



Victim Assistance Program Transfer Plan

Summary

Residents who have experienced violence deserve trauma-informed services to assist them in recovering from violence and increasing their capacity for resiliency. Services include assessing the safety and well-being of the household members, providing appropriate referrals, and, for residents who request a transfer and meet the criteria, executing a VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer or a VAWA Emergency Transfer. Services are delivered in a resident focused manner that is responsive to individual preferences. CHA will take reasonable steps to ensure services and written information will be accessible to persons with limited English proficiency.

In making its eligibility determinations regarding transfers, CHA does not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, familial status, marital status, partnership status, lawful occupation, lawful source of income, military status, alienage or citizenship status, or on the grounds that a person is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. CHA makes assistance available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived protected status in the above-listed groups. VAWA Emergency transfers are for individuals eligible under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

CHA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process. The Victim Assistance Program is not a crisis response or witness protection program. Residents are responsible for establishing safety for themselves and their family, this may include temporarily staying with a friend or family member or staying in a shelter. In an emergency, 911 should always be called.

CHA will review each transfer request to determine if the resident meets the eligibility requirements for either a VAWA Emergency Transfer or a VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer. CHA will act as quickly as possible to transfer eligible residents. CHA's ability to transfer an eligible resident to a new unit depends on availability of a unit based on the resident's family composition, area needed to relocate from, and availability of vacant units.

The following sections outline CHA's eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and procedures for processing VAWA Emergency requests and VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer requests through the Victim Assistance Program.

CHA will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities.



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VAWA Emergency Transfer Eligibility

To qualify for an VAWA Emergency Transfer:

The eligible resident, an authorized household member, or an affiliated individual¹ must qualify as a victim under one of the following VAWA categories:

- **Domestic Violence:** Victim of a felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed by a family member, current or former spouse or intimate partner, a person situated to a spouse under Illinois domestic or family violence laws, or by a person against a victim protected under Illinois domestic or family violence laws.
- **Dating Violence:** Victim of violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship is to be determined based on the length and type of relationship and frequency of interaction between persons involved in the relationship.
- **Sexual Assault:** Victim of any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent.
- **Stalking:** Victim of a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his/her individual safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

An eligible resident, authorized household member, or affiliated individual, who meets any of the above definitions must also reasonably believe that he or she is threatened with imminent harm from further violence if he or she remains in his or her current apartment. This means the victim has reason to fear that if the victim does not receive a transfer the victim would suffer violence in the very near future.

If a resident requests an emergency transfer based on an incident involving an individual who is not a tenant or authorized household member, staff will review the request to determine whether the individual qualifies as an “affiliated individual” and whether the tenant qualifies for emergency transfer under VAWA.

Victims of sexual assault may also qualify if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which the tenant is seeking to transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before submission of a transfer request form.

¹ An affiliated individual is defined as a spouse, parent, sibling, child, or a person to whom the tenant stands in the place of a parent or guardian, i.e., a person in the tenant’s care, custody, or control



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Eligible residents who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

What documentation is required for a VAWA Emergency Transfer?

The following pieces of documentation are accepted for VAP's consideration of a VAWA Emergency Transfer request:

- Intake & Assessment of Threat Form completed by both Resident and CHA's Service Coordinator. This form includes HUD Form 5383
- HUD Form 5382
 - Or one of the following types of third-party documentation:
 - A document signed by an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom the victim has sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse. The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of "domestic violence," "dating violence," "sexual assault," or "stalking" in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003
 - A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency (may include a police report), court, or administrative agency

If conflicting information is submitted, CHA may also require additional recent evidence (e.g. a police report within the past 30-90 days, a current Order of Protection, etc.) to directly support the VAWA case. Documentation of eligibility along with the Intake & Assessment of Threat are due within 14 business days of a case being opened.

Residents seeking an Emergency Transfer as covered by VAWA may submit self-certification of their eligibility. This is found in HUD form 5382.



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VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer Eligibility

To qualify for a VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer as a victim of violence the following conditions must be met:

- Documented life-threatening crimes of non-random (targeted) violence that puts a resident's life in danger.
- Crime occurred on CHA property.

What documentation is required for a VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer?

The following pieces of documentation are required for VAP's consideration of a Mandatory Administrative Transfer request:

An Intake & Assessment of Threat completed by both resident and CHA's Service Coordinator

And one of the following:

- A police report including both the Victim Information Notice and Case Incident Report
- A letter from the States Attorney's office or Attorney General's office
- An Order of Protection
- An arson report from the Chicago Fire Department
- Medical Records (in extreme cases where no other documentation is available)

Any evidence should be recent (e.g. a police report within the past 90 days, a current Order of Protection, etc.) and directly support the Victim Assistance Program case. Supporting documentation, along with the Intake & Assessment of Threat, are due within 14 business days of a case being opened.

