

Bridge Application Information



The Bridge Process is designed to address family financial hardships that occur due to extraordinary situations. Families must submit a Bridge Application along with appropriate documentation to begin the process.

Reasonable Accommodation: AHFC will provide a reasonable accommodation to enable a person with a disability to participate in the Bridge Process. Please contact your local AHFC office for more information and assistance with this process.

Qualifiers: The Bridge Process is designed to address financial hardships that occur due to extraordinary situations. To qualify:

1. The family must have an extraordinary change in life circumstances that significantly impacts the family's income; **AND**
2. The hardship must be of long-term or permanent duration (at least 90 days); **AND**
3. The hardship event must cause the family to experience a shelter burden in excess of 50 percent of gross or adjusted monthly income.

In addition, all families must:

- Be in compliance with AHFC policies; **AND**
- Submit a Bridge Application with appropriate documentation.

Application: The family must submit verification of their extraordinary change and all income to support their application.

Preliminary Review: The family's application may be reviewed at Tier 1 or Tier 2.

Tier 1: The local AHFC office will review the family's application to determine if:

- The application is complete and circumstances are verified; **AND**

- The family's circumstances meet minimum Bridge qualifications, **AND**
- Possible solutions are available under other AHFC policies and procedures

The Local AHFC Office may be able to provide the qualifying family with an immediate, short-term rent decrease or Safety Net, limited to 3 months, if:

- The family has permanently lost household member(s) with income;
- A medical or health condition is preventing an employed adult from working or is causing a decrease in work hours;
- The family has experienced an unexpected income loss. Families provided this Safety Net:
 - Will be referred to Jumpstart, AHFC's Family Self Sufficiency Program;
 - Must be willing to seek and obtain employment or become actively engaged in job training; and
 - Will only be considered for a Safety Net extension based on the family's employment barriers and participation in efforts to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

Tier 2: Qualifying applications that cannot be addressed under Tier 1 will be forward to the Regional Managers for subsequent review (Tier 2). Under Tier 2 AHFC may:

- Provide extensions to Safety Nets (limited to a total of six (6) months,



including time offered under Tier 1);

- Provide exemptions or deductions from income due to unreimbursed expenses for medical or child care that would have been considered prior to AHFC's Rent Reform.
- Forward the application for consideration by the Bridge Committee.

Preliminary Review Decision:

The family will be provided with a written determination. This letter will include:

- The review decision and the reasons for the decision;
- A determination regarding the amount, and duration of any temporary rent reductions, if awarded;
- How to request a review should the family disagree with the decision

Review of the Preliminary Decision:

If the family disagrees with the Preliminary Review decision:

- The family must submit a written request for a review to AHFC within ten (10) business days of the date of the written decision.
- Tier 1 decisions will be reviewed at Tier 2 by the Regional Managers.
- Tier 2 decisions will be reviewed by the Director of Housing Operations.
- The Director of Housing Operations' decision is a final determination.

Bridge Committee Review: The Bridge Committee meets quarterly to review applications and make decisions.

Family Rent While Awaiting Committee

Review: Once a family's request has been submitted for Committee review, the family's rent may be adjusted to 50 percent of gross or adjusted monthly income (if asking for expenses). This rent will remain in effect until the Committee has issued its written decision.

Bridge Packet: A summary of family information, with identifying information

removed, will be presented to the Committee. This information will include:

- The family's annual income (before and after the change in circumstance)
- The family's shelter burden
- The family's demographic information (number of work-able adults, number of disabled family members, number of elderly family members, number of minors)
- The family's explanation of their circumstances as provided on the Bridge Application

Committee Decision Factors: The Committee will review the family's Bridge Packet and may consider the following factors:

- The number of previous family hardship requests
- The family's level of participation in Jumpstart
- Any family efforts toward financial independence
- Any family efforts to remediate the hardship

Decision Options: The Committee may:

- Determine the level and duration of any family rent reductions
- Decide to extend a family's rental assistance beyond the five-year period
- Change the family's classification
- Any combination of the above
- Deny the family's request

Written Decision: The family will receive written notification with the Committee's decision. The letter will tell the family:

- The Committee's decision along with any rent adjustments
- The Committee's recommendations for family action to promote self sufficiency