

## Housing Protections

**Under Florida law, survivors of domestic violence have certain housing protections:**

### Relocation Assistance

**§§ 960.198 and 960.13, Fla. Stat.**

If you are a victim of a crime and need to relocate from your home, you may qualify for financial assistance under the Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) Bureau of Victim Compensation. The OAG may award you up to \$1,500 on any one claim and a lifetime maximum of \$3,000.

Contact your local certified domestic violence center to determine your eligibility and to apply. You can find your local certified domestic violence center at <https://www.fcadv.org/centers> or by contacting the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-500-1119.

### Address Confidentiality Program

**§ 741.403, Fla. Stat.**

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) provides a substitute mailing address for relocated victims of domestic violence, and the Office of the Attorney General serves as legal agent for receipt of mail and service of process. To apply, you must file the application with assistance from an advocate at a local certified domestic violence center, a victim advocate at the State Attorney's office or local law enforcement agency, or other agency designated by the OAG under § 741.408.

### Time Off for Employees Seeking Protection § 741.313, Fla. Stat.

If you or a family or household member is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, your employer must permit you to take up to three working days of leave from work to make your home secure or to find new housing. This law applies only to victims who have been employed for three or more months by an employer of 50 or more employees.



**Florida Domestic Violence Hotline**

**1-800-500-1119**

**1-800-621-4202 (TDD)**

**Florida Relay 711**

# Know Your Housing Rights



Sponsored by the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families.



## Addressing Property Damage

If your abuser has damaged your property, you may also be able to obtain financial assistance to make repairs through Florida's Crime Victims Compensation Fund. For more information, contact your local certified domestic violence center or visit <http://myfloridalegal.com/victims>. You may need to provide a police report or otherwise participate with a law enforcement investigation to access this fund. Please note that it is illegal for your landlord to try to evict you for calling police to your unit to report a domestic violence related crime. If you face this problem, you can contact the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline, at 1-800-500-1119, and then press three to speak with the Florida Domestic Violence Legal Hotline.

If you have renter's insurance, your policy may cover the costs of damage to the property. You may need to file a police report for your insurance company to repair the damage. Consult your policy agreement for more information or call your insurance company to discuss your options.

## Illegal Evictions

An illegal eviction can take place when you are forced to leave your home by someone who does not have a legal right to evict you or when your landlord does not follow proper legal procedures while evicting you. Talk to a lawyer immediately if you believe that you are being wrongfully or illegally evicted. A lawyer can file a petition in court to ask the judge to order the landlord to allow you back in the home.

### You may be illegally evicted if your landlord:

- Changes the locks while you are out or stops you from getting into your home.
- Makes life so uncomfortable for you that you are forced to leave your home (for example, turning off the heat, gas, hot water, electric, etc.); this is known as a "constructive eviction".
- Physically removes you from the property or has anyone who is not authorized to do so by law remove you.

Be sure to keep copies of any letters, emails or texts that you send to your landlord. Also, keep any documents that you receive from your landlord regarding the illegal eviction attempts. If you have been evicted, you will need to find another place to live. Contact your certified local domestic violence center to learn about housing resources in your community or call the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-500-1119 if you are a survivor of domestic violence and in need of shelter.

## Housing Discrimination

Federal and state Fair Housing laws, make it illegal to discriminate in the sale, rental or financing of housing based on a person's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status (having kids), or disability. In addition, some courts have found that refusing someone housing or evicting someone because they have experienced domestic violence is illegal sex discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

### According to the Federal Violence Against Women Act, protective rights for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking include:

- While applying for housing, you can not be denied simply because you are a victim.
- You can not be evicted or lose your voucher based on violence against you.
- Acts of violence against you cannot be "serious or repeated violations" of your lease or "good cause" for evicting you or ending your voucher.

If you believe you are a victim of housing discrimination, you may file a housing discrimination complaint with HUD by calling 1-800-669-9777, TDD 1-800-927-9275 or visit HUD.gov.

