

Housing Choice Voucher Family Handbook

WESTMORELAND COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY (WCHA)

WCHA'S goal is to provide excellent service to the families in Westmoreland County. WCHA will make every effort to inform you of the program rules and advise you of the effects of these rules. Federal regulations are not always easy to understand, so it is very important to ask questions when you are not sure of something. Do not hesitate to contact a WCHA representative if you have questions or problems that pertain to the housing programs.

When WCHA contacts you for an appointment, it will be either by first class mail or telephone. Please decide to attend all appointments on time. Your cooperation is essential to WCHA's ability to serve you.

REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATION

If you are a person with disabilities or part of a family that includes persons with disabilities, you may request a reasonable accommodation in order to fully utilize this housing program and any related services.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: Rules and regulations for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The HCV program provides rental assistance to eligible low-income families. The HCV program is designed to help low-income families find affordable housing and provide more choice in where to live.

HCV PROGRAM: The maximum amount WCHA will pay is an amount equal to the *payment standard* minus your family's total tenant payment.

The *payment standard* is established WCHA. It is based on the cost of housing and utilities for your area. Depends on your family composition and the bedroom size of the unit (it would be higher for a 3-bedroom unit versus a 1-bedroom unit).

HCV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

The HCV program is a three-way partnership between WCHA, the family (you), and the owner or landlord of the housing unit.

WCHA'S RESPONSIBILITIES

For the program to work, WCHA must do the following:

- Review all applications to determine whether an applicant is eligible for the program.
- Explain all the rules of the program to all the families who qualify.
- Issue a Voucher to the family.
- Approve the unit, the owner and the tenancy lease.
- Make housing assistance payments (HAP) to the owner in a timely manner.
- Ensure that both the family and the unit qualify under the program.
- Ensure that owners and families follow the program rules.
- Provide families and owners with prompt, professional service.

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FAMILY'S JOB

For the program to work, you must do the following:

- Provide WCHA complete and accurate information.
- Make your best effort to find a place to live that is suitable for them and qualifies for the program.
- Cooperate in attending all appointment scheduled by WCHA.
- Take responsibility for the care of your housing unit.
- Comply with the terms of the lease with the owner.
- Comply with the Voucher family obligations of your voucher.

OWNER'S JOB

For the program to work, the owner must:

- Screen families who apply to determine if they will be good renters.
- Comply with fair housing laws and not discriminate against any family.
- Maintain the housing unit by making necessary repairs in a timely manner.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract (HAP) an agreement the owner makes with WCHA.
- Collect rent due by the family and otherwise enforce the lease.
- To aid in the screening process, WCHA can supply the new owner with the current and previous address and landlord information. WCHA may also provide additional information relating to the family's performance as a renter.

STEPS TO RECEIVING HCV PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

WCHA DETERMINES THE FAMILY'S ELIGIBILITY

Your family was selected from the waiting list and your income and household composition was reviewed to determine your final eligibility.

TENANT BRIEFING / VOUCHER ISSUED

All applicants are required to attend a family briefing. The purpose of the family briefing is to:

- Issue your voucher
- Provide you with all the program information you will need to be successful in your housing search and to maintain good standing while you are on the program

BRIEFING PACKET

The briefing packet contains materials explaining how the program works and includes:

- A voucher
- Rules regarding the term of your voucher
- An explanation of how to request a voucher extension
- How your housing assistance payment was determined
- Information about maximum rents (fair market rents and payment standards) and utility allowances
- A Request for Tenancy Approval form

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- What the family should consider when selecting a rental unit
- The HUD-required Tenancy Addendum
- A fair housing discrimination complaint form
- Lead-based paint information
- The HUD booklet “A Good Place to Live”
- Information about voucher portability
- A list of landlords who may be willing to lease rental units under the voucher program
- Information regarding housing opportunities in areas of low poverty

SIZE OF THE VOUCHER

Your voucher indicates the number of bedrooms your family is eligible. This unit size is based on HUD guidelines and the WCHA’s written policy.

HOW WCHA DETERMINES YOUR UNIT SIZE

HUD requires WCHA to establish subsidy standards. These standards are used to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms for families of different sizes and makeups. The subsidy standards take into consideration factors such as the total number of people in the family, the age and sex of the people, and the relationship between them. These standards help WCHA to make the best use of the money HUD provides for housing costs and helps avoid overcrowding. Your unit size will be listed on your voucher.

VOUCHER EXPIRATION DATE

Your voucher is good for 60 days. It is important that you do not delay your search for housing. If your voucher expires before you find a suitable place to live, you may have to reapply and go back on the waiting list. Keep track of all the units you look at during the search period. **YOUR HOUSING SEARCH TIME IS LIMITED – START NOW.**

VOUCHER EXTENSION

Depending on WCHA’s written policies, the term of your voucher may be extended.

FAMILY DECIDES WHERE TO LIVE

LEASING IN-PLACE: You may be eligible to receive assistance at your present rental unit if the unit qualifies. The unit must be the appropriate size for your family; pass a housing quality standards inspection; and have a reasonable rent.

MOVING TO ANOTHER UNIT: If you decide to move from one unit to another and have your assistance go with you after you are on the program, the procedures are the same as they were when you were first approved to participate in the voucher program.

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This section can be used as a reference anytime you are planning to move to another unit and continue to receive rental assistance.

TO CONTINUE ASSISTANCE AT YOUR NEW UNIT

Your WCHA representative will explain the policies and procedures for moving from your unit with continued assistance.

YOU MUST GIVE NOTICE

If you want to move from one assisted unit to another and continue to receive housing assistance, you must give the owner/landlord and WCHA proper written notice according to the lease and the PHA policy.

WHERE CAN YOU LOOK?

You may search for suitable housing anywhere within Westmoreland County, or anywhere in the United States within the jurisdiction of a PHA with an HCV program (portability). The areas where you may search for housing will be explained to you by your housing representative.

DECIDING WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE

There are many factors to consider in your search for suitable housing, try to select a place that meets your family's needs. Here are some suggestions.

- **SCHOOLS:** If you have school-aged children, you will want to consider the various school districts that are available, as well as the distance from the housing unit to the school.
- **SAFETY:** When you search for housing, consider the safety of the neighborhood and its surroundings.
- **WORK:** consider the distance between your workplace and the location of the housing unit.
- **CHILD-CARE:** Consider the availability of child-care in the area of the housing unit. If you work, what is the distance between the housing unit, the child-care provider, and your work location?
- **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** If you do not have a vehicle, what is the access to public transportation in the area of the housing unit?

PREMISES AND NEIGHBORHOOD

It is important to consider the neighborhood and premises. You might want to ask yourself the following:

- Is there a place for children to play outside safely?
- Is the unit in a high crime area?
- What is the general condition of the neighborhood?
- Are you close to medical services? Fire Department?

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- Is there adequate parking for you and your guests?
- Is the area/building well lighted at night?

FAMILIES IN HIGH-POVERTY AREAS

If you live in a high poverty area, you may want to consider searching for a housing unit in another area. There are many possible advantages to your family in doing so much as improved employment and educational opportunities. Your WCHA representative will explain the areas where you are eligible to search for housing.

PORTABILITY

A great feature of the HCV program is that your assistance “moves” with you. You can use your assistance to move not only across town but also to anywhere in the United States within the jurisdiction of a PHA that runs the HCV program. The HUD term for the ability to move outside WCHA’s jurisdiction with rental assistance is *portability*.

WCHA may limit moves under *portability*, so contact your WCHA representative if you wish to move outside Westmoreland County.

FACTS ABOUT PORTABILITY

- The PHA where you want to move may have different rules, policies and deadlines.
- There may different bedroom payment standards.
- The new PHA will probably have different utility allowances that will affect the amount you pay for rent.
- A different size voucher may be issued to you.
- When you are first issued a voucher, you are always subject to the income limits of the PHA where you want to live.

PORTABILITY AND FSS

If you are participating in the family self-sufficiency (FSS) program, make sure that you discuss moving with your case manager. If you cannot fulfill your FSS obligations in the new location, your FSS contract may be terminated and you may lose your escrow balance, if you have one.

TIPS TO FIND SUITABLE HOUSING

Property managers and owners advertise rental properties in different ways. Here are some ideas on where to start:

- Check the classified section of all local newspapers.
- Ask friends and neighbors.

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- Drive through neighborhoods where you may want to live and look for yard signs.
- Check bulletin boards in Laundromats and supermarkets.
- Check with real estate offices or rental agencies. Rental agencies sometimes charge a fee.
- Check your briefing packet for a list of property owners.
- Search on the internet:
 - www.pahousingsearch.com
 - www.gosection8.com

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A UNIT?

For the unit to be approved, it must meet the following requirements:

- The rent for the unit must be reasonable for the type, size and condition of the unit.
- The unit must pass a housing quality standards inspection.
- The owner must be willing to enter a contract with WCHA and following the program rules.

EVALUATING A UNIT

The following questions can help you evaluate a unit:

- What are the costs of utilities? Is the unit energy efficient? Are tenant-paid utilities metered separately?
- Is the unit free from serious drafts?
- Is the building secure? Do all windows lock safely? Do the entrance doors have secure locks?
- Is there evidence that the unit has not been well maintained?
- Is the heating source adequate for the size of the unit?
- Is there enough room for your furniture?
- Does the landlord provide pest control?
- Is the unit clean and ready to move in?
- Are the refrigerator and stove large enough for your family size?
- Are there private, secure, mailboxes?
- Is garbage pick-up available?
- Are there restrictions on pets?
- Is there enough parking and storage?
- Are there enough amenities and facilities for your family?

