

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) – TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protection to individuals in the instance of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA prohibits the eviction of tenants in these situations. All owners participating in the Section 8 Voucher Program must comply with VAWA.

Definitions as used in VAWA:

- **domestic violence** – includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.
- **dating violence** – means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- **stalking** – to follow, pursue, or repeatedly commit acts with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; to place under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; to place a person in reasonable fear of death, serious bodily injury, or cause substantial emotional harm to the person, a member of their immediate family, or a spouse/intimate partner of that person.
- **immediate family member** – a spouse, parent, brother/sister, or child of that person; an individual to whom that person stands in the position or place of a parent; or any other person living in the household of that person and related to that person by blood and marriage.