Initiating a Transfer

The Victim Assistance Program (VAP) can be reached by calling **312-913-7396**, Monday through Friday from 8 AM - 5 PM. ***This line is not intended for emergencies. For all life-threatening emergencies, call 911. If the resident is a victim of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking, he or she should also contact the Domestic Violence Helpline 1.877.863.6338 (1-877-TO END DV) and/or the Rape Victim Hotline 1-888-293-2080 to be connected to services and resources such as counseling and court advocacy, and in emergencies, shelter.***

At this time, the Victim Assistance Program is only available to residents who live in public housing residents (Traditional, Scattered Sites, and Mixed Income) and residents living in RAD-



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PBV units (Rental Assistance Demonstration Property Based Voucher) properties. Participants in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) will need to go through the HCV program via the call center.

Callers to the VAP line will be screened for basic eligibility. Callers who appear eligible will be linked with a Victim Assistance (VA) service coordinator. The VA service coordinator will assist them with submitting a relocation request and supporting documentation. All callers will be offered counseling services through the FamilyWorks program.

CHA's "Intake & Assessment of Threat" is the form to use to request in writing a transfer based on violence. The "Intake & Assessment of Threat" is a form to be completed collaboratively between the resident and assigned service coordinator. The Intake & Assessment of Threat form also includes HUD Form 5383.

Provided that the Head of Household is not a perpetrator, the Head of Household's involvement is required to pursue a transfer through VAP. In situations where the Head of Household is a perpetrator, the victim may seek relocation confidentially through the Victim Assistance Program. If a VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer or VAWA Emergency Transfer is granted and facilitated on behalf of the victim through a bifurcation process, CHA will pursue eviction of the perpetrator.

Move Process

Once a VAP Mandatory Administrative Transfer or VAWA Emergency Transfer is approved, VAP will work with the Property Office to identify an available unit that meets a household's needs. Household size (number of bedrooms needed), areas identified as unsafe based on violence reported in request, proximity to employment/education, and resident preferences will be taken into consideration when practical. Residents will be relocated to unit of the same bedroom count if they meet minimum occupancy standards. Residents who are under housed (not enough bedrooms) will be relocated to an appropriately sized unit. Should a same bedroom size unit not be available, the resident will be offered the next appropriate size unit (e.g. resident needs a 2-bedroom unit and is not available; CHA would house the resident in the next appropriately sized unit, a 3-bedroom). CHA's relocation team will assist the resident by providing moving boxes and scheduling movers. Movers scheduled by the Relocation team for VAP approved transfers will be paid for by the CHA.

All unit offers will be outside of a resident's current development or area. Once a unit is identified, the resident will have 72 hours to accept or decline the offered unit. CHA's VAP Service Coordinator will review the moving process with the resident (e.g. completion of forms with existing Property Manager, utilities, key drop-off/pick-up, etc.) at the time the unit is accepted.



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There may be times when a resident does not want to move to the first unit that is offered. Given CHA's high occupancy rates, it is not possible to provide several units for a resident to choose. If a resident chooses to decline a unit, they will be asked to confirm that decision in writing via their Unit Offer Letter. They are encouraged to continue to work with their VA Service Coordinator on safety and support. Residents who decline the unit offered will have their VAP case considered closed. Residents will be notified in writing when their VA relocation request is considered closed. Residents may grieve the decision to close their case and be given the opportunity to submit additional information related to the reason the unit was declined.

What happens if a request is denied?

Not every request for a transfer is approved. A letter of denial will be sent to the resident that will include a summary of the documentation received and the reason(s) that the evidence did not support the request. There will also be an opportunity to submit additional information or grieve the decision through the CHA's Grievance Process for VAP.

Grievance Process

A resident may submit a grievance letter to the Victim Assistance Program, with any additional supporting documentation, within the 30 days following the denial of a request or the refusal of a unit. Grievance letters should be submitted by mail or email to the attention of the Victim Assistance Program Review Committee:

Chicago Housing Authority
Victim Assistance Program Review Committee:
60 East Van Buren 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

VAP Hotline: 312-913-7396
VAP Email: VictimAssistance@thecha.org

A committee will review the request for a transfer in its entirety and will issue a final decision. The Victim Assistance Program will communicate this decision to the resident.

Grievance letters should include the following:

- A. New and continued safety concerns.
 - a. Supporting documentation (that has not already been submitted to VAP) should be submitted to reflect new and continued threats to safety.



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- B. If the grievance letter is being submitted to grieve the location of a unit offered and declined, the letter should include specific information about why the offered unit is unsafe. *(Please note that only safety concerns directly related to the initial Victim Assistance Program case approval will be considered.)*

Decisions will be issued, both in writing and by phone*, by VAP within 10 business days of receipt.

*Provided that there are no safety concerns with these methods of communication.



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Additional Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence

City of Chicago Domestic Violence Hotline

1-877-863-6338

Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

773-244-2230

Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

555 W Harrison #1900

312-325-9155