



May 21, 2024

GENERAL NEWS

HUD Announces Assistance for Iowa Disaster Survivors

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced the implementation of federal disaster assistance for the State of Iowa to assist state, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe storms and tornadoes from April 26 to April 27, 2024.

A presidential [major disaster declaration](#) issued on May 14, 2024, allows HUD to offer assistance to affected individuals in the counties of Clarke, Harrison, Mills, Polk, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, and Union. Effective immediately, the department will:

- Grant a [90-day moratorium](#) on foreclosures of FHA-insured homes
- Make mortgage insurance available under [HUD's Section 203\(h\)](#) program
- Make insurance available for both mortgages and home rehabilitation under [HUD's Section 203\(k\) program](#)
- Make [information on housing providers](#) and HUD programs available
- Provide flexibility to Community Planning and Development grantees, which can apply for needed administrative flexibility in response to natural disasters. For more information on applying for a waiver or suspension of program requirements, [contact](#) your local CPD program office.
- Provide flexibility to PHAs, which can apply for needed waivers and flexibilities for disaster relief and recovery. To find detailed information on applying for a waiver, click [here](#) for the latest *Federal Register* disaster relief notice. The Department also released Notice [PIH 2021-34](#), which advises the public of HUD's expedited process for waivers and flexibilities from HUD regulatory and administrative requirements for various public housing and voucher programs.
- Provide administrative flexibility to tribes and their tribally designated housing entities through regulatory waivers.
- Ensure [HUD-approved housing counseling agencies](#) are ready to assist
- Assist with housing discrimination

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Click [here](#) for more information about disaster resources.

Owner of Massachusetts Sober Homes Found Liable for Sexual Harassment

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that the owner of a group of residential sober homes in Massachusetts was found liable for sexual harassment following a five-day jury trial. In August 2021, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division filed a [lawsuit](#) alleging that the owner subjected female tenants to sexual harassment in violation of the [Fair Housing Act](#).

Since at least 2012 through 2021, the agent and sole officer of the residential sober homes sexually harassed female residents by offering to reduce or forgive rent, granting extra house privileges or waiving security deposits in exchange for engaging in sex acts or sexually explicit photographs, and making unwanted sexual comments.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits harassment of tenants and other forms of housing discrimination because of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, and familial status. In October 2017, the DOJ's Civil Rights Division [announced](#) the [Sexual Harassment in Housing Initiative](#). The initiative specifically seeks to increase the Department's efforts to protect individuals from harassment by landlords, property managers, maintenance workers, security guards, and other employees and representatives of rental property owners. Since launching the Initiative, the Department has filed 40 lawsuits alleging sexual harassment in housing.



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