

## Why GAO Did This Study

Domestic violence and sexual assault can contribute to housing instability. The 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act expanded protections for survivors in HUD-assisted rental housing. The Act was reauthorized in 2022.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 Joint Explanatory Statement, includes a provision for GAO to review housing providers' emergency transfer plans. This report examines (1) the extent to which selected housing providers adopted emergency transfer plans, (2) challenges to and strategies for completing emergency transfers, and (3) HUD's support and oversight of housing providers' efforts.

GAO analyzed emergency transfer policies from a nongeneralizable sample of 60 housing providers, randomly selected within size and urban and rural classifications. GAO reviewed HUD policies, procedures, and training related to the 2013 and 2022 reauthorizations and compared HUD's monitoring against relevant regulations and agency policies. GAO also visited three sites and interviewed 20 housing providers and nine interest groups (such as housing industry and survivor advocacy groups).

## What GAO Recommends

GAO makes seven recommendations to HUD, including providing directions on how to implement emergency transfers and revising the form used to assess private property managers' compliance with Violence Against Women Act requirements. HUD agreed with all the recommendations.

View [GAO-24-106481](#). For more information, contact Jill Naamane at (202) 512-8678 or [naamanej@gao.gov](mailto:naamanej@gao.gov).

# RENTAL HOUSING

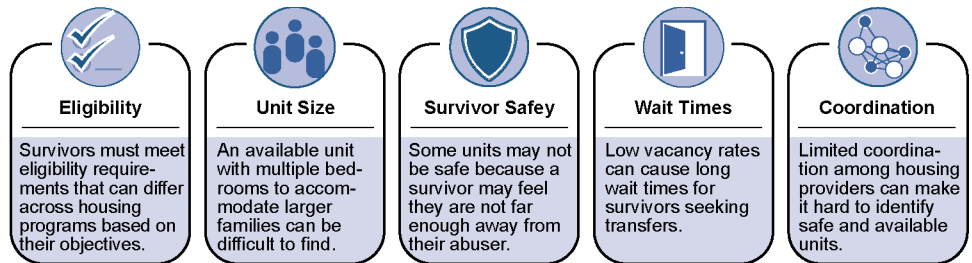
## Opportunities Exist to Improve Oversight of Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault

### What GAO Found

Most housing providers (45 of 60) in GAO's nongeneralizable sample adopted emergency transfer plans for relocating victims of domestic violence or sexual assault (survivors), as required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Violence Against Women Act regulation. But these providers—public housing agencies and private property managers under contract with HUD—often did not specify how transfers would take place. Three providers also required survivors to provide additional information in order to be eligible for a transfer (although inconsistent with the regulation), which might delay a transfer approval and put survivors at risk.

Challenges to transferring survivors include differing program eligibility requirements based on program objectives, limited coordination among housing providers on vacant units, and a limited number of appropriate units, according to housing providers and interest groups GAO interviewed. To address these challenges, some housing providers said they used strategies such as sharing data on vacant units, prioritizing survivors from waitlists, and streamlining application processes.

### Example of Potential Challenges in Making Emergency Transfers between HUD-Assisted Housing Programs



Source: GAO analysis of interviews with housing providers and officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); GAO (icons). | GAO-24-106481

HUD has planned training and begun monitoring some housing providers on emergency transfers, but opportunities remain to improve oversight in this area. The 2022 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act included multiyear funding for training and technical assistance. In January 2024, the agency established a multiyear training and technical assistance workplan to address needs expressed by housing providers. In 2023, it also began monitoring public housing agencies' compliance with Violence Against Women Act requirements. However, HUD has provided limited written instruction on implementing emergency transfers and inconsistently monitored private property managers with HUD contracts. For example, notices to housing providers did not include direction on coordinating transfers across programs. HUD regional officials noted that reviews of private property managers did not consistently check compliance with Violence Against Women Act requirements, because the review form did not include questions specific to emergency transfers. Without additional instruction and monitoring from HUD, housing providers may struggle to transfer survivors.