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GENERAL NEWS

HUD Announces More than \$27 Million in HOPWA Awards

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced that it has awarded more than \$27 million to assist thousands of low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. The funding, provided through HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS ([HOPWA](#)) program, will renew HUD's support to 31 local programs.

Under the HOPWA program, HUD makes grants to cities, states, and nonprofit organizations to provide housing assistance and supportive services to low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. By providing assistance with housing and related services, the HOPWA program helps persons living with HIV/AIDS enter into housing, access and remain in medical care, and adhere to complex treatment regimens.

The press release includes a list of the grant recipients and the amounts they were awarded. Click [here](#) for a summary of the grant programs.

DOJ Settles Sexual Harassment Suit against Ohio Landlords

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has reached a settlement with Ohio landlords resolving allegations that one of them sexually harassed female tenants at rental properties he owned or managed with the other defendants.

According to the press release, the lawsuit alleged that the landlord engaged in unwelcome sexual harassment at properties he managed, including making unwelcome sexual advances and comments to female tenants, sending them unwanted sexual text messages, videos and photos, offering to reduce or excuse their monthly rental payments, security deposits and utility fees in exchange for sex acts, and entering the homes of female tenants without their consent and without prior notice. The lawsuit also alleged that the landlord carried out some of this sexual harassment while managing properties on behalf of the other defendants, making them liable for the harassment he carried out while acting as their agent.

The [proposed consent decree](#), which must still be approved by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, requires that defendants pay a total of \$90,000 to three female tenants who were harmed by the harassment and a \$10,000 civil penalty to the United States. It also prohibits the defendant from continuing to manage rental housing, requires him to retain an independent property manager to manage any rental properties he owns now or in the future, and requires all defendants to receive fair housing training and implement comprehensive nondiscrimination policies and complaint procedures to prevent sexual harassment at their properties in the future.

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 21 lawsuits alleging sexual harassment in housing.



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