



## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT (VAWA) Q&A**

### **WHAT IS VAWA?**

Initially passed in 1994, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) created the first U.S. federal legislation acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes, and provided federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating violence. The Housing Choice Voucher and HOME programs must be operated allowing for the protections of VAWA. This law is not limited to women and it extends to any person without regard to sex, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or age. Prohibits denial of assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights to victims based solely on criminal activity related to an act of domestic violence committed against them. It does not protect the perpetrator.

### **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

More information can be found in the Administrative Plan of the Housing Authority. Chapter 3 contains information for applicants and Chapter 12 contains for participants receiving assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher Programs.

The Property Management Policy contains information for individuals covered under the HOME program.

### **HOW DO I CLAIM VAWA?**

The Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence or Stalking (HUD-50066) can be obtained on HUD's website at [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/administration/hudclips/forms/hud5](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/hudclips/forms/hud5)

### **WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW AS A LANDLORD?**

Landlords under the Housing Choice Voucher program have to comply with VAWA. A landlord may not evict a tenant if the basis of the eviction is solely on criminal activity against a victim that is protected under VAWA.

VAWA does not limit the authority of the AHA or a landlord to terminate the assistance of any participant if it "can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property if that tenant is not evicted or terminated from assistance."

### **WHAT ARE THE CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS?**

All information provided to the AHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence and may neither be entered into any shared data base nor provided to any related entity, except to the extent that the disclosure (a) is requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) is required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) is otherwise required by applicable law.