BE PREPARED WHEN YOU APPLY FOR A RENTAL UNIT

When you make an appointment with a prospective owner or landlord, be prepared to ask and answer questions and to make a positive first impression. The landlord will be trying to evaluate you as a renter. At the same time, you will be evaluating both the landlord and the unit. Go early for your appointment, look around the neighborhood. When calling owners in response to ads, don't prematurely ask, "Do you take HCV? or Do you take Section 8?". Try to get an appointment to see the unit so that the owner has an opportunity to meet you first.

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REFERENCES

Be prepared to provide your rental history information. Try to get references from previous landlords, if possible. If you are currently renting a unit, make sure that it is in good condition, so that your present landlord will provide a good reference. Keep in mind that WCHA is required to furnish your current and prior landlord's names and addresses to your prospective landlord. If you have no rental history, bring references from responsible persons who know you such as employers or persons with whom you have done business.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

If the landlord speaks English and English is not your first language, or you are not comfortable discussing business matters in English, take a translator to the appointment with you. Make sure your translator will make a positive first impression, also. Do not take young children to translate.

SECURITY DEPOSIT

The owner of the unit decides how much the security deposit will be. When you begin searching, make sure that you have money available for the security deposit and deposits for utilities.

HOUSING PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

When searching for a unit, make sure you have the housing program documents with you. Review the information that was provided at your briefing so you can answer questions the owner may have about the HCV program.

LANDLORD/OWNER/AGENT

When you meet the owner/landlord/agent, ask questions.

- How much is the security deposit?
- Does the owner live nearby?
- Who do I call for normal and wear and tear repairs or maintenance?
- Does the owner seem interested in maintaining the condition and appearance of the property?
- Ask about the office hours for management and maintenance problems?
- Have other tenants lived there a long time?
- Does the owner have a "zero tolerance" policy for drugs and violence by tenants?
- Try to find out from the police community relations office how often they have been called to the premises or immediate area.

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OWNER APPROVES THE FAMILY

OWNER'S RIGHT TO INQUIRE: As a voucher holder, you may select from a variety of rental units and neighborhoods. WCHA can assist you in locating a unit by providing an owner referral list; however, you must still be approved by the owner.

Most property owners and managers will ask you to complete an application and will check on your rental history and credit. Owners can deny you a rental unit if you have a previous history of not fulfilling your lease obligations.

SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL

When you find a unit that you want to rent, the owner must complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) form and attach the HUD tenancy addendum to the lease. The lease must be filled out but not signed. These documents must all be submitted to WCHA. The RFTA and tenancy addendum are included in your briefing packet.

When WCHA receives your RFTA, they will review it to determine if the unit is the correct size and proposed rent is approvable.

If the RFTA and proposed lease are in order, WCHA will make an appointment to inspect the unit.

REMEMBER YOU NEED TO TURN IN THE RFTA TO WCHA BEFORE YOUR VOUCHER EXPIRES.

WCHA APPROVES TENANCY AND UNIT

Once the RFTA is received and approved, WCHA will notify both you and the owner of the date and time of the housing quality standards inspection. It is in your best interest to be present at the inspection so that you can see what repairs, if any, are required.

If the unit passes the initial inspection and the rent is reasonable, WCHA will prepare the necessary paperwork and your assistance will begin the day after the unit passes inspection or the date the family plans on moving into the unit. If the unit does not pass the initial inspection, the owner will be given a reasonable time period to correct any items that failed.

Rental assistance cannot begin until the repair items are completed and approved by the WCHA inspector. If there are major repairs to be made, or if the owner seems reluctant to make the repairs, you may want to consider looking for another unit. WCHA will provide you with another RFTA.

It is a good idea to be involved in the process. If you and WCHA work together, the chances are quite good that you will be successful in finding a suitable place to live.

CONTRACT AND LEASE SIGNED

If the lease and unit are satisfactory, WCHA will enter a contract with the owner, and you will sign a lease agreement with the owner.

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HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) TO OWNER'

WCHA will begin making payments to the owner after the unit has been approved and the HAP contract has been signed. WCHA will direct deposit the payment to the owner on or about the first of each month.

WCHA will continue to make payments if:

- The unit continues to meet housing quality standards
- You continue to be eligible for assistance
- You continue to reside in the unit
- The owner follows the HAP contract

TIPS FOR MOVING

BE PREPARED BEFORE YOU MOVE

- Notify important companies and people about your change of address.
 - Your doctors
 - Your banks
 - Your child's schools
 - Your creditors
 - Your insurance companies
 - Your employers
 - Your post office
- List important new telephone numbers.
- Decide what goes with you, what stays, and what to give away. Hold a yard sale.
- Make sure you have enough help on moving day.
- Collect all important papers and keep them with you.
- Find out how much advance notice is needed for utilities and basic services.
- Find out where a branch of your bank is located.
- Check school schedules and enrollment requirements.
- Get any newspaper or magazine subscriptions transferred.
- Call the Department of Motor Vehicles to change your driver's license, owner's registration, etc.
- Find out about voter registration.
- Find out about the new train or bus schedules at your new location.

MOVE-OUT CHECKLIST

When you want to move to another unit, make sure you leave on good terms with the owner. Before moving make sure that the unit is in good condition and that your rent is paid.

- Repair any item that was damaged by you, your family, or visitors.
- Make sure that walls and doors are clean.
- Replace broken or missing curtain rods.

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- Clean the entire unit.
- Remove all your possessions from the unit.
- Have your utilities turned off?
- Return all your keys to the landlord and get a dated receipt for the keys.

SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE HCV PROGRAM

FAMILY OBLIGATIONS TO WCHA

- **Supplying Required Information:** The family must supply any information WCHA or HUD determines necessary for running the program. The family must certify and recertify. Including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status, information about family income and household members, and other necessary information.
- **Social Security Numbers:** The family must disclose and provide proof of social security numbers for everyone in the household, and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- **True and complete information:** Information your family provides must be true and complete.
- **Comply with Housing Quality Standards (HQS):** The family is responsible for meeting certain HQS requirements (see Family Obligations to the Owner).
- **Allowing WCHA to inspect the unit:** The family must allow WCHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.
- **Lease Violations:** The family may not commit any serious repeated lease violations.
- **Family Notice to Move or Lease Termination:** The family must notify WCHA and the owner before your family moves out of the unit or terminates the lease on notice to the owner.
- **Owner Eviction Notice:** The family must promptly give WCHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.
- **Use of Unit as Family's Only Residence:** Your family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family and as the family's only residence.
- **Approval of Family Members:** Family members must be approved by WCHA. The family must promptly inform WCHA of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request WCHA approval to add any other family members as occupants of the unit.
- **Family Members Move Out:** The family must notify WCHA if a family member no longer resides in the unit.
- **Foster Children and Live-in-Aides:** A foster child or live-in-aide may reside in the unit with approval of WCHA.

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- **Profit Making Activities:** Family members may engage in legal profit-making activities in the unit, according to the lease terms, but only if these activities are incidental in the primary use of the unit as your family's residence.
- **Subleasing:** The family may not sublease or sublet the unit.
- **Assigning or Transferring:** The family may not assign the lease or transfer the unit.
- **Absence from the Unit:** The family must supply information or certifications requested by WCHA to verify that your family is living in the unit or relating to family absences. The family must promptly notify WCHA of absence from the unit.
- **Interest or Ownership:** The family may not own or have any interest in the unit.
- **Fraud and Other Program Violations:** Members of your family must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program.
- **Crime by Family Members:** Members of your family may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.
- **Other Housing Assistance:** The family may not receive HCV assistance while receiving another housing subsidy for the same unit.
- **Alcohol or Substance Abuse:** The family may not engage in illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol that threatens the health and safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

FAMILY OBLIGATIONS TO THE OWNER

- **Lease:** Read the lease carefully. If you are not sure of a lease requirement, ask the owner.
- **Rent:** Pay the rent on time
- **Unit:** Take care of the housing unit
- **Maintenance:** The owner is required to make repairs and provide routine maintenance. However, if the housing unit fails to meet HQS because of the following items, it the family's responsibility:
 - The family is required to provide any utilities (such as electricity, gas, or water) that are not furnished by the owner. If this happens, the family will be given a brief period to get the utilities in service. The family will also need to make sure that the utilities remain in service.
 - The family is responsible for providing and maintaining any appliance that the owner does not furnish, such as a stove or refrigerator.

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- The family is responsible for damages to the unit or premises (beyond normal wear and tear) that are caused by any family member or guest.
- If the unit does not meet HQS for these reasons, and the deficiencies are not corrected within the time period set by WCHA, WCHA will discontinue assistance payments to the owner. Your participation in HCV program may be terminated.

RENT PAYMENTS TO LANDLORD

When the family signs a lease with the owner, you are required to pay your share of the rent on the first of each month according to your lease. If you fail to pay your rent, the owner can evict you. Serious and repeated violations of the lease may result in the termination of the HCV. Remember the lease that you sign is a legal contract, and both parties must comply with their obligations.

Payment Changes: If your income changes (increases or decreases) contact your WCHA representative within 10 days and provide verifications. The change in your income may result in an increase or decrease in the WCHA HAP payment to the owner and what family must contribute. Both the family and the owner will be given a written notice before any change becomes effective.

Sanctioned Welfare Payments: If the Welfare Agency sanctions benefits for noncompliance with self-sufficiency program requirements, WCHA is required to include the amount of sanctioned welfare income in the family's annual income. WCHA must verify the amount, term, and reason for the sanction with the welfare agency.

Side Payments: It is illegal for the family to make additional payments to the owner to cover a rent amount that is higher than WCHA's rent limit, and it is illegal for the owner to charge such side payments. All separate agreements between the owner and family must be approved by WCHA.

ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

HUD requires that families be recertified at least once a year. Your family will receive a recertification packet approximately 90-120 days before your lease renewal date. Return recertification paperwork within 30 days so there will be no interruption in the HAP payment to the owner.

