

Jumpstart Program Next Phase for Rent Reform

Rent Reform - Overview

One of AHFC's most important jobs is to provide housing opportunities to all Alaskans. Over the last few years, the supply of affordable housing has not kept up with the growing demand. While federal assistance is decreasing, families are staying longer than they were a decade ago, and for every unit available, there are four additional families seeking assistance. A year and a half ago AHFC launched Rent Reform, a series of programs based on an in-depth understanding of the housing needs that are unique to Alaska and an extensive study of the most successful housing programs in the nation. The goal has been to make the process simpler for Alaskans, to provide assistance to more Alaskans who need it, and to empower families in our program to become financially independent.



Classic Program

The Classic program went into effect January 1, 2014 with contract signing completed by April 1. The program is designed to provide long-term, stable, rental assistance, while also streamlining and simplifying the subsidy calculation process. It primarily assists families that rely on fixed income sources such as Social Security and disability income. Their contribution toward rent is based on income. The percentage is 28.5 percent of their monthly gross income with AHFC picking up the rest, and there will be no time limit for the assistance provided by AHFC.



Step Program

The Step Program, also in effect January 1, 2014, is designed to provide families with an adult able to work with opportunities to increase economic independence and transition into traditional rental or homeownership markets. Their contribution toward rent will also be income-based, starting at 28.5 percent. After the first year, their contribution will climb, while AHFC's contribution will decrease in each of the following years, eventually ending at 70 percent after five years. At that point assistance will cease. Families can reapply for the program after waiting a year after they get off the program.

One adult in each Step Program household will be required to complete a financial literacy course by the end of the first year of rental assistance. AHFC believes this requirement will provide families some of the knowledge and skills necessary to be financially independent.

jumpstart

Jumpstart Program

The Jumpstart program is due for roll out during November this year. It's geared toward families participating in AHFC's Housing Programs and aims to help households make the transition to higher rents and ultimately to market-based rents. In the Jumpstart program AHFC case managers work with families to help them develop individualized goals, introduce or direct them to resources, and support their progress toward meeting their goals.

AHFC monitors each family's progress and determines if the family is eligible for a financial incentive or reward. Families can also take advantage of services such as; learning how to set short- and long-term household goals, saving money for the future, developing skills for new employment and continued employment and assistance with resume writing and job searching and financial management.

bridge

Hardship Policy

AHFC anticipates that families will face challenges and situations beyond their control that will impair their ability to pay their rent. For these instances, AHFC has developed a comprehensive hardship policy designed to address each family's individual need.