CEO or his/her/their designee shall serve as the Single Point of Contact.

The PHA is not limited to providing VAWA information at the times specified in the above policy. If the PHA decides to provide VAWA information to a tenant following an incident of domestic violence, Notice PIH 2017-08 cautions against sending the information by mail, since the abuser may be monitoring the mail. The notice recommends that in such cases the PHA make alternative delivery arrangements that will not put the victim at risk.

RHA Policy

Whenever RHA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a public housing tenant might place a victim of domestic violence at risk, it will attempt to deliver the information by hand directly to the victim or by having the victim come to an office or other space that may be safer for the individual, making reasonable accommodations as necessary. For example, RHA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if RHA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim.

When discussing VAWA with the victim, RHA will take reasonable precautions to ensure that no one can overhear the conversation such as having conversations in a private room.

The victim may, but is not required to, designate an attorney, advocate, or other secure contact for communications regarding VAWA protections.

16-VII.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]

A PHA presented with a claim for initial or continued assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse may—but is not required to—request that the individual making the claim document the abuse. Any request for documentation must be in writing, and the individual must be allowed at least 14 business days after receipt of the request to submit the documentation. The PHA may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy the PHA's request by providing any one of the following three forms of documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)]:

- (1) A completed and signed HUD-approved certification form (HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking), which must include the name of the perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide and is known to the victim. The form may be filled out and submitted on behalf of the victim.
- (2) A federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local police report or court record, or an administrative record
- (3) Documentation signed by a person who has assisted the victim in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or the effects of such abuse. This person may be an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; a mental health professional; or a medical professional. The person signing the documentation must attest under penalty of perjury to the person's belief that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse. The victim must also sign the documentation.

The PHA may not require third-party documentation (forms 2 and 3) in addition to certification (form 1), except as specified below under "Conflicting Documentation," nor may it require certification in addition to third-party documentation [FR Notice 11/16/16].

RHA Policy

Any request for additional documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking following receipt of a form HUD-5382 will be made in writing by the Director of Programs. This communication will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request, will describe the three forms of acceptable documentation, will provide explicit instructions on where and to whom the documentation must be submitted, and will state the consequences for failure to submit the documentation or request an extension in writing by the deadline.

RHA will provide an extension to the 14 business days of 10 business days if requested.

Upon receipt of one of these forms of documentation, RHA employees are prohibited from conducting further fact finding for the purpose of trying to verify the 'validity' of an applicant, tenant, or participant's victim status. RHA may only request additional documentation if there is conflicting information (i.e. two or more members of the same household submit conflicting documentation regarding who is the perpetrator and who is the victim). RHA will provide 30 calendar days in order for the individual to provide additional documentation if such circumstances arise.

Once the victim provides documentation, RHA will acknowledge receipt of the documentation within 10 business days.

Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]

In cases where the PHA receives conflicting certification documents from two or more members of a household, each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the perpetrator, the PHA may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and 3). The PHA may also request third-party documentation when submitted documentation contains information that conflicts with existing information already available to the PHA. The PHA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property. Individuals have 30 calendar days to return third-party verification to the PHA. If the PHA does not receive third-party documentation, and the PHA will deny or terminate assistance as a result, the PHA must hold separate hearings for the tenants [Notice PIH 2017-08].

RHA Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents from members of the same household, RHA will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(e) and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made. When requesting third-party documents, RHA will provide contact information for local domestic violence and legal aid offices. In such cases, applicants or tenants will be given 30 calendar days from the date of the request to provide such documentation.

If RHA does not receive third-party documentation within the required timeframe (and any extensions) RHA will deny VAWA protections and will notify the applicant or tenant in writing of the denial. If, as a result, the applicant or tenant is denied or terminated from the program, RHA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]

The PHA has the discretion to provide benefits to an individual based solely on the individual's statement or other corroborating evidence—i.e., without requiring formal documentation of abuse in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(b). HUD recommends documentation in a confidential manner when a verbal statement or other evidence is accepted.

RHA Policy

If RHA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence (as determined by the victim) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, RHA will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)]

In order to deny relief for protection under VAWA, a PHA must provide the individual requesting relief with a written request for documentation of abuse. If the individual fails to provide the documentation within 14 business days from the date of receipt, or such longer time as the PHA may allow, the PHA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

16-VII.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]

All information provided to the PHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, must be retained in confidence. This means that the PHA (1) may not enter the information into any shared database, (2) may not allow employees or others to access the information unless they are explicitly authorized to do so and have a need to know the information for purposes of their work, and (3) may not provide the information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that the disclosure is (a) requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) otherwise required by applicable law.

RHA Policy

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, RHA will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

RHA PROCEDURES

When a tenant, participant or applicant invokes their VAWA rights in ways unrelated to emergency transfers, including but not limited to when a participant asks Recipient to remove a perpetrator from the household and bifurcate the lease, when an applicant notifies Recipient that adverse information impacting eligibility is related to their status as a survivor of VAWA violence/abuse, and when a participant notifies RHA that an alleged failure to comply with the lease is related to their status as a survivor of VAWA violence/abuse, RHA shall respond in a manner that complies with VAWA and, where applicable, the Department's general implementing regulations and any program-specific implementing regulations.

All RHA staff who interact with and/or who make housing-related decisions concerning tenants, participants, and/or applicants shall be trained in VAWA and related RHA policies and procedures.

Front-line staff who receive information from a tenant, participant or applicant which contains a request, a statement or an inquiry that either specifically or indirectly appear to represent a tenant, participant or applicant's victimization related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will immediately refer to his/her/their manager.

