WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HOUSING?

Sexual harassment in housing is any unwelcome sexual conduct by a housing provider towards a tenant or applicant based on their sex. Examples of housing providers include property owners, landlords, property managers, mortgage brokers, real estate agents, maintenance workers, housing authority staff members, management company employees and others.

Fair housing laws enable people to seek legal remedies if a housing provider discriminates on the basis of certain protected categories. Those include race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HOUSING

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

Quid Pro Quo (Something in Return)
A housing provider requires 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 them.
- A maintenance worker said they will fix my sink sooner if I go on a date with them.
- The manager of the apartment will approve my application only if I perform a sexual act on them.

Hostile Environment
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 them to stop.

PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES

CONTACT US

If you think that you or someone you know may have been a victim of sexual harassment in housing, the Fair Housing Project may be able to help. We will connect you with the PSLS office that serves the county where you live.

855-FHP-PSLS (347-7757)
pslegal.org/fairhousing

The Fair Housing Project receives special funding to serve people in Boone, Lake, McHenry, Peoria, Tazewell and Winnebago Counties; the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal.

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