

## **FAIR HOUSING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT (from the West Virginia Assistive Technology Newsletter)**

When we think of discrimination in housing, sexual harassment may not be at the top of the list. But according to HUD, sexual harassment is the most common form of harassment complaint received at its offices.

People are entitled to safety and privacy in their home. It is unfair when people need to relocate to achieve this. Individuals with disabilities, as well as low-income women who belong to racial or ethnic minorities, are especially in danger of sexual harassment in housing.

There are two types of sexual harassment – hostile environment and Quid Pro Quo.

Hostile environment sexual harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwelcome conduct so severe it interferes with their right to use and enjoy the housing.

Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when someone in an authority position, such as a landlord or apartment manager makes an unwelcome request or demand of a person and makes giving in to the request a condition related to the person's housing.

Examples of sexual harassment can be found in recent HUD cases. In one case in West Virginia, a Kanawha County property manager and owner were required to pay \$120,000 to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by the Department of Justice. In this case, workers at an apartment building were sexually harassing female tenants. The person in charge took no action when tenants complained and was also charged in this case.

If you believe you have experienced discrimination in housing, contact the West Virginia Fair Housing Action Network (WVFHN) at 844-212-3464 or [info@wvfhan.org](mailto:info@wvfhan.org)