HUD requires WCHA to inspect your housing unit at least once every other year (biennially), although WCHA may require once a year (annually) inspections. The family and owner will be notified by mails of the date of the HQS inspection. It is the family's responsibility to make sure that an adult is there to allow the inspector access to your unit. Your cooperation ensures that there will not be any interruption in your HAP payment to the owner.

Be sure to:

- Be on time for your recertification appointment
- Return recertification paperwork on time
- Prepare for the HQS inspection
- Make sure someone is at home for the inspection

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REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN ANNUAL RECERTIFICATIONS

- When a family member moves out of your unit, you must report it to WCHA immediately.
- If the family is considering having someone move into the unit, you must first notify WCHA, because all family members must be approved by WCHA. Every adult must pass the criminal background check and provide a social security card, birth certificate and income/asset verifications. The owner must also approve adding this person(s) to the household.
- Changes in household income or composition must be reported to WCHA within 10 days.

Zero Assistance

The HAP payment to owner will be reduced to \$0 when there is an increase in family income that causes the family's share to equal or exceed the total rent. When this happens the HAP contract with the owner will remain in effect for 180 calendar days, starting from the day WCHA paid the last HAP payment to the owner.

During this 180 day period your family is still considered to be on the HCV program even though no HAP payment is being made to the owner. If the family has a reduction in income, WCHA will calculate an interim rent adjustment based on current household income and resume HAP payments to the owner.

Program Integrity

HUD determines how much money is available for HCV rental assistance to each community. For this reason, WCHA needs to make sure that the funds are used to assist only those families who are eligible. WCHA has a waiting list that there is not enough money to assist all the families who apply.

WCHA assumes that the information provided by families is complete and accurate, but occasionally they find that it is not complete and accurate.

Making false statements and providing false information are serious violations of program rules as well as violations of state and federal criminal laws.

Be aware that families that provide false information or documents:

- Are subject to denial or termination of assistance
- Are required to repay any amounts that were paid by WCHA
- May be subject to criminal penalties under state or federal law if it is determined that the family's actions are intentional

If you are not sure about the rules or procedures, contact your WCHA representative to get the correct information. No one should be evicted or lose their assistance unnecessarily. If you are aware of someone who is violating program rules, please contact a WCHA representative.

When everyone plays by the rules, WCHA can help more families. Do it right!

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Most Common Program Violations

- Unauthorized Household Members
- Under-Reporting Income
- Subleasing the Unit
- Not Reporting changes in income and household members.

Hearings

It is important to WCHA that families are provided all rights and protection under the law and HUD regulations. Seek an explanation from a WCHA representative before you request a hearing. It may be a matter of misunderstanding that can be resolved easily.

You may request a hearing to consider whether the following WCHA decisions or determinations regarding your family are in line with the law, HUD regulations and WCHA's policies:

- Determination of your family's annual or adjusted income used to compute the HAP payment
- Determination of the appropriate utility allowance from WCHA's utility allowance schedule
- Determination of your family unit size under WCHA's subsidy standards and whether an exception will be granted
- Decision to terminate housing assistance because of your family's action or failure to act, including absence from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted.

If you do request a hearing, one will be scheduled promptly, and your family will be notified in writing of the date, time, and location of the hearing. You may bring legal counsel, witnesses, and evidence to the hearing.

Upon request, you may also obtain copies of any documents or evidence upon which WCHA's action or inaction is based. If you request it, this will happen before the hearing but at your family's expense. Your family will also be required to provide to WCHA before the hearing copies of any documents or evidence you plan to use at the hearing.

Denial or Termination of Assistance

Your family's housing assistance may be denied or terminated if:

- You violate a family obligation under the HCV program
- Any member of your family has ever been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years
- A PHA has even terminated assistance under the HCV program for any member of your family
- Any member of your family commits fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt act in connection with any federal housing program

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- Any member of your family commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity
- Any family member is illegally using a controlled substance
- Any family member's abuse of alcohol interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Your family currently owes rent or other amounts to WCHA or to another PHA in connection with HCV or any housing assistance program under the 1937 Housing Act
- Your family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease
- Your family breaches a repayment agreement with any PHA for amounts owed to them or amounts paid to an owner
- You fail to comply, without good cause, with your family's FSS program contract of participation (if applicable)
- Your family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward WCHA personnel
- You fail to fulfill your obligations under the welfare-to-work voucher program (if applicable)

Mandatory Permanent Ineligibility & Termination

WCHA must permanently deny eligibility or terminate the assistance to any person convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

WCHA must permanently deny eligibility to a person who is subject to lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

Withdrawals

Families who have been certified eligible to participate in the HCV program decline initial program participation or choose to withdraw from the program after receiving assistance for a while (i.e. just got called back to work after a long layoff, or are planning to get married and will now have a little more income, or better yet, have just won the state lottery).

Before withdrawing from the HCV program discuss your plans with your WCHA representative because it can take many years to reapply and have your name selected from the waiting list. Depending on your income, your family may still be eligible from some rental assistance.

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Successful Families

- Provide complete and accurate information
- Cooperate with WCHA
- Supply the documents needed
- Avoid owing money and losing rental assistance
- Find a suitable unit
- Comply with the lease
- Avoid getting evicted
- Take care of the unit
- Comply with the family obligations to WCHA

FAIR HOUSING LAWS

Federal laws and regulations have been put into place so that you and everyone else have equal access to housing regardless of your age, religion, gender, disability, color, race, national origin, family status, sexual orientation, gender identify, or marital status. If you feel like you have been discriminated against for any of these reasons, you should be aware of your rights under the law.

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination against certain protected classes and other groups of people. State and local requirements, as well as PHA policies, can prohibit discrimination based on other factors.

The PHA shall not discriminate because of race, color, sex, religion, familial status, age, disability or national origin (called “protected classes”)

Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18.

The PHA will not discriminate based on marital status, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

- Deny to any family the opportunity to apply for housing, nor deny to any qualified applicant the opportunity to participate in the housing choice voucher program
- Provide housing that is different from that provided to others
- Subject anyone to segregation or disparate treatment
- Subject anyone to sexual harassment
- Restrict anyone's access to any benefit enjoyed by others in connection with the housing program
- Treat a person differently in determining eligibility or other requirements for admission
- Steer an applicant or participant toward or away from an area based any of these factors
- Deny anyone access to the same level of services
- Deny anyone the opportunity to participate in a planning or advisory group that is an integral part of the housing program
- Discriminate in the provision of residential real estate transactions
- Discriminate against someone because they are related to or associated with a member of a protected class
- Publish or cause to be published an advertisement or notice indicating the availability of housing that

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prefers or excludes persons who are members of a protected class

Low-income families rely on owners who are willing to participate in the program. There is a shortage of decent and affordable housing. The HCV program subsidy helps families to rent in many different neighborhoods. Participant families include elderly persons, persons with disabilities and working families who do not earn enough to keep pace with the rising rental costs.

Requests for Accommodation

Fair housing laws also protect people with disabilities. If you are a person with disabilities or part of a family that includes persons with disabilities, and you need a change in the rules or services, or a modification to your unit, you can request a reasonable accommodation. A reasonable accommodation is a change, modification, alteration, or adaption in a policy, procedure, practice, program, or facility that provides a person with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from a housing or non-housing program, service, or activity.

If WCHA decides your request is reasonable and will remove the barrier to your housing due to your disability, then WCHA should be able to make those changes for you. Keep in mind that WCHA will make all reasonable efforts to be flexible in assisting you and your family to participate in the program successfully. Requests for accommodation will be verified to ensure that the accommodation is reasonable.

Examples of reasonable accommodation are:

- Home visits if your disability prevents you from coming to the WCHA offices
- Allowing a higher subsidy to cover costs associated with renting a unit in the community that meets disability-related needs
- An accessible format for WCHA correspondence, such as audio recordings for the visually impaired or TTY for the hearing impaired
- The use of an advocate or interpreter
- A current listing of accessible units known to WCHA that may be available

Limited English Proficiency

WCHA does not just offer communication help for people with disabilities, they also can provide services for people who may have trouble reading, writing, or speaking English. If you need assistance with language contact a WCHA representative and let them know what language you need services in. If you need translation or interpretive services for an interview, or any of the paperwork they give you, they should be able to help at no cost to you.

Victims of Domestic Violence

If you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, federal law also keeps WCHA from denying assistance to you simply because you are a victim if you are otherwise qualified. The Violence Against Women and the Department of Justice Reauthorized Act of 2005 (VAWA) makes it illegal for WCHA and HCV owners from considering actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking as a cause for terminating the tenancy, occupancy, or program assistance of a victim, regardless of age or gender. WCHA and landlords may ask for certification documentation of victim status but must keep information relating to a family's domestic violence circumstances confidential under the law.

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How to File a Discrimination Complaint?

If you feel you have been denied your housing rights due to unlawful discrimination, you can file a housing discrimination complaint to help resolve the issue. There are a few ways to do so.

- File a complaint through HUD. HUD offers several options for filing a fair housing complaint:
 - Complete the housing discrimination complaint form in your briefing packet and return it to the appropriate HUD office listed on that complaint form.
 - Go to HUD website at www.hud.gov and click on the fair housing links.
 - Over the phone (toll-free number on the form)
 - Over the internet using an electronic form
 - Contact a state or local agency specializing in fair housing issues in your community for help in filing a fair housing complaint. Legal aid and disability rights groups often help qualified individuals file fair housing complaints through the local court system.

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RECORD OF SEARCH FOR HOUSING

Instructions: This form will help you to keep a record of your housing search.

Enter the information requested on every unit you look at.

Date	Unit Address	Amount of Rent	Amount of Security Deposit	Owner's Name & Telephone Number	What Happened?

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FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE REPORTING FORM

Instructions: HUD and WCHA are seriously concerned about fraud and abuse in the housing assistance programs. Please complete this form if you become aware of any violation of the program rules by any person. You may furnish your name, but you are not required to.

