

**POLICY ON PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
("VAWA POLICY")**

Adopted April 21, 2015

Resolution 014-015-012

**I. Purpose**

The Albion Housing Commission has adopted this policy in compliance with the Violence Against Women Act, a federal law that provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. This policy is gender-neutral, and its protections are available to males who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking as well as female victims of such violence. This summary of VAWA protections is not intended to limit the rights of victims provided by the Act.

**II. Goals and Objectives**

This Policy has the following principal goals and objectives:

- Maintaining compliance with all applicable legal requirements imposed by VAWA;
- Reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; and protect victims of such criminal acts;
- Prevent homelessness caused by domestic violence;
- Create long-term housing solutions for victims of domestic violence;
- Build collaborations among victim service providers, homeless service providers, housing providers and housing agencies to address the housing needs of victims of domestic violence; and
- Enable the Albion Housing Commission to respond appropriately to domestic violence, while maintaining a safe environment for all housing residents.

**III. Protection of Victims**

- A. For the purpose of this policy, the term "domestic violence" encompasses acts or threats of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, as those terms are defined in VAWA.
- B. VAWA protects qualified applicants or tenants and family members of applicants or tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking from being denied, evicted or terminated from housing assistance based solely on criminal acts of domestic violence against them. Criminal acts of domestic violence shall not be considered "serious or repeated lease violations" by the victim or "criminal activity" by the victim that is grounds for termination of the lease or housing assistance.

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- C. VAWA protections are available to both applicants for and recipients of housing assistance through the Public Housing Program.
- D. VAWA protects both women and men who are victims of domestic violence.
- E. The protections provided by VAWA and this policy are to be observed and enforced by all PHA staff, individuals and agencies contracting with the PHA.
- F. VAWA does not limit the authority of the PHA, when notified, to honor court orders addressing rights of access to or control of the property, including civil protection orders issued to protect the victim and issued to address the distribution or possession of property among the household members in cases where a family breaks up.

#### **IV. Admissions and Screening**

- A. AHC will not deny admission to public housing to any person because that person is or has been a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking provided that such person is otherwise qualified for such admission.
- B. When so requested in writing by an applicant for assistance whose history includes incidents in which the applicant was a victim of domestic violence, AHC, may but shall not be obligated to, take such information into account in mitigation of potentially disqualifying information, such as poor credit history or previous damage to a dwelling. If requested by an applicant to take such mitigating information into account, AHC shall be entitled to conduct such inquiries as are reasonably necessary to verify the claimed history of domestic violence and its' probable relevance to the potentially disqualifying information. AHC will not disregard or mitigate potentially disqualifying information if the applicant household includes a perpetrator of a previous incident or incidents of domestic violence.

#### **V. Termination of Tenancy**

- A. Under VAWA, public housing residents have the following specific protections, which will be observed by AHC:
  - 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 will not be good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights or assistance to the victim or threatened victim of that violence.
  - In addition to the foregoing, tenancy assistance or occupancy rights will not be terminated by AHC as a result of criminal activity, if that criminal activity is directly

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related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking engaged in by a member of the assisted household, a guest or another person under the tenant's control, if the tenant or an affiliated individual of the tenant is the victim or threatened victim of this criminal activity. However, the protection against termination of tenancy or assistance described in this paragraph is subject to the following limitations:

- Nothing contained in this paragraph shall limit any otherwise authority of AHC to terminate tenancy or evict for any violation of a lease or program requirement not premised on the act or acts of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking in question against the tenant or a member of the tenant's household. However, in taking any such action, the AHC may not apply a more demanding standard to the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking than that applied to other tenants.
- Nothing contained in this paragraph shall be construed to limit the authority of AHC to evict or terminate from assistance any tenant or lawful applicant if the AHC can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or to those employed at or providing service to the property, if the tenant is not evicted or terminated from assistance.
- Nothing contained in this paragraph will prevent an eviction, if the person claiming to be a victim within the protection of VAWA fails to deliver the certification or other documentation within 14 business days after receiving the PHA's request for such certification.

## VI. Certification

- A. PHA May Request Certification. If an applicant or public housing resident claims protection under VAWA against denial of an application, termination of tenancy, or other adverse action, the PHA may require the person who claims the VAWA protections to deliver a signed certification or other documentation concerning the incident or incidents. If the person does not deliver this certification within the time allowed, he or she will lose the legal protections under VAWA.
- B. Acceptable Forms of Certification. There are three ways to comply with a certification request by the PHA:
- i. Complete a certification form approved by HUD (Form HUD-50066 or other approved form);
  - ii. Provide a police report or court record:

## Definitions

For purposes of determining whether a public housing applicant or tenant may be covered by VAWA, the following list of definitions applies:

VAWA defines **domestic violence** to include felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by any of the following:

- A current or former spouse of the victim
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common
- A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse
- A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies
- 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

VAWA defines **dating violence** as 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:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

VAWA defines **sexual assault** as "any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent" (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

VAWA defines **stalking** as (A)(i) to follow, pursue, or repeatedly commit acts with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person OR (ii) to place under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person AND (B) in the course of, or as a result of, such following, pursuit, surveillance, or repeatedly committed acts, to place a person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to, or to cause substantial emotional harm to (i) that person, (ii) a member of the immediate family of that person, or (iii) the spouse or intimate partner of that person.

