

LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Have you been a victim of domestic violence or sexual harassment? Learn about your rights and legal protections.

Possible Violations of Your Rights

Sexual Harassment

- Your maintenance man makes unwelcome sexual comments.
- Your landlord touches you without consent.
- Your landlord enters your home without notice.
- Your landlord asks for sexual favors in exchange for housing or housing services.
- Your landlord retaliates against you for denying sexual favors.
- You report that your neighbor harassed you, but the manager ignores your complaints.

Domestic Violence

- Your landlord evicts you after a domestic violence incident.
- You lose your housing voucher after being a victim of domestic violence.
- Your housing provider claims she has a “zero tolerance” policy for violence in your complex, with no exceptions.
- A landlord refuses to rent to you because you are a victim of domestic violence.

Legal Protections

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

- Protects survivors of domestic violence and their families who live in federally subsidized housing. Housing providers cannot deny housing or evict a tenant because she or he is a victim of domestic violence.
- Permits the landlord or housing authority to make policy exceptions to allow a domestic violence victim to transfer their voucher to preserve safety, or to split the lease or partially terminate a Section 8 voucher to evict the abuser, while letting the victim and her family stay.

Fair Housing Laws

- Protect domestic violence victims who are not in subsidized housing when landlords evict or refuse to rent to tenants based on gender stereotypes.

Sexual Harassment Protections

- Prohibit housing providers and their employees from subjecting tenants to sexual harassment, asking for sexual favors to obtain or keep housing or services, or retaliating against tenants for refusing sexual advances.

What You Need to Know about VAWA

- **What is covered?**
Domestic violence, violent crimes by a spouse/partner/cohabitant (current or former), dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- **Who is covered?**
Women and men, immediate family members, and anybody who lives in the household.
- **What housing types are covered?**
Public housing, private housing that accepts Section 8, project-based Section 8 housing, and housing regulated by other programs.
- **What proof should be provided?**
Self-certification, police/court/ administrative record, or a statement from a third party.

How to Get Help

Call Fair Housing of Marin if you are a victim of sexual harassment in your housing, or if you are evicted or threatened with eviction after a domestic violence incident.