

Orange County Housing Authority

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act¹

To all Tenants and Applicants

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA protections are not only available to women, but are available equally to all individuals regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA) 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 OCHA, you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Protections for Tenants

If you are receiving assistance under OCHA, 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 OCHA solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household

OCHA 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 OCHA chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, OCHA 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, OCHA 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.

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

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

In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, OCHA must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, OCHA 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, OCHA 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, OCHA may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, the housing provider may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.

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

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

OR

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

OCHA 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. OCHA's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and OCHA 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

OCHA 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 OCHA must be in writing, and OCHA 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. OCHA 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 OCHA as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if OCHA 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 OCHA with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident.

The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.

- A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.
- A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom you sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that he or she believes that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.
- Any other statement or evidence that OCHA has agreed to accept.

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

If OCHA 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), OCHA 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, OCHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

OCHA 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.

OCHA must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of OCHA (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.

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

- You give written permission to OCHA to release the information on a time limited basis.
- OCHA 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 OCHA or your landlord to release the information.

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

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

You can be evicted and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. However, OCHA 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 OCHA 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 OCHA can demonstrate the above, OCHA 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 violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with Los Angeles Field Office

300 N. Los Angeles Street, Suite 4054
Los Angeles, CA. 90012
213 898-8000

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf>

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

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact OCHA 714 480-2700.

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 <http://www.211oc.org/DV>

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 <http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-856-HOPE, or visit at <https://hotline.rainn.org/online/terms-of-service.jsp>

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact <http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382 [Certification Form HUD-5382.docx](#)

Orange County Housing Authority

1501 E. St. Andrew Place • Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 480-2700 • California Relay Service (800) 735-2929
<http://www.ochousing.org>

Fax Numbers:

Occupancy
(714) 480-2701
(714) 480-2937
(714) 480-2919

Leasing/Inspections
(714) 480-2822

Special Housing Programs
(714) 480-2812

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA 2013) Policy

On March 7, 2013, President Obama signed a law known as Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA 2013). Portions of this law provide enhanced protections for those who are assisted with (Section 8) Housing Choice Vouchers if they become victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

The following is a brief summary of the principal provisions of the law. The information in this handout is intended to inform participants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities under VAWA.

Protections under VAWA 2013

1. **Denial of Assistance:** VAWA 2013 provides that an applicant cannot be denied assistance or admission because he or she is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking if the applicant is otherwise qualified for assistance or admission to rental assistance programs.
2. **Termination of Assistance:** Criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking shall not be considered cause for termination of assistance for any participant or affiliated individual of a participant's family who is a victim or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.
3. **Lease terms:** An incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will not be considered to be a "serious or repeated" violation of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of that violence and shall not be good cause for terminating the assistance, tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of that violence.

Removal of/Termination of Assistance to Perpetrator

VAWA also creates a new authority under Federal law that allows a Public Housing Agency, or an owner of a Section 8-assisted property to evict, remove, or terminate assistance to any individual tenant or lawful occupant of the property who engages in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against an affiliated individual or other individual. This may be done without evicting or taking any other adverse action to the other occupants.

Limitations

There are some limitations to these protections:

- Assistance and/or tenancy may be terminated if OCHA, the owner, or the manager can demonstrate that an assisted tenant posed "an *actual* and *imminent* threat" to other tenants or to persons employed at or providing services at a rental property or unit.
- Assistance and/or tenancy may be terminated for lease violations that are not based on an incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking for which VAWA provides protections.

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Verification/Certification

OCHA shall require verification or certification concerning the incident or incidents where an individual claims VAWA protections in one of the following three ways:

- Police report or court order
- Other document signed by a professional person from whom the victim has sought assistance in addressing the domestic violence, dating violence or stalking.
- HUD approved form (50066)

Failure to provide verification within fourteen (14) business days of the date requested will result in loss of protection under VAWA.

Confidentiality

Information provided about an incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking shall be retained by OCHA in confidence and shall not be entered in any shared database nor provided to any related entity, except where disclosure is:

1. requested or consented to by the individual in writing, or
2. required for use in an eviction proceeding as permitted in VAWA, or
3. required by applicable law

Portability/Moving to Another Location

An OCHA tenant will not be denied portability to a unit located in another jurisdiction (notwithstanding if the term of the tenant's existing lease has not expired) as long as the tenant has complied with all other requirements and must relocate in order to protect the health or safety of a person who was or is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. However, the victim must have a reasonable belief that he or she is imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remains in the present location.

**If you have questions about this handout or your right under VAWA,
Please contact your Occupancy Specialist or Field Representative at OCHA**

**For a complete text of VAWA see Public Law 113-4
www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ4/pdf/PLAW-113publ4.pdf
For more information about domestic violence resources in Orange County,
Please call: 2-1-1 (formerly Orange County Info Link)
National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 779-7233 (SAFE) or (800) 787-3224 (TTY)**

**CERTIFICATION OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
DATING VIOLENCE,
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING,
AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION**

**U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development**

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

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 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.

TO 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): _____

<p>In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s):</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

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.