I would like to bring the following information to the attention of WCHA:

How long has this situation been going on? _____

Is there anyone other than you who can verify this information? ___ Yes ___ No

If Yes, who? _____

What other facts would help us verify this information?

Name (optional) _____

Telephone number _____ Date _____

Email _____

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REQUEST FOR ADDITION TO HOUSEHOLD

Instructions: It is a family obligation that WCHA and the owner must approve additional members of the household before they can move into the unit. Please complete this form and submit it to your WCHA representative before permitting anyone to move into your housing unit.

Date: _____

Head of Household _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

I would like to request approval for the following person to move into my household:

Name of person _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ How long at this address? _____

Email _____

Relation _____

Source and amount of income received by this person:

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NOTICE OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW

This is to inform you that I wish to withdraw from the HCV program

Head of Household _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Reason for Withdraw from the HCV Program:

Signature _____ Date _____

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REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

A reasonable accommodation is a change, modification, alteration, or adaption in a policy, procedure, practice, program, or facility that provides a person with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from a housing or non-housing program, service, or activity.

If WCHA decides your request is reasonable and will remove the barrier to your housing due to your disability, then WCHA should be able to make those changes for you. Keep in mind that WCHA will make all reasonable efforts to be flexible in assisting you and your family to participate in the program successfully. Requests for accommodation will be verified to ensure that the accommodation is reasonable.

Examples of reasonable accommodation are:

- Home visits if your disability prevents you from coming to the WCHA offices
- Allowing a higher subsidy to cover costs associated with renting a unit in the community that meets disability-related needs
- An accessible format for WCHA correspondence, such as audio recordings for the visually impaired or TTY for the hearing impaired
- The use of an advocate or interpreter
- A current listing of accessible units known to WCHA that may be available

No.	Owner/Landlord	City	Phone Number
1	Eastmont Estates (individuals or families)	Greensburg, PA	724-838-0818
2	White Valley Apartments (Individuals or families)	Delmont, PA	724-271-0510
3	Harrison City Commons (Individuals or families)	Harrison City, PA	724-744-4626
4	Huntingdon Village Apartments (individuals or families)	Hunker, PA	724-696-4015
5	Westmoreland Hills (individuals or families)	Scottsdale, PA	724-887-0200 or TD#81
6	Duff Manor (62 or older)	Export, PA	724-838-0818
7	Troutman Building (62 or older)	Greensburg, PA	724-838-0818
8	Monessen House (62 or older)	Monessen, PA	724-838-0818
9	Shaner Housing, Marley Court (families)	Irwin, PA	724-863-9859
10	Walker's Ridge (families)	Greensburg, PA	724-216-5726
11	Ridge Ave Sr. Housing (62 or older)	New Kensington, PA	724-337-4080
12	Faith Manor Apts. (62 or older, disabled)	Avonmore, PA	724-697-5323
13			
14			
15			

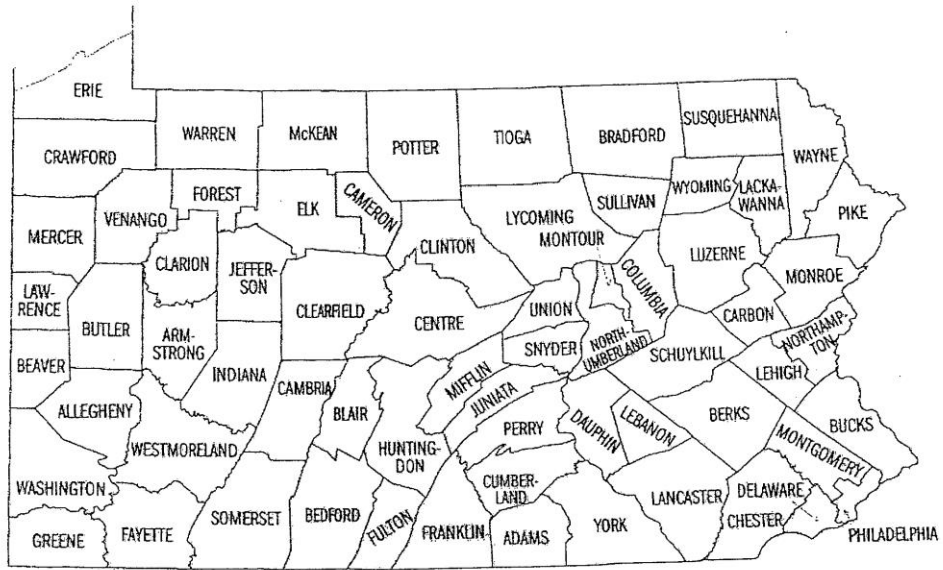
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VOUCHER PORTABILITY OPTION – LIST OF HOUSING AUTHORITIES

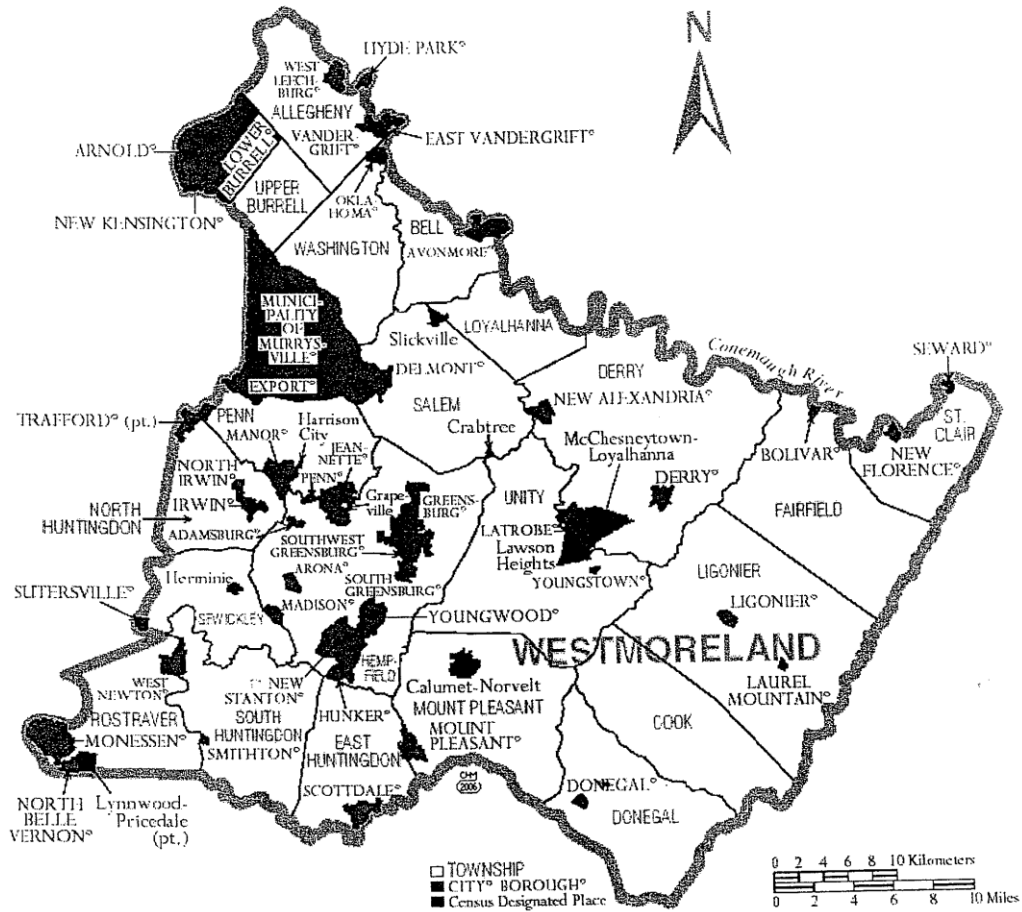
If you locate housing in another county or state, before WCHA can process your portability move, you must give us the name of the housing authority in that area, address, phone number, fax number and email address. Listed below is the name and address of local housing authorities.

Allegheny County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 625 Stanwix Street 12 th Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412-402-2434 Fax 724-560-4527	Lawrence County Housing Authority Section Department 481 Neshannock Avenue P O Box 988 New Castle, PA 16103 724-656-5106
Altoona Housing Authority Section 8 Department 2700 Pleasant Valley Blvd. Altoona, PA 16602 814-949-2008	McKeesport Housing Authority Section 8 Department 2901 Brownlee Street McKeesport, PA 15132 412-673-6942 Fax 412-673-1706
Housing Authority of the County of Armstrong Section 8 Department 350 South Jefferson St. Kittanning, PA 16201 724-548-7671 1-800-762-8291 Fax 724-545-6406	City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority Section Department 200 Ross Street 7 th Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15219 412-456-5142 or 412-456-5090 Fax 412-456-5224
Beaver County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 300 State St. Beaver, PA 15009 724-775-1220 Fax 724-630-2034	Somerset County Housing Authority Section 8 Department P O Box 38, 600 Kircher Place Boswell, PA 15531 814-629-7148
Housing Authority City of Butler Section 8 Department 114 Woody Drive Butler, PA 16001 724-287-6797 Fax 724-287-7906	Washington County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 105 South Franklin Street, Crumrine Tower Washington, PA 15301 724-228-6068 Fax 724-228-6089
Fayette County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 624 Pittsburgh Road Uniontown, PA 15401-1007 724-434-6797 Fax 724-434-2131	Clearfield County Housing Authority Section 8 Department Paul G Pecharko Complex 203 South Third Street Clearfield, PA 16830 1-814-765-2485
Green County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 170 E Greene Street Waynesburg, PA 15370 724-672-6523	Clarion County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 8 West Main Street Clarion, PA 16214 1-814-226-8910
Indiana County Housing Authority Section 8 Department 104 Philadelphia Street Indiana, PA 15701 724-463-4730 Fax 724-463-4743	
Johnstown Housing Authority Section 8 Department P O Box 419 Johnstown, PA 15907 814-534-7771 Fax 1-814-432-5576	

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The information in EIV is also used by HUD, HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG), and auditors to ensure that your family and PHAs comply with HUD rules.