**LEASE ADDENDUM**

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005**

TENANT	LANDLORD	UNIT NO. & ADDRESS
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This lease addendum adds the following paragraphs to the Lease between the above referenced Tenant and Landlord.

**Purpose of the Addendum**

The lease for the above referenced unit is being amended to include the provisions of the Violence Against Women and Justice Department Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA).

**Conflicts with Other Provisions of the Lease**

In case of any conflict between the provisions of this Addendum and other sections of the Lease, the provisions of this Addendum shall prevail.

**Term of the Lease Addendum**

The effective date of this Lease Addendum is \_\_\_\_\_, This Lease Addendum shall continue to be in effect until the Lease is terminated.

**VAWA Protections**

1. The Landlord may not consider incidents of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking as serious or repeated violations of the lease or other "good cause" for termination of assistance, tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of abuse.
2. The Landlord may not consider criminal activity directly relating to abuse, engaged in by a member of a tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, cause for termination of assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights if the tenant or an immediate member of the tenant's family is the victim or threatened victim of that abuse.
3. The Landlord may request in writing that the victim, or a family member on the victim's behalf, certify that the individual is a victim of abuse and that the Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence or Stalking, Form HUD-91066, or other documentation as noted on the certification form, be completed and submitted within 14 business days, or an agreed upon extension date, to receive protection under the VAWA. Failure to provide the certification or other supporting documentation within the specified timeframe may result in eviction.
4. The PHA may bifurcate the lease and terminate the tenancy of a family member if the PHA determines that the family member has committed acts of physical violence against other family members or others. This action will not affect the tenancy of remaining, nonculpable family members.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Landlord

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Public and Indian Housing**

OMB Approval No. 2577-0249  
Exp. (07/31/2017)

**Purpose of Form:** The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 ("VAWA") protects qualified tenants, participants, and applicants, and affiliated individuals, who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking from being denied housing assistance, evicted, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of such violence against them.

**Use of Form:** This is an optional form. A PHA, owner or manager presented with a claim for continued or initial tenancy or assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (herein referred to as "Victim") has the option to request that the victim document or provide written evidence to demonstrate that the violence occurred. The Victim has the option of either submitting this form or submitting third-party documentation, such as:

- (1) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency (e.g. police), court, or administrative agency; or
- (2) Documentation signed by the Victim and signed by an employee, agent or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional, or a mental health professional from whom the Victim has sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, in which the professional attests under penalty of perjury (28 U.S.C. 1746) that he or she believes that the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking is grounds for protection under 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 5.2005 or 24 CFR § 5.2009.

If this form is used by the Victim, the Victim must complete and submit it within 14 business days of receiving it from the PHA, owner or manager. This form must be returned to the person and address specified in the written request for the certification. If the Victim does not complete and return this form (or provide third-party verification) by the 14th business day or by an extension of the date provided by the PHA, manager or owner, the Victim cannot be assured s/he will receive VAWA protections.

If the Victim submits this form or third-party documentation as listed above, the PHA, owner or manager cannot require any additional evidence from the Victim.

**Confidentiality:** All information provided to a PHA, owner or manager concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking relating to the Victim (including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking) shall be kept confidential by the PHA, owner or manager, and such information shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of the PHA, owner, or manager are not to have access to these details unless to afford or reject VAWA protections to the Victim; and may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) requested or consented to by the Victim in writing; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

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**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING:**

**Date Written Request Received by Victim:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Victim:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of Other Family Members Listed on the Lease:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Perpetrator\*:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note: The Victim is required to provide the name of the perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide, and is known to the victim.

**Perpetrator's Relationship to Victim:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) the Incident(s) of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking Occurred:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident(s) (This description may be used by the PHA, owner or manager for purposes of evicting the perpetrator. Please be as descriptive as possible.):

[INSERT TEXT LINES HERE]

I hereby certify that the information that I have provided is true and correct and I believe that, based on the information I have provided, that I am a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information is a basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Executed on (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

**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. Information provided is to be used by PHAs and Section 8 owners or managers to request a tenant to certify that the individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking. The information is subject to the confidentiality requirements of the HUD Reform Legislation. This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.