



# THREE-QUARTER HOUSE RESIDENTS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

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## What is a Three-Quarter House?

A Three-Quarter House is a building that rents rooms or bunk beds to single adults. They are sometimes referred to as “programs” even though they are not licensed or regulated by any government agency. Three-Quarter Houses are also called transitional houses or sober homes.

## You Have a Right to a Safe, Habitable Home Free From Harassment

Your landlord or Three-Quarter House operator cannot force you to leave your home. Unlawful harassment is any action by a landlord intended to force tenants to vacate their dwelling or to waive or surrender their rights. Thus, it is illegal for your landlord or Three-Quarter House operator to:

- Use force or threatened force to attempt to make you move out of the building
- Deprive you of essential services like heat, hot water, gas or electricity
- “Close” the house for any period of time each day or limit your ability to come and go as you please
- Force you into medical treatment or to attend any kind of substance use treatment program

Your landlord is responsible for making necessary repairs and for maintaining your building free of bed bugs, roaches, and rodents. You also have a right to in a building that is not dangerously overcrowded.

## How to Enforce Your Right to Safe Housing

- Ask the landlord to make repairs/stop the harassment, preferably in writing. You can make this request by yourself or join with other tenants in your building to make a joint demand. Keep a copy of the letter.
- Take pictures of the problems that need to be fixed. Keep track of dates that you ask for repairs. If there is a problem with your heat, keep a log of the outside temperature and the temperature in your apartment every day.
- Call 311 to report the conditions and/or harassment. Tell 311 that you live in a Three-Quarter House (if you do) and be sure to mention any overcrowding. Write down the complaint number.
- Bring an HP Action in Housing Court to force the landlord to make repairs and to stop the harassment.

TIP: Speak to a community or legal services organization BEFORE you advocate for repairs from your landlord.

## NYC Mayor’s Taskforce on Three-Quarter Houses

The Taskforce has an inspection team that responds to Three-Quarter House tenant complaints made to 311.

If the inspector finds dangerous overcrowding or other dangerous conditions, the City may issue a vacate order. If this happens:

- The City is required to provide every vacated tenant with emergency relocation services
- Relocation services include: temporary housing, a rental voucher (if you are low-income), and assistance obtaining permanent housing
- You should gather as many documents as possible to prove your residency to apply for relocation services

**You can reach the Mayor’s Taskforce by calling the HRA Rapid Rehousing hotline at 929-221-8665.**

**If you need legal advice or assistance, you can call Mobilization for Justice at 212-417-3705.**

## Your Landlord Cannot Refuse a Rental Voucher

Landlords of buildings with six or more units are prohibited from discriminating based on source of income. This means that it is illegal for a landlord or broker to refuse a housing subsidy voucher - like SEPS or LINC - or treat you differently from other tenants because of your source of income.

If landlords or brokers refuse to accept your voucher or if you believe you are being treated differently because you have a voucher:

1. Write down the details: the date and time, who you spoke with, what they said, and their contact information.
2. Call HRA's Rapid Rehousing hotline at 929-221-8665, the NYC Human Rights Commission at 718-722-3131 or Mobilization for Justice at 212-417-3705.

## You Have Wage and Hour Protections

Employees in New York City, including house managers at Three-Quarter Houses, have the right to:

1. Be paid the minimum wage.
2. Be paid for overtime work.
3. Assert the right to be paid without threats or retaliation.

To file a complaint against an employer who failed to pay you the minimum wage or overtime, call the New York State Department of Labor at 888-469-7365.

## Where to Get Help

For more information or legal assistance, call Mobilization for Justice at 212-417-3705.

To make a complaint about conditions in your house, call the Mayor's Task Force at 929-221-8665.

### Get Involved!

To get involved in the fight to improve the lives of Three-Quarter House tenants, call the Three-Quarter House Tenant Organizing Project, known as "TOP," at 212-417-3705.

You can also follow TOP on social media: [Facebook.com/TenantOrganizingProject](https://www.facebook.com/TenantOrganizingProject)  
Twitter: @TOPnyc



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212-417-3700 [www.mobilizationforjustice.org](http://www.mobilizationforjustice.org)

**MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE**, formerly MFY Legal Services, offers free legal assistance to low-income New Yorkers throughout New York City to resolve legal problems in the areas of housing; foreclosure; civil, disability and aging rights; bankruptcy, tax, consumer, employment, government benefits, immigration, and kinship care. Through these services we prevent homelessness, help seniors and people with disabilities live independently, stabilize families, maintain and increase income, and address racial disparities.