The Manager will supply the tenant, participant or applicant with RHA's Notice of Occupancy Rights Under the Violence Against Women's Act (Form HUD-5380) and the Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternative Documentation (Form HUD-5382), when a tenant or applicant notifies an employee that he or she is seeking to exercise a right under VAWA. The Manager will also state that the tenant or applicant may complete either the Form HUD-5382 or provide one of the other forms of documentation enumerated at 34 USC § 12491(c) and 24 CFR § 5.2007(b)(1), and that is the right of the participant to choose which form of documentation to submit. When receiving information by means other than in person, the Manager shall inquire as to how the tenant/participant/applicant wishes to receive copies of Form HUD-5380 and HUD-5382.

The Manager will then inform the Director of Programs of the name, date and program type, and any general information related to the tenant, participant or applicant. Upon receipt of this information, the Director of Programs shall serve as the Single Point of Contact with the tenant/participant/applicant until which time a disposition upon the claim is reached. Upon disposition, the Director of Programs shall direct the Manager to enact the provisions outlined in the disposition. All other subsequent terms of eligibility and/or continued occupancy shall be monitored by the Manager and completed by front-line staff in accordance with usual business practices and in accordance with the terms outlined in the respective policy.

In the event that such time as indicated under this policy has fully elapsed and RHA has not received the proper form or another eligible source of validation, or RHA has not received additional information sufficient to cause RHA to proceed differently, RHA will proceed with the outstanding circumstances in accordance with all other policies.

When a tenant of the Public Housing Program requests an emergency transfer, the transfer request shall be processed consistent with the RHA Emergency Transfer Plan and all other terms outlined in the RHA Procedures relative to VAWA. Upon disposition that a resident is eligible for a transfer under this plan, the resident shall be placed upon the RHA Waiting List for Emergency Transfers. All other terms outlined under this section of the policy shall apply.

READING HOUSING AUTHORITY DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING.

EXHIBIT 16-1: NOTICE OF OCCUPANCY RIGHTS UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT, FORM HUD-5380

READING HOUSING AUTHORITY

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act¹

To all Tenants and Applicants

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 **THE PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS** are 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 **THE PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS** 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 **THE PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS**, 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 **THE PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS** solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

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.

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

Reading Housing Authority (RHA) 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 RHA chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, RHA 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, RHA 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, RHA must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, RHA 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, RHA 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, RHA 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, the housing provider 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) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.

(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit a form, or may accept another written or oral request.

(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit. This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer.

If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you expressly request the transfer.

RHA will keep confidential requests for emergency transfers by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the location of any move by such victims and their families.

RHA's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and RHA must make a copy of its emergency transfer plan available to you if you ask to see it.

Documenting You Are or Have Been a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking

RHA can, but is not required to, ask you to provide documentation to "certify" that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such request from RHA must be in writing, and RHA must give you at least 14 business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to provide the documentation. RHA may, but does not have to, extend the deadline for the submission of documentation upon your request.

You can provide one of the following to RHA as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if RHA asks you to provide documentation that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- ☐ A complete HUD-approved certification form given to you by RHA with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident. The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.
- ☐ A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.
- ☐ A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom you sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that he or she believes that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.
- ☐ Any other statement or evidence that RHA has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within 14 business days, RHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If RHA receives conflicting evidence that an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has been committed (such as certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), RHA has the right to request that you provide third-party documentation within thirty 30 calendar days in order to resolve the conflict. If you fail or refuse to provide third-party documentation where there is conflicting evidence, RHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

RHA must keep confidential any information you provide related to the exercise of your rights under VAWA, including the fact that you are exercising your rights under VAWA.

RHA must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of RHA (for example, employees and contractors) to have access to confidential information unless for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law.

RHA must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. RHA, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- ☐ You give written permission to RHA to release the information on a time limited basis.
- ☐ RHA needs to use the information in an eviction or termination proceeding, such as to evict your abuser or perpetrator or terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.
- ☐ A law requires RHA or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit RHA's duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Evicted or Assistance May Be Terminated

You can be evicted, and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. However, RHA cannot hold tenants who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who have not been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The protections described in this notice might not apply, and you could be evicted, and your assistance terminated, if RHA can demonstrate that not evicting you or terminating your assistance would present a real physical danger that:

- 1) Would occur within an immediate time frame, and

2) Could result in death or serious bodily harm to other tenants or those who work on the property.

If RHA can demonstrate the above, RHA should only terminate your assistance or evict you if there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat.

Other Laws

VAWA does not replace any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You may be entitled to additional housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under other Federal laws, as well as under State and local laws.

Non-Compliance with The Requirements of This Notice

You may report a covered housing provider's violation of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with t THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, PHILADELPHIA FIELD OFFICE

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/01/04/2022-28073/the-violence-against-women-act-reauthorization-act-of-2022-overview-of-applicability-to-hud-programs>.

Additionally, RHA must make a copy of HUD's VAWA regulations available to you if you ask to see them.

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact the Director of Programs for the Reading Housing Authority Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs at 610-775-4813.

For help regarding an abusive relationship, you may call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or, for persons with hearing impairments, 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). You may also contact Safe Berks at 610-373-1206.

For tenants 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>.

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact Safe Berks at 610-373-1206 or Reading Police Department by calling 911, or at 610-655-6111 (for emergencies) or 610-655-6116 (for non-emergencies). Victims of stalking seeking help may contact Safe Berks at 610-373-1206 or Reading Police Department by calling 911, or at 610-655-6111 (for emergencies) or 610-655-6116 (for non-emergencies).

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382