Overall, the purpose of EIV is to identify and prevent fraud within HUD rental assistance programs, so that limited taxpayer's dollars can assist as many eligible families as possible. EIV will help to improve the integrity of HUD rental assistance programs.

Is my consent required in order for information to be obtained about me?

Yes, your consent is required in order for HUD or the PHA to obtain information about you. By law, you are required to sign one or more consent forms. When you sign a form HUD-9886 (*Federal Privacy Act Notice and Authorization for Release of Information*) or a PHA consent form (which meets HUD standards), you are giving HUD and the PHA your consent for them to obtain information about you for the purpose of determining your eligibility and amount of rental assistance. The information collected about you will be used only to determine your eligibility for the program, unless you consent in writing to authorize additional uses of the information by the PHA.

Note: *If you or any of your adult household members refuse to sign a consent form, your request for initial or continued rental assistance may be denied. You may also be terminated from the HUD rental assistance program.*

What are my responsibilities?
As a tenant (participant) of a HUD rental assistance program, you and each adult household member must disclose complete and accurate information to the PHA, including full name, SSN, and DOB; income information; and certify that your reported household composition (household members), income, and expense information, is true to the best of your knowledge.

HHS provides HUD with wage and employment information as reported by employers; and unemployment compensation information as reported by the State Workforce Agency (SWA).

SSA provides HUD with death, Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) information.

What is the EIV information used for?

Primarily, the information is used by PHAs (and management agents hired by PHAs) for the following purposes to:

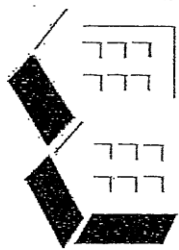
1. Confirm your name, date of birth (DOB), and Social Security Number (SSN) with SSA.
2. Verify your reported income sources and amounts.
3. Confirm your participation in only one HUD rental assistance program.
4. Confirm if you owe an outstanding debt to any PHA.
5. Confirm any negative status if you moved out of a subsidized unit (in the past) under the Public Housing or Section 8 program.
6. Follow up with you, other adult household members, or your listed emergency contact regarding deceased household members.

EIV will alert your PHA if you or anyone in your household has used a false SSN, failed to report complete and accurate income information, or is receiving rental assistance at another address. **Remember, you may receive rental assistance at only one home!**

EIV will also alert PHAs if you owe an outstanding debt to any PHA (in any state or U.S. territory) and any negative status when you voluntarily or involuntarily moved out of a subsidized unit under the Public Housing or Section 8 program. This information is used to determine your eligibility for rental assistance at the time of application.



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH)



RENTAL HOUSING INTEGRITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

What You Should Know About EIV

A Guide for Applicants & Tenants of Public Housing & Section 8 Programs

What is EIV?

The Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system is a web-based computer system that contains employment and income information of individuals who participate in HUD rental assistance programs. All Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) are required to use HUD's EIV system.

What information is in EIV and where does it come from?

HUD obtains information about you from your local PHA, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

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Remember, you must notify your PHA if a household member dies or moves out. You must also obtain the PHA's approval to allow additional family members or friends to move in your home prior to them moving in.

What are the penalties for providing false information?

Knowingly providing false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is **FRAUD** and a **CRIME**.

If you commit fraud, you and your family may be subject to any of the following penalties:

1. Eviction
2. Termination of assistance
3. Repayment of rent that you should have paid had you reported your income correctly
4. Prohibited from receiving future rental assistance for a period of up to 10 years
5. Prosecution by the local, state, or Federal prosecutor, which may result in you being fined up to \$10,000 and/or serving time in jail.

Protect yourself by following HUD reporting requirements. When completing applications and reexaminations, you must include all sources of income you or any member of your household receives.

If you have any questions on whether money received should be counted as income or how your rent is determined, ask your PHA. When changes occur in your household income, contact your PHA immediately to determine if this will affect your rental assistance.

What do I do if the EIV information is incorrect?

Sometimes the source of EIV information may make an error when submitting or reporting information about you. If you do not agree with the EIV information, let your PHA know.

If necessary, your PHA will contact the source of the information directly to verify disputed income information. Below are the procedures you and the PHA should follow regarding incorrect EIV information.

Debts owed to PHAs and termination information reported in EIV originates from the PHA who provided you assistance in the past. If you dispute this information, contact your former PHA directly in writing to dispute this information and provide any documentation that supports your dispute. If the PHA determines that the disputed information is incorrect, the PHA will update or delete the record from EIV.

Employment and wage information reported in EIV originates from the employer. If you dispute this information, contact the employer in writing to dispute and request correction of the disputed employment and/or wage information. Provide your PHA with a copy of the letter that you sent to the employer. If you are unable to get the employer to correct the information, you should contact the SWA for assistance.

Unemployment benefit information reported in EIV originates from the SWA. If you dispute this information, contact the SWA in writing to dispute and request correction of the disputed unemployment benefit information. Provide your PHA with a copy of the letter that you sent to the SWA.

Death, SS and SSI benefit information reported in EIV originates from the SSA. If you dispute this information, contact the SSA at (800) 772-1213, or visit their website at: www.socialsecurity.gov. You may need to visit your local SSA office to have disputed death information corrected.

Additional Verification. The PHA, with your consent, may submit a third party verification form to the provider (or reporter) of your income for completion and submission to the PHA.

You may also provide the PHA with third party documents (i.e. pay stubs, benefit award letters, bank statements, etc.) which you may have in your possession.

Identify Theft. Unknown EIV information to you can be a sign of identity theft. Sometimes someone else may use your SSN, either on purpose or by accident. So, if you suspect someone is using your SSN, you should check your Social Security records to ensure your income is calculated correctly (call SSA at (800) 772-1213); file an identity theft complaint with your local police department or the Federal Trade Commission (call FTC at (877) 438-4338, or you may visit their website at: <http://www.ftc.gov>). Provide your PHA with a copy of your identity theft complaint.

Where can I obtain more information on EIV and the income verification process?

Your PHA can provide you with additional information on EIV and the income verification process. You may also read more about EIV and the income verification process on HUD's Public and Indian Housing EIV web pages at: <http://www.hud.gov/choices/ahp/programspthpivwv.cfm>.

The information in this Guide pertains to applicants and participants (tenants) of the following HUD-PH rental assistance programs:

1. Public Housing (24 CFR 960); and
2. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), (24 CFR 982); and
3. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation (24 CFR 882); and
4. Project-Based Voucher (24 CFR 983)

February 2010

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IMPORTANT NOTICE NEW PA LAW REQUIRES CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS



The Pennsylvania Carbon Monoxide Alarm Standards Act of 2013 was signed into law on 12/18/2013.

The law pertains to all Pennsylvania residential properties (single-family and multi-family, whether owner-occupied or rentals) having fossil fuel-burning heaters, appliances, fireplaces, and/or attached garages. Fossil fuels include natural gas, coal, kerosene, gasoline, fuel oil, methanol, ethanol, other alcohols, wood, propane, methane, butane, other fuel gases, and any other petroleum or hydrocarbon products which can emit carbon monoxide as a by-product of combustion.

For rental properties, the law imposes specific responsibilities on **both the property owners and on their tenants.**

Rental Property Requirements

1. Each apartment or residential unit must have an operational and approved carbon monoxide detector/alarm **centrally located, in the vicinity of the bedrooms, and near any fossil fuel-burning heaters, appliances, or fire places,** within 18 months of the effective date of the new law. More than one such device may be required in each rental unit to satisfy all these requirements.
2. Each device must comply with, and be installed in accordance with the Approved American National Standard for Single and Multiple Station Carbon Monoxide Alarms (ANSI / UL 2034), or with the Approved American National Standard for Gas and Vapor Detectors and Sensors (ANSI / UL 2075). Alternatively, a device which is a combined carbon monoxide and smoke detector must meet either of these same standards and ANSI / UL 217 for single and multiple stations smoke alarms or ANSI / UL 268 for smoke detectors.
3. At the sale of a residential building, the seller must disclose information regarding the installation of carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in the property.

Rental Property Owner Responsibilities

1. Provide and install the approved carbon monoxide detectors/alarms as required and in locations specified by the law.
2. Replace any carbon monoxide detectors/alarms that were stolen, removed, found missing, or rendered inoperable during a prior occupancy of the rental unit, which were not replaced by the prior occupant before commencement of a new occupancy.
3. Ensure that the batteries in each approved carbon monoxide detector/ alarm are in operable condition, and that the devices are functional and operating when a new occupant takes residence in the rental unit.
4. Maintenance responsibility for carbon monoxide detectors/alarms is the property owner's responsibility during any period of vacancy.

Tenant Responsibilities

1. Keep and maintain each carbon monoxide detector/alarm in good repair during the tenant's occupancy.
2. Test the device and replace batteries as needed.
3. Replace any carbon monoxide detectors/alarms that are stolen, removed, missing, or rendered inoperable during their occupancy of the rental unit.
4. Notify the rental property owner or their authorized agent in writing of any deficiencies pertaining to the approved carbon monoxide detectors/alarms.

Municipal Regulations. Local municipalities may adopt their own requirements regarding the installation and placement of carbon monoxide detectors/alarms that are more stringent than the requirements of this state law. The City of Philadelphia and some other municipalities have already done so. Be sure to comply with your own local regulations.

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

16-IX.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those laws apply in conjunction with VAWA.

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 primarily in the following sections: 3-I.C, “Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family”; 3-III.G, “Prohibition against Denial of Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking”; 10-I.A, “Allowable Moves”; 10-I.B, “Restrictions on Moves”; 12-II.E, “Terminations Related to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking”; and 12-II.F, “Termination Notice.”

