

Fresno Housing Authorities

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

Emergency Transfers

Fresno Housing Authorities (FH) 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 FH 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 FH 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 FH 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 programs such as; Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV), Project Based Voucher (PBV), administered under FH's Assisted Housing Division (AHD), Low Income Public Housing (LIPH), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), Multifamily Project Rental Assistance (PBRA), Multifamily Project Based Section 8 operated under the California Finance Housing Agency (CalHFA) programs [HUD Programs] are in compliance with VAWA. Properties operated solely or in conjunction

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.

with one or more of the above and/or regulated under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, (LIHTC) Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 42 program (Affordable Housing Program), administered under the Housing Management Division (HMD) are also to maintain compliance 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

To request an emergency transfer, the tenant shall notify FH and submit a written request for a transfer to **1331 Fulton Mall Fresno, CA 93721 Attn: Angela Verdialez for programs administered under AHD and Attn: Blanca Navarro for programs administered (HMD)**. FH 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 FH 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.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

FH cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a VAWA emergency transfer request. FH 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.

The tenant will be required to provide a good reason for refusing the unit and documentation supporting their good cause reason for refusing the Unit. FH may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If FH has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency is eligible, FH 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, FH 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.

Public Housing Transfer Hierarchy:

Transfers made pursuant to VAWA are considered emergency transfers. Tenants in FH's Public Housing program who request and are approved for a VAWA emergency transfer will be processed for the transfer in accordance with the PHA's hierarchy of transfers as established in PHA's ACOP Section 12.1.

Affordable Housing Transfer Hierarchy:

Transfers made pursuant to VAWA are considered emergency transfers. Tenants in FH's Affordable Housing program who request and are approved for a VAWA emergency transfer will be processed for the transfer in accordance with the FH's hierarchy of transfers as established in the affordable housing management plan Section 5.5.

Housing Choice Voucher Program Issuance of Voucher:

Participants in FH's Housing Choice Voucher Program who request and are approved for a VAWA related transfer will be processed for a transfer voucher in accordance with the PHA's emergency transfer policies as established in the PHA's Administrative Plan Chapter 13.2.

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, or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

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>.

Confidentiality

FH will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives FH 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 FH responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.