

PARTICIPANT EMERGENCY HOUSING
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM POLICY

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I. General

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

BIHA is committed to providing a safe, quality and affordable place to live and ensure that all people can live fulfilling and healthy lives. During state or national emergencies, BIHA will take alternative steps for access to a safe, healthy and affordable home, free from the threat of displacement. The Participant Emergency Pandemic Assistance Program (EPAP) policy describes how BIHA will implement alternative steps to continue providing BIHA housing services. PEPAP seeks to implement homeless prevention assistance, isolation and quarantine assistance, and supportive housing services to BIHA Participants and Alaska Natives who are in immediate need of shelter and supportive services as a result of a pandemic or natural disaster, as defined by the Center for Disease Control and/or recognized by the State of Alaska Proclamation;

SECTION 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The objective of this policy is to identify alternative services for existing BIHA participants and applicants as they struggle to self-isolate or self-quarantine, it also provides direction for BIHA NAHASDA staff or a service provider to administer and manage the EPAP and apply waivers in accordance with PIH Notice 2020-5, *COVID-19 Statutory and Regulatory Waivers as it now exists or is hereafter amended*.

SECTION 3. AUTHORIZATION

The BIHA Executive Director is authorized and directed by the BIHA Board of Commissioners to implement the provisions of the PEPAP.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY

If any one or more section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, word, provision or application of this Policy shall for any person or circumstance be held to be illegal, invalid, unenforceable, and/or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of any other section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, word, provision or application of this Ordinance which is operable without the offending section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, word, provision or application shall remain effective notwithstanding.

SECTION 5. APPLICABILITY

A. Law

Policies regarding the administration of this program are to follow the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) and the

Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) Regulations at 24 CFR Part 1000, and the PIH Notice 2020-5 *COVID-19 Statutory and Regulatory Waivers*.

B. Funding

Assistance is subject to the availability of funds.

C. Policies

Generally, eligibility, admission, and occupancy criteria for assistance shall be consistent with those described in the BIHA adopted Admission & Occupancy Policy and the Infectious Disease Pandemic and Outbreak Policy.

D. Amendments

This policy can only be amended by the BIHA Board of Commissioners.

SECTION 6. Waivers

A. Purpose

Pursuant to PIH Notice 2020-5, *COVID-19 Statutory and Regulatory Waivers*, as it now exists or is hereafter amended, HUD has identified waivers of various IHBG rules in order to expedite the delivery of services and reduce the administrative burden associated with normal TDHE operations.

B. Period of Availability

The period of availability of each IHBG waiver and alternative requirement below ends when funds subject to the waiver and alternative requirement are expended, unless otherwise specified under each waiver and alternative requirement (e.g., IHP/APR deadline extensions).

C. Applicable Waivers and Alternative Requirements

The following are IHBG prescribed waivers and alternative requirements to be implemented by the BIHA

1. Income limits do not apply. All families may be assisted regardless of income and classification of unit, meaning FCAS or NAHASDA unit.
2. Income verification is waived.
 - a. IHBG recipients may deviate from their current written admissions and occupancy policies, and may allow less frequent income recertifications; and

- b. IHBG recipients may carry out intake and other tasks necessary to verify income remotely including allowing income self-certification over the phone (with a written record by the IHBG recipient's staff), or through an email with a self-certification form signed by a family.

3. Public health services

- a. IHBG recipients may use funds to carry out a wide range of public health activities designed to help staff, eligible residents, and other third-party providers serving eligible residents, prepare for, prevent, or respond to COVID-19; delivering meals on wheels or other food delivery services to eligible residents that are sheltered-in-place and complying with a stay-at-home order, or otherwise maintaining recommended social distancing.

4. Useful life requirements are waived if assistance is related to cleanup of pandemic contamination and temporary use dwelling units for purposes of housing and quarantining families to inhibit the spread of disease to low-income Indian families and the Tribal community.

5. Total Development Costs (TDC) may be exceeded by 20%.

SECTION 7. ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

Eligible families are Alaska Natives as defined in the BIHA Admissions and Occupancy Policy.

SECTION 8. SELECTION

Applicants will be selected in the order of first-come, first serve. And evaluated on a case-by-basis.

SECTION 9. SERVICE AREA

Units occupied or selected by recipients must be located within Sitka, Alaska

SECTION 10. ELIGIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES

Emergency housing assistance may be provided for, but not limited to the following circumstances that result in a substantial reduction in income or becoming unemployed due to circumstances beyond their control such as but not limited to the following situations:

- an inability to earn income as the result of a loss of childcare due to a pandemic or other catastrophic incident;

- an inability to earn income as the result of mandated isolation and quarantine due to contracting an infectious disease during a pandemic;
- An inability to secure goods and services as the result of mandated isolation and quarantine due to a pandemic or other catastrophic incident;
- a catastrophic illness resulting in inability to maintain essential housing costs;
- a natural disaster recognized by the State of Alaska Proclamation
- an event which means the death of, or mental incapacity of, or abandonment of the home by, all of the persons who have executed the agreement as lessees.