16-IX.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, 42 USC 13925]

As used in VAWA:

- 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 of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

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- 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 individual stands in the position or place of a parent; or
 - Any other individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- 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 his or her safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

16-IX.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 HCV program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

PHA Policy

The PHA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its Web site. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it.

A copy of the notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to housing choice voucher 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 the PHA'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 Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers

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

PHAs are required to inform program applicants and participants 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.

PHA Policy

The PHA will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance, as part of the written briefing packet, and at the time the family is admitted to the program. The PHA will also include information about VAWA in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.G).

The PHA will provide all participants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 5-I.B) and at annual reexamination. The PHA will also include information about VAWA in notices of termination of assistance, as provided in section 12-II.F.

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notice in Exhibit 16-1 and a copy of form HUD-50066, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking.

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 participant 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.

PHA Policy

Whenever the PHA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a participant 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, the PHA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if the PHA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim.

When discussing VAWA with the victim, the PHA 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.

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Notification to Owners and Managers [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(2)]

PHAs are required to notify owners and managers participating in the HCV program of their rights and obligations under VAWA.

PHA Policy

The PHA will provide owners and managers with information about their rights and obligations under VAWA when they begin their participation in the program and at least annually thereafter.

The VAWA information provided to owners will consist of the notice in Exhibit 16-5 and a copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking and Alternate Documentation.

16-IX.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, 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 or stalking, 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 [VAWA final rule].

PHA Policy

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will be in writing, 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

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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.

The PHA may, in its discretion, extend the deadline for 10 business days. In determining whether to extend the deadline, the PHA will consider factors that may contribute to the victim's inability to provide documentation in a timely manner, including cognitive limitations, disabilities, limited English proficiency, absence from the unit, administrative delays, the danger of further violence, and the victim's need to address health or safety issues. Any extension granted by the PHA will be in writing.

Once the victim provides documentation, the PHA 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. 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 hearing for the tenants [Notice PIH 2017-08].

The PHA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property.

PHA Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents (two or more forms HUD-50066) from members of the same household, the PHA 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, the PHA 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 the PHA does not receive third-party documentation within the required timeframe (and any extensions) the PHA 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, the PHA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

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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.

PHA Policy

If the PHA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence (as determined by the victim) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, the PHA 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-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]

All information provided to the PHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, 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.

PHA Policy

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

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Westmoreland County Housing Authority

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence against Women Act¹* (Exhibit 16-1 HUD-5380)

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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Public Housing or Section 8 New Construction, 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.

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

²Housing 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.

Protections for Tenants

If you are receiving assistance under Public Housing or Section 8 New Construction, 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 Public Housing or Section 8 New Construction 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, child, or a person to whom you are a surrogate 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

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Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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, Westmoreland County Housing Authority must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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

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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.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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

Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority must be in writing, and Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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. Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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.

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- Any other statement or evidence that Westmoreland County Housing Authority has agreed to accept.

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

If Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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), Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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, Westmoreland County Housing Authority does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of Westmoreland County Housing Authority (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.

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

- You give written permission to Westmoreland County Housing Authority to release the information on a time limited basis.
- Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit Westmoreland County Housing Authority'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.

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However, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority can demonstrate the above, Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority Deputy Executive Director at 1-800-WCHA-NOW (1-800-924-2669).

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at [FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf].

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

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact:

- **Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence 1-888-832-2272**
- **Alle-Kiski Hope Center 1-888-299-4673**

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 Victims of Crime, 1-855-4-VICTIM.

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>.

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For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact 911 OR the National Sexual Assault Hotline, 1-800-656-4673.

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact also contact 911 OR Victims' of Crime Stalking Resource Center, 1-855-4-VICTIM.

Although the Westmoreland County Housing Authority does not provide direct services, please find the following list of references to other resources covering a wide variety of needs. The resources listed are not comprehensive, but rather a place for you to start.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Certification Form HUD-5382 TO BE INCLUDED.
- WCHA's Resource List TO BE INCLUDED

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Blackburn Center

Domestic Violence Help

[Greensburg, PA](#)

Emergency Shelter

(Services Westmoreland County)

Hotline: 1-888-832-2272

Hours: 24/7

Business: 724-837-9540

Hours: M-Th 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

TTY/TTD: 724-837-9540

Fax: 724-837-3676

Website: www.blackburncenter.org

Languages: English

Established: 1975

Beds: 13

Maximum Length of Stay (days): 30

Wheelchair Accessible: Yes

Pet Shelter: No

Description:

Blackburn Center advocates for the rights of all individuals to live free from domestic and sexual violence and other forms of violence by eliminating root causes and providing for the well-being and safety of survivors/victims.

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Alle-Kiski Area HOPE Center
Domestic Violence Help
Tarentum, PA
(Services Westmoreland County)

Hotline: 1-888-299-4673

Hours: 24/7

Business: 724-224-1100

Hours: M - F 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

TTY/TTD: --

Fax: 724-224-1123

Website: www.akhopecenter.org

Language: English

Established: Jan. 1, 1979

Beds: --

Maximum Length of Stay (days): --

Wheelchair Accessible: Yes

Pet Shelter: Yes

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**Women's Center & Shelter
of Greater Pittsburgh
Domestic Violence Help
Pittsburgh, PA
(Services Allegheny County)**

Hotline: 412-687-8005

Hours: 24/7

Toll Free: 877-338-7255

Business: 412-687-8017

Hours: 24/7

TTY/TTD: --

Fax: 412-687-3315

Website: www.wcscanhelp.org

Languages Spoken: English, Spanish

Established: --

Beds: 36

Maximum Length of Stay (days): 45

Wheelchair Accessible: Yes

Pet Shelter: --

Refer to foster care: Yes

Description:

Program reports that it provides residential facility for people to live temporarily. Call for maximum length of stay. Emergency Shelter.

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**Center for Victims
Domestic Violence Help
[Pittsburgh, PA](#)
(Services Allegheny County)**

Hotline: 1-866-644-2882

Hours: 24/7

Business: 412-482-3240

Hours: M - F 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Collect Calls Accepted

Fax: 412-482-3241

Website: www.centerforvictims.org

Language Spoken: English

Wheelchair Accessible: Yes

Pet Shelter: No

Description:

Program reports that it provides residential facility for people to live temporarily.
Call for maximum length of stay. Emergency Shelter.

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Women Against Abusive Relations (WAAR)
Domestic Violence Help
[Pittsburgh, PA](#)
(Services Allegheny County)

Business: 412-818-3225

Hours: M - F 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Fax: 412-871-3989

Website: www.waarheals.org

Languages Spoken: English

Established: Jan. 1, 2001

Beds: 0

Maximum Length of Stay (days): --

Wheelchair Accessible: Yes

Pet Shelter: No

Description: --

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Alice Paul House (Serves Indiana County & statewide)

Hotline: 724-349-4444

Hours: 24/7

Business: 724-349-5744

Hours: M - F 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Toll Free: 1-800-435-7249

Fax: 724-349-7883

Website: www.alicepaulhouse.org

Languages Spoken: English

Beds: 12

Maximum Length of Stay (days): 30

Wheelchair Accessible: Yes

Pet Shelter: Yes

Description:

Program reports that it provides residential facility for people to live temporarily. Emergency Services, Legal and Financial Aid Assistance, Counseling Services, Housing Services, Support Services, Children Services, Community Educational Services. Populations Served: Women, Adult Male victim of domestic violence, Elderly, Teens, Individuals and Families. Deaf, Developmentally Disabled, Disabled, Immigrant, Military, Rural, Trafficked persons, Prostituted persons, LGBTQ, Trans women/men.

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Westmoreland County Housing Authority

Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence,

Sexual Assault or Stalking (Exhibit 16-2)

Purpose of Form: The Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) protects applicants, tenants, and program participants in certain HUD programs from being evicted, denied housing assistance, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against them. Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Use of This Optional Form: If you are seeking VAWA protections from your housing provider, your housing provider may give you a written request that asks you to submit documentation about the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In response to this request, you or someone on your behalf may complete this optional form and submit it to your housing provider, or you may submit one of the following types of third-party documentation:

(1) A document signed by you and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional, or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you have sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse.

The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of “domestic violence,” “dating violence,” “sexual assault,” or “stalking” in HUD’s regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003.

(2) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or

(3) At the discretion of the housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

Submission of Documentation: The time period to submit documentation is 14 business days from the date that you receive a written request from your housing provider asking that you provide documentation of the occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Your housing provider may, but is not required to, extend the time period to submit the documentation if you request an extension of the time period. If the requested information is not received within 14 business days of when you received the request for the documentation, or any extension of the date provided by your housing provider, your housing provider does not need to grant you any of the VAWA protections. *Distribution or issuance of this form does not serve as a written request for certification.*

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be kept confidential and such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have

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access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections to you, and such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

MUST BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING

1. Date the written request is received by victim: _____

2. Name of victim: _____

3. Your name (if different from victim's): _____

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____

5. Residence of victim: _____

6. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): _____

7. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____

8. Date(s) and times(s) of incident(s) (if known): _____

10. Location of incident(s): _____

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In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s):

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection, and that the individual named above in Item 2 is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____ Signed on (Date) _____

Public Reporting Burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response. This includes the time for collecting, reviewing, and reporting the data. The information provided is to be used by the housing provider to request certification that the applicant or tenant is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The information is subject to the confidentiality requirements of VAWA. This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

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Westmoreland County Housing Authority

Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of (Exhibit 16-3)

Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

Housing Choice Voucher Program (HUD-5382 Certification Form)

Emergency Transfers

Westmoreland County Housing Authority is concerned about the safety of its tenants, and such concern extends to tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),¹ Westmoreland County Housing Authority allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the tenant's current unit to another unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The ability of Westmoreland County Housing Authority to honor such request for tenants currently receiving assistance, however, may depend upon a preliminary determination that the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and on whether Westmoreland County Housing Authority has another dwelling unit that is available and is safe to offer the tenant for temporary or more permanent occupancy.

