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HUD-VASH NEWS

HUD and VA Launch VASH “Boot Camps” for PHAs and VAMCs

In a [press release](#) late yesterday, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) and Veterans Affairs ([VA](#)) announced that they are launching HUD–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing ([HUD-VASH](#)) “boot camps,” a series of workshops to help PHAs and Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs) improve their processes and more quickly transition veterans from homelessness to permanent housing with wraparound supportive services. The first of the HUD-VASH “boot camps” was launched yesterday in Chicago, IL. According to the press release, there will be nine additional “boot camps” in each of HUD’s 10 regions across the country over the coming months.

As you know, the HUD-VASH program combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by Veterans Affairs. HUD-VASH vouchers enable homeless veterans to obtain affordable and decent housing in the private market. Veterans rent privately owned housing and generally contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent.

The “boot camps” announced yesterday are two-day, action-oriented, in-person workshops, with a virtual convening for PHAs and VAMCs who are unable to attend in person. The workshops will be facilitated by HUD and VA technical assistance providers and representatives from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). During the workshops, each team of PHAs and VAMCs strategize on ways to improve and speed up referrals of veterans experiencing homelessness to HUD-VASH, issuing vouchers to eligible veterans, and leasing up veterans into rental housing. In addition, the sessions will cover effective implementation of Housing First, understanding trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), effective delivery of supportive services, and landlord engagement. Further details can be found in the [press release](#).

GENERAL NEWS

DOJ Files Sexual Harassment Suit against GA Property Owners and Manager

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has filed a lawsuit against the owners and manager of rental properties in Georgia alleging sexual harassment and retaliation in violation of the [Fair Housing Act](#).

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, alleges that the owner has sexually harassed female tenants since at least 2008. According to the complaint, he made repeated and unwelcome sexual comments and advances to female tenants, touched female tenants’ bodies without their permission, entered their homes without permission, requested sexual contact, offered rental benefits in exchange for sex, and took retaliatory actions

against female tenants who refused his sexual advances. The lawsuit seeks monetary damages to compensate persons harmed by the alleged harassment, civil penalties to vindicate the public interest, and a court order barring future discrimination.

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 33 lawsuits alleging sexual harassment in housing and recovered over \$10.8 million for victims of such harassment.



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