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GENERAL NEWS

Treasury Posts Samples of Simplified Eligibility Forms to Speed ERA Distribution

In a recently published [press release](#), the U.S. Department of Treasury ([Treasury](#)) reiterated its call for state and local governments operating Emergency Rental Assistance ([ERA](#)) programs to speed the delivery of assistance to those in need by eliminating unnecessary documentation requirements.

To help states and other jurisdictions quickly implement impactful programs, the Department has [published](#) on its website examples of simplified eligibility forms that are being used effectively by ERA programs around the country. Treasury is also sending the forms to all ERA program grantees, hosting information sessions, and offering technical support to encourage programs to use self-attestation when determining a household's eligibility. Treasury has also released an [Eviction Prevention Program Maturity Model](#) to help local eviction prevention collaboratives to assess and identify steps to strengthen their efforts.

You can find more information and other ERA resources on the [ERAP website](#).

DOJ Files Sexual Harassment Suit against Massachusetts Landlord

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the U.S. Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has filed a lawsuit against the operator of residential sober homes in Massachusetts alleging that he violated the [Fair Housing Act](#) by subjecting female residents to sexual harassment and retaliation.

DOJ's [complaint](#) alleges that from at least 2012 through at least 2019 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 sexual acts, requesting sexually explicit photographs and indicating that he would reduce or waive rent in exchange for the images, making unwanted sexual comments regarding female residents' bodies, and retaliating and taking adverse housing actions against residents who reported his conduct.

The lawsuit seeks a court order to prevent future discriminatory conduct, monetary damages to compensate the victims and civil penalties. The lawsuit also alleges that the company through which he operated the residential sober homes is liable for his conduct.

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 22 lawsuits alleging sexual harassment in housing.



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