II. Homeless Prevention Assistance

SECTION 1. ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

A. Allowable Costs

Homeless Prevention Assistance may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Three month's mortgage payment for a home already occupied by the applicant family not to exceed 70% of monthly mortgage;
- Three month's rent in a mobile home or mobile home park already occupied by the applicant family not to exceed 70% of monthly rent.
- One month's rent in a nursing home, group home, transitional living center, motel, or other room in an established facility already occupied by the applicant family not to exceed 70% of monthly rent.
- One month's delinquent rent with any documented late fee not to exceed 70% of monthly rent.
- One month's delinquent mortgage payment with any documented late fees not to exceed 70% of monthly mortgage.
- Mortgage assistance - will follow the applicable loan program.
- Security deposit plus first and last month's rent on a unit where the lease payment does not exceed 70% of the combined deposit;
- Utility assistance
- Relocation costs
- Housing services related to the provision of self-sufficiency in accordance with IHBG regulations.

B. Impermissible Use of Funds

- Assistance may not be used to pay rent to an immediate family member) i.e., father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, sibling, or grandparent) or to any person with whom the applicant resides.
- Assistance may not be used for which duplicate assistance exists.

C. Authorization of Cost

Program staff will determine allowability of costs on a case-by-case basis.

D. Payment of Assistance

At no time will assistance be made directly to the family. NAHASDA program staff will develop procedures regarding the process for disbursing emergency assistance funds. The following cites typical examples of payment disbursement:

- Directly to a landlord
- Directly to a vendor
- Directly to a financial institution
- Directly to a service provider under an agreement with the BIHA
- Other as determined by NAHASDA program staff

SECTION 2. ASSISTANCE AMOUNT

A. Factors

The factors used to determine the amount of assistance to be awarded on behalf of the participant are:

- Present annual income of the household
- Family budget
- Fair Market Rent (FMR) for area in the State of Alaska as determined by HUD.
- Family circumstances
- Type of assistance needed

B. Term of Assistance

Emergency assistance is temporary, and the duration of assistance will be determined by the BIHA on a case-by-case basis and dependent on the type of assistance needed.

SECTION 3. APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE

A. Program Criteria

The eligibility, admission, and occupancy criteria for assistance utilizing this program shall be the same as those described in the BIHA adopted BIHA Admission & Occupancy Policy, as they apply to the type of assistance provided.

B. Application Document

1. All applications shall be on a form provided by BIHA. The form shall include, at a minimum, the date of application, name and contact information for the applicant and an explanation of the need for homeless prevention assistance, such as:
 - a. Living in unsafe conditions.
 - b. Currently homeless.
 - c. Soon to be homeless.
2. Declaration of an emergency for the area resulting in the additional need for housing assistance to address the emergency conditions.
3. The application constitutes the basic record of each family applying for participation. Each applicant, therefore, will be required to supply the information requested on the application and to sign the application, attesting to the information provided.
4. The application, together with all other material relating to the family's eligibility, is to be filed and maintained in accordance with the BIHA Admission and Occupancy requirements.

C. Application Processing

1. Applications will be accepted in person or by mail to the BIHA office. Depending on the Activation Level, as described in the BIHA Infectious Disease and Outbreak Policy and Procedure. Applications may be accepted via electronic delivery or telephone.
2. Upon determination of eligibility, applicants will be placed on a waiting list and selected for assistance on a first come, first served basis based upon the time and date when the BIHA received the completed application.
3. Applications will be processed as quickly as possible if there is an urgent need for assistance to prevent an eligible family from becoming homeless. BIHA staff may use all available means to verify income and other information including phone calls and written statements from 3rd parties.

D. Ineligibility

1. The BIHA Executive Director may determine an applicant to be ineligible, if the applicant has any history of criminal activity involving crimes of physical violence to persons or property and other criminal acts which would be damaging to the health, safety or welfare of their own family or other residents.
2. The BIHA Executive Director may determine eligibility of an applicant who has an outstanding debt with the BIHA on a case-by-case basis.

All applicants determined ineligible shall be notified in accordance with the provisions of the BIHA Admissions and Occupancy Policy.

III. Emergency Isolation & Quarantine Assistance

SECTION 1. SUPPLEMENTAL ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Subject to the availability of funds, additional emergency housing support assistance may be provided for, but not limited to the following:

1. Distributing educational materials and general Center for Disease Control (CDC) information via mail, social media, and other methods of communicating how to limit exposure to a pandemic related infectious disease and managing isolating and quarantining situations.
2. Purchasing and providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (masks, gloves, etc.), health supplies (thermometers, tissues, hand sanitizing soap, etc.) and cleaning supplies (disinfectant, bleach, spray bottles, wipes, etc.)
3. Purchasing and providing food along with delivery services to enable the affected families to shelter-in-place.
4. Providing medical delivery services.
5. Provide utility assistance payments for those who are unable to meet utility obligations. Payments will be made directly to the utility provider.
6. Provide other housing services identified and requiring rapid action to respond to the pandemic situation as determined by BIHA's Executive Director.