This plan identifies tenants 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 tenants 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 Westmoreland County Housing Authority complies with VAWA.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A tenant 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 tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains within the same unit.
- If the tenant is a victim of sexual assault, the tenant 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 tenant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan.

Tenants 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

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.

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To request an emergency transfer, the tenant shall notify Westmoreland County Housing Authority's management office and submit a written request for a transfer to **Westmoreland County Housing Authority, Attention: Deputy Executive Director, 167 South Greengate Road, Greensburg, PA 15601.**

Westmoreland County Housing Authority will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. The tenant's written request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant were to remain in the same dwelling unit assisted under Westmoreland County Housing Authority's program, OR
2. A statement that the tenant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the tenant's request for an emergency transfer.

Confidentiality

Westmoreland County Housing Authority will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives Westmoreland County Housing Authority 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 tenant, if one is provided, from the person(s) that committed an act(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant. See the *Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act For All Tenants* for more information about Westmoreland County Housing Authority's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

Westmoreland County Housing Authority cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. Westmoreland County Housing Authority will, however, act as quickly as possible to move a tenant 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 tenant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the tenant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred tenant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the tenant has been transferred. Westmoreland County Housing Authority may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If Westmoreland County Housing Authority has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency is eligible, Westmoreland County Housing Authority will assist the tenant in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the tenant could move. At the tenant's request, Westmoreland County Housing Authority will also assist tenants in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are attached to this plan.

Emergency Transfers: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

Tenant-based assistance: If you are a participant in the tenant-based HCV program and request an emergency transfer as described in this plan, Westmoreland County Housing Authority will assist you to move to a safe unit quickly using your existing voucher assistance. The Westmoreland County Housing Authority will make exceptions to program regulations restricting moves as required.

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At your request, Westmoreland County Housing Authority will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Project-based assistance: If you are assisted under the project-based voucher (PBV) program, you may request an emergency transfer under the following programs for which you are not required to apply:

- Tenant-based voucher, if available
- Project-based assistance in the same project (if a vacant unit is available and you determine that the vacant unit is safe)
- Project-based assistance in another development owned by Westmoreland County Housing Authority

Emergency transfers under VAWA will take priority over waiting list admissions for these types of assistance. You may also request an emergency transfer under the following programs for which you are required to apply:

- Public housing program
- PBV assistance in another development not owned by Westmoreland County Housing Authority

Emergency transfers will not take priority over waiting list admissions for these programs. At your request, Westmoreland County Housing Authority will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Safety and Security of Tenants

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

Tenants 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).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE, 1-800-656-4673 or visit the online hotline at <https://hotline.rainn.org>.

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>.

Attachment: Local organizations assisting victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

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FORM Exhibit 16-4: EMERGENCY TRANSFER REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING, HUD-5383

EMERGENCY TRANSFER
REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL
ASSAULT, OR STALKING

U.S Department of Housing
And Urban Development

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Exp. 06/30/2017

- (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. In response, you may submit Form HUD-5382, or any one of the other types of documentation listed on that Form.
- (2) **You expressly request the emergency transfer.** Submission of this form confirms that you have expressly requested a transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit this form or may accept another written or oral request. Please see your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more details.
- (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, 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 submit this form or otherwise expressly request the transfer.

Submission of Documentation: If you have third-party documentation that demonstrates why you are eligible for an emergency transfer; you should submit that documentation to your housing provider if it is safe for you to do so. Examples of third party documentation include, but are not limited to: a letter or other documentation from a victim service provider, social worker, legal assistance provider, pastoral counselor, mental health provider, or other professional from whom you have sought assistance; a current restraining order; a recent court order or other court records; a law enforcement report or records; communication records from perpetrator of the violence or family members or friends of the perpetrator of the violence, including emails, voicemails, text messages, and social medial posts.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and concerning your request for an emergency transfer shall be kept confidential. Such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections or an emergency transfer to you. Such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

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TO BE COMPLETED BY ONOR BEHALF OF THE PERSON REQUESTING A TRANSFER

1. Name of victim requesting an emergency transfer: _____
2. Your name (if different from victim's) _____
3. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____
4. Name(s) of other family member(s) who would transfer with the victim; _____
5. Address of location from which the victim seeks to transfer: _____
6. Address or phone number for contacting the victim: _____
7. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): _____
8. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____
9. Date(s), Time(s) and location(s) of incident(s): _____
10. Is the person requesting the transfer a victim of a sexual assault that occurred in the past 90 days on the premises of the property from which the victim is seeking a transfer? If yes, skip question 11. If no, fill out question 11. _____
11. Describe why the victim believes they are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if they remain in their current unit.
12. If voluntarily provided, list any third-party documentation you are providing along with this notice:

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the individual names above in Item 1 meets the requirement laid out on this form for an emergency transfer. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____ Signed on (Date) _____

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WESTMORELAND COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

OWNER NOTIFICATION OF YOUR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

Exhibit 16-5

VAWA provides protections for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HC) and PBV applicants, tenants, and participants from being denied assistance on the basis or as a direct result of being a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Purpose

Many of VAWA's protections to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking involve action by the public housing agent (PHA), but some situations involve action by owners of assisted housing. The purpose of this notice (herein called "Notice") is to explain your rights and obligations under VAWA, as an owner of housing assisted through Westmoreland County Housing Authority HCV program. Each component of this Notice also provides citations to HUD's applicable regulations.

Denial of Tenancy

Protections for applicants: Owners cannot deny tenancy based on the applicant having been or currently being a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. However, the applicant must be otherwise eligible for tenancy. (See 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 982.452(b)(1).)

Eviction

Protection for HCV participants: Incidents or threats of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking will not be considered a serious or repeated lease violation by the victim, or good cause to terminate the tenancy of the victim (24 CFR 5.2005(c)). Protection also applies to criminal activity related directly to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, conducted by a member of tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, if the tenant or an affiliated individual of the tenant is the victim or threatened victim of such domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (24 CFR 5.2005(b)(2)).

Limitations on VAWA protections:

- a. Nothing in the VAWA Final Rule limits the authority of an owner, when notified of a court order to comply with a court order with respect to (24 CFR 5.2005(d)(1)).
 - 1) The rights of access or control of property, including civil protection orders issued to protect a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or
 - 2) The distribution or possession of property among members of a household in a case.
- b. Nothing in the VAWA Final Rule limits an owner from evicting a victim of domestic violence dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking for a lease violation that is not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as long as the owner does not subject the victim to more demanding standards than other tenants when deciding to evict. (See 24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2).)
- c. Nothing in the VAWA Final Rule limits an owner from evicting a tenant (including the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking) if the owner can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing services to the HCV property would be present if the tenant or lawful occupant is not evicted. (See 24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3).)
 - i. In this context, words, gestures, actions, or other indicators will be considered an "actual and imminent threat" if they meet the following standards: An actual and

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imminent threat consists of a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate time frame, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include: the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the length of time before the potential harm would occur. (See 24 CFR 5.2003.)

- ii. Any eviction due to “actual and imminent threat” should be utilized by an owner only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat, including, but not limited to transferring the victim to a different unit, barring the perpetrator from the property, contacting law enforcement to increase police presence or develop other plans to keep the property safe, or seeking other legal remedies to prevent the perpetrator from acting on a threat. Restrictions predicated on public safety cannot be based on stereotypes but must be tailored to particularized concerns about individual residents. (See 24 CFR 5.2005(d)(4).)

+Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

If an applicant or tenant requests VAWA protection based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the owner has the option to request that the victim document or provide written evidence to demonstrate that the violence occurred. However, nothing in HUD’s regulations requires a covered housing provider to request this documentation. (See 24 CFR 5.2007(b)(3).)

If the owner chooses to request this documentation the owner must make such request in writing. The individual may satisfy this request by providing any one document type listed under 24 CFR 5.2007(b)(1):

- a. Form HUD-5383 (Self-Certification Form); or
- b. A document:
 - 1) Signed by an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom the victim has sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse;
 - 2) Signed by the applicant or tenant; and
 - 3) That specifies, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes in the occurrence of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is the ground for protection and remedies under 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, and that the incident meets the applicable definition of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking under 24 CFR 5.2003; or
- c. A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or
- d. At the discretion of a covered housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

The owner must screen any of the above items (a – c). The owner has discretion to accept a statement or other evidence (d).

The owner is prohibited from requiring third-party documentation of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, unless the submitted documentation contains conflicting information.

If the owner makes a written request for documentation, the owner may require submission of that documentation within 14 business days after the date that the individual received the written request for

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documentation. (24 CFR 5.2007(a)(2)). The owner may extend this time period at its discretion. During the 14-business day period and any granted extensions of that time, no adverse actions, such as evictions or terminations, can be taken against the individual requesting VAWA protection.

Once a victim provides documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the owner is encouraged to acknowledge receipt of the documentation in a timely manner.

If the applicant or tenant fails to provide documentation that meets the criteria in 24 CFR 5.2007 within 14 business days after receiving the written request for that documentation or within the designated extension period, nothing in VAWA Final Rule may be construed to limit the authority of the covered housing provider to:

- a. Deny admission by the applicant or tenant to the housing or program.
- b. Deny assistance under the covered housing program to the applicant or tenant.
- c. Terminate the participation of the tenant in the covered housing program; or
- d. Evict the tenant, or a lawful occupant that commits a violation of a lease.

An individual's failure to timely provide documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking does not result in a waiver of the individual's right to challenge the denial of assistance or termination, nor does it preclude the individual's ability to raise an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking at eviction or termination proceedings.

