

## THE SAFE HOMES ACT

**What is it?** The Safe Homes Act gives victims of domestic or sexual violence the following rights if they are renting.

### *Ending the Lease Early*

**Survivors may end their lease early.**

Tenants who follow the notification procedure will not have to pay the rent once they leave.

- Tell the landlord in writing about the threat of violence on the premises 3 days before or after you leave.
- Remove your belongings and return the key as proof of leaving.
- If the sexual assault occurred on the premises, you must give the landlord notice within 60 days after the assault. Include evidence such as a police report or medical or court records.

### *Changing the Locks*

Survivors may change the locks to keep the abuser out of the home.

- Give the landlord proof of potential violence and a written request from all people on the lease (except the abuser if they are on it).
- If the abuser is on the lease, the locks can be changed if there is an Order of Protection or Civil No Contact Order

### ***When Does This Law Apply?***

When the abuser knows, or when you think they may know where you live.

### ***NEED IMMEDIATE HELP?***

Call the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline for free 24/7 support.

**1-877-863-6338**

**1-877-863-6339 (TTY)**

If you are a victim of sexual assault, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline

**1-800-656-4673**

Founded in 1968, HOPE serves Chicago's Northwestern & Western Suburbs, as well as twenty-eight other counties in Northern & North Central Illinois



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## Housing Rights for Survivors of Abuse

### **HOPE Fair Housing Center**

If you or someone you know has experienced a form of domestic or sexual abuse or harassment, you have special housing protections under federal, state, and local laws. Help is available and **HOPE can help.**

## FEDERAL PROTECTIONS

The federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2013), protects anyone who...

- Is a victim or a spouse, sibling, parent, or child of a victim of actual or threatened domestic violence dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking AND is living in or applying to public housing programs



-VAWA allows Public Housing Authorities and Section 8 landlords to evict an abuser while allowing the rest of the household to stay.

-Property owners cannot refuse to rent to someone because they have been a victim of domestic or sexual violence if the applicant otherwise qualifies.

-Situations of domestic or sexual violence do not give the landlord the right to evict the victim.

\*All public housing, project-based Section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 202, Section 811, Section 236, and Section 221 (d)(3) BMIR Projects, properties with HOME, HOPWA, or McKinney-Vento Funding, and Rural Development

The Fair Housing Act does not specifically protect victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault, but since the majority of survivors are women, cases of discrimination can sometimes be tried under the protected class of sex.

## HOW HOPE CAN HELP

If you think you may be a victim of housing discrimination,

1. Contact HOPE Fair Housing Center.
2. Document meetings and phone calls with landlords, property managers, real estate agents, loan officers, and insurance agents.
3. Save all receipts, copies of applications, business cards, and other documents.

All of HOPE's services are free



Fair Housing law protects tenants from sexual harassment from Landlords, Property Managers, Maintenance People, and Other Tenants.

### Sexual harassment includes:

- asking for sexual favors
- unwanted sexual advances touching
- sexual comments

**A landlord cannot evict you for reporting sexual harassment, but you have a limited time to exercise your rights.**

The Federal Fair Housing Act and Illinois Human Rights Act prohibit discrimination in housing based on these protected classes:

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Race  | • Ancestry                       |
| • Color   | • Marital status                 |
| • National Origin                                     | • Age (+40)                      |
| • Religion  | • Military status                |
| • Sex   | • Sexual orientation             |
| • Disability  | • Gender identity                |
| • Familial status (households with children under 18) | • Order of Protection status     |
|   | • Unfavorable military discharge |