

FAIR HOUSING RIGHTS PROTECT YOU

Fair housing laws enable people to seek legal remedies if a housing provider discriminates on the basis certain protected categories. Those include race, color, religion, national origin, sex (gender or sexual orientation), familial status (families with children under the age of 18, or those expecting children), disability, and others. For more information on housing discrimination visit Prairie State Legal Services at www.pslegal.org/fairhousing.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HOUSING?

Sexual harassment in housing is unwelcome sexual conduct by a housing provider based on the sex of a tenant or applicant.

A few people tell their stories here:

www.justice.gov/crt/video/sexual-harassment-housing-psa

WHO IS A HOUSING PROVIDER?

Examples of housing providers include:

- ▶ property owners
- ▶ property managers
- ▶ real estate agents
- ▶ housing authority staff members
- ▶ landlords
- ▶ mortgage brokers
- ▶ maintenance workers
- ▶ management company employees
- ▶ and others

WHAT CAN I DO IF THIS HAPPENED TO ME?

If you think that you or someone you know may have been a victim of sexual harassment in housing, contact the **Fair Housing Project at Prairie State Legal Services at 855-FHP-PSLS (347-7757)** to learn about your legal rights. We may be able to give you legal advice, investigate your case, help you break your lease to move to safer housing, or represent you in the filing of a fair housing complaint. We provide services at no-cost to our clients.



WHAT LEGAL REMEDIES ARE POSSIBLE?

If you prevail on a complaint brought under fair housing laws, a court or appropriate government agency can provide you with a number of possible remedies. The most common include orders that:

- ▶ Allow you to move into the housing (if it was originally denied to you)
- ▶ Require the provider to make policy changes
- ▶ Reimburse you for expenses (i.e. related moving costs and/or medical expenses)
- ▶ Award you money for damages, pain, suffering and humiliation
- ▶ Require the housing provider to stop or start doing something
- ▶ Pay for your attorney's fees and court costs
- ▶ Impose a civil penalty to the government up to \$55,000 to satisfy the public interest
- ▶ Grant you an additional sum in punitive damages (to deter the same conduct in the future)

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?

There are two main types of sexual harassment in housing and both are unlawful: quid pro quo and hostile environment.

Something in Return (a.k.a Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment)

A housing provider requiring a sexual favor in exchange for a housing benefit. One incident is enough to break the law.

Examples:

- My landlord offered to discount my rent if I have sex with him.
- A maintenance man said he will fix my sink sooner if I go on a date with him.
- The manager of the apartment will approve my application only if I perform a sexual act on him.

Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual conduct that interferes with your ability to obtain or enjoy your housing. The harassment must be severe and pervasive. One severe incident can be enough to break the law but an ongoing pattern of incidents can also break the law.

Examples:

- My property manager tried to touch me when I went to pay my rent.
- The security guard at the front desk keeps asking to see naked pictures of me.
- My housing authority case worker made comments about my body.
- A real estate agent keeps sending me sexually explicit jokes and photos even though I asked her to stop.



WHAT IF I'M DEALING WITH MORE THAN HARASSMENT?

Community organizations in our service area may be able to provide you with counseling and/or emergency shelter if you have been a victim of sexual abuse or sexual assault:

Lake County
Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center
(847) 872-7799*
zcenter.org

A Safe Place
(800) 600-SAFE (7233)*
asafeplaceforhelp.org

McHenry County
CARE Center
(888) 802-8890*
nwcasa.org

Rockford Area
Rockford Family Peace Center
(779) 348-7600
rockfordfamilypeacecenter.org
Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling
(815) 636-9811*
rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org

Peoria Area
Center for Prevention of Abuse
(800) 559-SAFE (7233)

Bloomington/Normal Area
Mid-Central Community Action – Neville House
(309) 827-7070*



(855) FHP-PSLS
(855) 347-7757



www.pslegal.org



Serving people in Lake, McHenry, Boone, and Winnebago Counties and the cities of Peoria, Bloomington and Normal.

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HOUSING IS AGAINST THE LAW!



PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES

Equal Access to Justice

* 24-hour Support or Crisis Line