Moves

A victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may move in violation of their lease if the move is required to protect their safety. If a move results in the termination of the Housing Assistance Payment Contract, the lease automatically terminated.

Lease Bifurcation

Owners may choose to bifurcate a lease, or remove a household member from a lease in order to evict, remove, terminate occupancy rights, or terminate assistance to such member who engages in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against an individual or other individual. (See 24 CFR 5.2009(a).) If an owner chooses to bifurcate the lease, the owner must comply with the reasonable time to establish eligibility under the covered housing program or find alternative housing following lease bifurcation provision in 24 CFR 5.2009(b). VAWA protections, including bifurcation, do not apply to guests or unreported members of a household or anyone else residing in a household who is not a tenant.

Eviction, removal, termination of occupancy rights, or termination of assistance must be affected in accordance with the procedures prescribed by federal, state, or local law for termination of leases.

To avoid unnecessary delay in the bifurcation process, HUD recommends that owners seek court-ordered eviction of the perpetrator pursuant to applicable laws. This process results in the underlying lease becoming null and void once the owner regains possession of the unit. The owner would then execute a new lease with the victim.

Evictions Due to "Actual and Imminent Threat" or Violations Not Premised on Abuse

The VAWA Final Rule generally prohibits eviction on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant or tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the applicant or tenant otherwise qualifies for assistance, participation or occupancy. (See 24 CFR 5.2005.)

However, the VAWA Final Rule Does Not prohibit an owner from evicting a tenant for any violation not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is in question against the tenant or

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an affiliated individual of the tenant. Nor does the VAWA Final Rule prohibit an owner from evicting a tenant if the owner can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing services to property of the owner would be present if that tenant or lawful occupant is not evicted or terminated from assistance. (See 5.2005(d)(2) and (3).)

In order to demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees at the property, the covered housing provider must have objective evidence of words, gestures, actions, or other indicators that meet the standards in the following definition:

- The duration of the risk.
- The nature and severity of the potential harm.
- The likelihood that the potential harm will occur; and
- The length of time before the potential harm would occur.
- (See 24 CFR 5.2003 and 5.2005(d)(2)).

Confidentiality

Any information submitted to a covered housing provider under 24 CFR 5.2007, including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, must be maintained in strict confidence by the covered housing provider. (See 24 CFR 5.2007(c).)

Employees of the owner for those within their employ, e.g., contractors) must not have access to the information unless explicitly authorized by the owner for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law (e.g., the information is needed by an employee to provide the VAWA protections to the victim).

The owner must not enter this information into any shared database, or disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is:

- a. Requested or consented to in writing by the individual (victim) in a time-limited release.
- b. Required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program; or
- c. Otherwise required by applicable law.

When communicating with the victim, owners must take precautions to ensure compliance with these confidentiality requirements.

Service Providers

Westmoreland County Housing Authority has extensive relationships with local service providers. Westmoreland County Housing Authority staff are available to provide referrals to shelters, counselor, and advocates. These resources are also provided Westmoreland County Housing Authority Annual and 5-Year Plan, Administrative Plan, VAWA notice of Occupancy Rights and Emergency Transfer Plan. A list of local service providers is attached to this Notice.

Definitions

Actual and imminent threat refers to a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate time frame, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include: the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur.

Affiliated individual, with respect to an individual, means:

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(1) A spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or a person to whom that individual stands in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is a person in the care, custody, or control of that individual); or

(2) Any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual.

Bifurcate means to divide a lease as a matter of law, subject to the permissibility of such process under the requirements of the applicable HUD-covered program and State or local law, such that certain tenants or lawful occupants can be evicted or removed and the remaining tenants or lawful occupants can continue to reside in the unit under the same lease requirements or as may be revised depending upon the eligibility for continued occupancy of the remaining tenants and lawful occupants.

Dating violence means violence committed by a person:

1. Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
2. Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors.
 - i. The length of the relationship”
 - ii. The type of relationship; and
 - iii. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Domestic violence includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or your victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction. The term “spouse or intimate partner of the victim” includes a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Sexual assault means a consensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Stalking means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- (1) Fear for the person’s individual safety or the safety of others; or
- (2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

VAWA means the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, as amended (42 U.S.C. 13925 and 42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.).

Attached:

Legal services and the domestic violence resources for the Metro area

Form HUD-5382 Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

Westmoreland County Housing Authority VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights

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SECTION 8 DEPARTMENT
167 South Greengate Road
Greensburg, PA 15601-6392
1-800-924-2669
724-832-7248, FAX 724-832-7488
www.wchaonline.com

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL FAMILIES

PHONE CALLS: Your phone call, or office visit is important to us. Staff has been downsized and caseloads redistributed. Some families may have a new caseworker. Your call may go into voice mail because your caseworker is on the phone with another family or out of the office. Please, only leave one detailed voice mail message. Speak slowly, clearly, stating your first and last name. Please spell your last name. Leave a phone number where you can be reached. Due to poor cell phone reception, repeat your phone number slowly. Due to the large volume of incoming and outgoing phone calls, messages are returned as quickly as possible. Please be patient. Calling back and leaving several messages or hanging up delays the response time. Before placing a call to your caseworker, please refer to this sheet when you have questions about your rental assistance. A phone call is not always necessary. If you drop in without an appointment, your caseworker may be out of the office due to prior commitments. It may be necessary to sit and wait until another caseworker is free to meet with you. They will not be familiar with your file and unable to answer detailed questions.

EMAILS: You can contact your caseworker by email. Emails should be detailed, and include your full name, address and phone number.

CHANGES IN INCOME: ALL changes in income (increases or decreases) must be submitted in writing within 10 days with documentation supporting the change. Documentation must be in our hands by the 20th of the month if you want a decrease to become effective on the 1st of the following month. Rent decreases not reported within 10 days will not be made retroactive.

WAGES: Send in copies of at least four (4) pay stubs showing the change in hours worked or rate of pay; or, have your employer write a letter detailing the changes taking place.

WELFARE, SOCIAL SECURITY, SSI, PENSIONS, UNEMPLOYMENT, CHILD SUPPORT, ETC.: Send in a copy of the latest statement showing the amount you will be receiving (cash benefits, food stamps, SSP, unemployment, child support, etc.).

NO LONGER EMPLOYED: The employer must submit written documentation on company letterhead showing your final day of work. If you cannot get an employer statement, write a note explaining why you are no longer working, your last day, and your employer's name, address and phone number.

ADDING MEMBERS TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD: Persons **ARE NOT** permitted to move into your household until: (1) they pass the criminal background check, and (2) get approval from the landlord. If you permit someone to move into your household before they are determined eligible, **your rental assistance will be terminated.**

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MOVING: Prior to moving you must send your landlord a 60-day written notice of your intent to move. Send the original to your landlord and a copy to your WCHA caseworker. All adult household members must pass a criminal background check. After passing the criminal background check, your caseworker will verify with your current landlord that you are in good standing (rent, water, sewage and trash are not delinquent, no damages to the unit). Tenants in good standing will receive a MOVE PACKET. Have the new landlord complete and return the REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL to start the inspection process. Complete your MOVE PACKET and return copies of all income and asset verifications for all members living in your household. Tenants not in good standing will not be permitted to move until the landlord verifies, they are now in good standing.

INSPECTIONS: All inspection related questions should be directed to the Inspection Department (such as scheduling, re-scheduling, items listed on inspection reports, etc.).

LISTING RENTAL UNITS: Landlords can add and update property listings for free online at the following sites:

www.pahousingsearch.com;
www.gosection8.com.

APPLICATION DEPARTMENT: JANET at ext. 3054 (janetg@wchaonline.com) can answer questions regarding Section 8 applications, eligibility interviews, briefings, Request For Tenancy Approvals turned in by landlords after a briefing, and incoming portability voucher holders from other housing authorities.

SECTION 8 DEPARTMENT: After your rental unit passes inspection and the landlord gives us a move-in date, your file is turned over to one of the following caseworkers based on your last name, unless otherwise noted.

Caseworker & email address	Ext. No.	Tenant's Last Name Begins With
Jennifer (jenifferp@wchaonline.com)	3044	A – B – C – D – E – F – Ge (HCV & PBV)
Leann (leanne@wchaonline.com)	3041	Gi – H – I – J – K – L – Ma to Mc (HCV & PBV)
Valerie (valeriet@wchaonline.com)	3040	Me – N – O – P – Q – R – S (HCV & PBV)
Chris (chriiss@wchaonline.com)	3039	T – U – V – W – X – Y – Z (HCV & PBV) PBA Village of Easton A thru Z MOD REHAB A thru Z HOME TBRA Coupons A thru Z
FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FSS) AND HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS		WCHA is CLOSED on the following dates in 2020: JANUARY 1 – NEW YEAR'S DAY JANUARY 20 – MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY FEBRUARY 17 – PRESIDENT'S DAY APRIL 10 – GOOD FRIDAY MAY 25 -MEMORIAL DAY JUNE 15 – FLAG DAY JULY 6 – INDEPENDENCE DAY SEPTEMBER 7 -LABOR DAY OCTOBER 12 – COLUMBUS DAY NOVEMBER 3 – ELECTION DAY NOVEMBER 11 – VETERAN'S DAY NOVEMBER 26 – THANKSGIVING DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY
Cheryl (cherylm@wchaonline.com)	3048	
Robin (robinm@wchaonline.com)	3013	
Marci (marcip@wchaonline.com)	3060	
Julia (juliap@wchaonline.com)	3045	
INSPECTION DEPARTMENT		
Kelley (Kelleyb@wchaonline.com)	3028	
Keith (keithf@wchaonline.com)	3031	
Eric (erich@wchaonline.com)	3036	
Bryan (bryanb@wchaonline.com)	3062	

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