

Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and/or Human Trafficking

Emergency Transfers

The Eastern PA CoC has developed this Emergency Transfer Plan so that participants in homeless assistance projects who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking can be safe and have stable housing.

In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),¹ Eastern PA CoC homeless assistance programs providing housing or rental assistance must allow participants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking to request an emergency transfer from the participant's current unit to another unit. This requirement applies to programs receiving Continuum of Care (CoC) funding, as well as DCED Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding, in accordance with DCED policies and requirements.

The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² Homeless assistance providers will work with *Connect To Home*, the Eastern PA CoC's Coordinated Entry System to enact an emergency transfer through resources beyond those available within the the providers own organization.

This plan identifies participants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to participants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by HUD, which is the Federal agency that oversees VAWA compliance of CoC/ESG-funded programs.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A participant is eligible for an emergency transfer when any member of the household is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking, and reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the participant remains within the same unit. As an additional protection for victims of sexual assault, the participant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar-day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.

¹ Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

² Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

A participant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan. Participants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

Emergency Transfer Request Documentation

To request an emergency transfer, the participant shall notify their housing provider/ case manager and submit an oral or written request for a transfer to that provider. The provider must provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. The Eastern PA CoC has developed the attached sample form, which was adopted from Form HUD-5383. The participant's request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the participant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the participant were to remain in the same dwelling unit assisted under the provider's program; OR
2. A statement that the participant, or a member of the participant's household was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the participant's request for an emergency transfer.

Confidentiality

The housing provider and *Connect to Home* will keep confidential any information that the participant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the participant gives the housing provider written permission to release the information on a time limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the participant, if one is provided, from the person(s) that committed an act(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking against the participant. See the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act For All Participants for more information about the provider's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

The housing provider must accept/reject the Emergency Transfer Request within 5 business days. If the request is accepted, providers have 10 business days to complete the transfer. If a housing provider accepts the Emergency Transfer Request, but is not able to provide an internal transfer, an external transfer will be facilitated through *Connect to Home*.

Households awaiting an external transfer through *Connect to Home* are to be prioritized for the next available unit for which they are eligible. Due to the emergency situation, these households should not be added to a waiting list and left to wait until they are reprioritized.

If a participant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the participant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred participant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the participant has been transferred. Neither the provider, nor the *Connect to Home* Managers may be able to transfer a participant to a particular unit if the participant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

At the participant's request, the housing provider will also assist participants in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking that are attached to this plan.

Protocol for transfer request

If the provider cannot transfer the participant through resources operated by/ available through their own organization, the housing provider or case manager will need to contact their regional Coordinated Entry Manager to request assistance. The Coordinated Entry Manager will work quickly, following the protocol outlined in the Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures manual in order to assist the housing provider to identify an alternate safe unit.

Safety and Security of Participants

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the participant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Participants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

Participants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

Participants who are or have been victims of human trafficking seeking help may visit the online National Human Trafficking Hotline at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/state/pennsylvania> or by calling 1-888-373-7888 (TTY: 711).

Attachment: Local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking.

List of Domestic Violence organizations in each county of the Eastern PA CoC

County	Hotline	Domestic Violence Program Name
Adams	800-787-8106	Survivors, Inc.
Bedford	800-555-5671	Your Safe Haven
Blair	800-500-2849	Domestic Abuse Project/Blair County/Family Services Inc.
Bradford	570-265-5333	Abuse and Rape Crisis Center
Cambria	800-999-7406	Women's Help Center, Inc.
Carbon	800-424-5600	Domestic Violence Service Center, Inc.
Centre	877-234-5050	Centre County Women's Resource Center
Clinton	570-748-9509	Clinton County Women's Center
Columbia	800-544-8293	Women's Center, Inc. of Columbia/Montour
Cumberland	800-852-2102	Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry Counties
Franklin	800-621-6660	Women In Need, Inc.
Fulton	800-621-6660	Women In Need, Inc.
Huntingdon	814-643-1190	Huntingdon House
Juniata	717-242-2444	The Abuse Network
Lebanon	866-686-0451	Domestic Violence Intervention of Lebanon County, Inc.
Lehigh	877-438-4957	Turning Point of Lehigh Valley, Inc.
Lycoming	800-326-8483	Wise Options
Mifflin	717-242-2444	The Abuse Network
Monroe	570-421-4200	Women's Resources of Monroe County, Inc.
Montour	800-544-8293	Women's Center, Inc. of Columbia/Montour
Northampton	877-438-4957	Turning Point of Lehigh Valley, Inc.
Northumberland	800-850-7948	Transitions of PA
Perry	800-852-2102	Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry Counties
Pike	800-698-4847	Victims' Intervention Program
Schuylkill	800-282-0634	Schuylkill Women in Crisis
Snyder	800-850-7948	Transitions of PA
Somerset	800-999-7406	Women's Help Center, Inc.
Sullivan	800-894-3706	Sullivan County Victim Services
Susquehanna	570-346-4671	Women's Resource Center, Inc.
Tioga	800-550-0447	HAVEN of Tioga County
Union	800-850-7948	Transitions of PA
Wayne	800-698-4847	Victims' Intervention Program
Wyoming	866-206-9050	Victims Resource Center

Sexual Assault organizations in PA

For a list of organizations/locations that can provide assistance to victims of sexual assault, visit online - <http://www.pcar.org/help-pa/locations>

Purpose of Form: If you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and you are seeking an emergency transfer, you may use this form to request an emergency transfer and certify that you meet the requirements of eligibility for an emergency transfer under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Although the statutory name references women, VAWA rights and protections apply to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Using this form does not necessarily mean that you will receive an emergency transfer. See the Eastern PA Continuum of Care's emergency transfer plan for more information about the availability of emergency transfers.

The requirements you must meet are:

(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation. In response, you may submit Form HUD-5382, or any one of the other types of documentation listed on that Form.

(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer. Submission of this form confirms that you have expressly requested a transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit this form, or may accept another written or oral request. Please see your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more details.

(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit. This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may also qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you submit this form or otherwise expressly request the transfer.

Submission of Documentation: If you have third-party documentation that demonstrates why you are eligible for an emergency transfer, you should submit that documentation to your housing provider if it is safe for you to do so. Examples of third party documentation include, but are not limited to: a letter or other documentation from a victim service provider, social worker, legal assistance provider, pastoral counselor, mental health provider, or other professional from whom you have sought assistance; a current restraining order; a recent court order or other court records; a law enforcement report or records; communication records from the perpetrator of the violence or family members or friends of the perpetrator of the violence, including emails, voicemails, text messages, and social media posts.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and concerning your request for an emergency transfer shall be kept confidential. Such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections or an emergency transfer to you. Such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PERSON REQUESTING A TRANSFER

1. Name of victim requesting an emergency transfer: _____

2. Your name (if different from victim's) _____

3. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) who would transfer with the victim: _____

5. Address of location from which the victim seeks to transfer:

6. Address or phone number for contacting the victim: _____

7. Would it make you feel safer to share the name of your perpetrator and your relationship with that individual? If yes:

Name of the accused perpetrator: _____

Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____

8. Date(s), Time(s) and location(s) of incident(s): _____

9. Is the person requesting the transfer a victim of a sexual assault that occurred in the past 90 days on the premises of the property from which the victim is seeking a transfer? If yes, skip question 10. If no, fill out question 10. _____

10. Describe why the victim believes they are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if they remain in their current unit.

12. If voluntarily provided, list any third-party documentation you are providing along with this notice: _____

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the individual named above in Item 1 meets the requirement laid out on this form for an emergency transfer. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____ Signed on (Date) _____