

News Release:

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Survivors of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Empowered with Housing
Numbers Released Today Present Picture of Those Served

ANCHORAGE, AK, October 31, 2014 – Halloween is scary, but for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault every day is scary. For those the Empowering Choice Housing Program offers a safe haven. More than 470 Alaskans have benefited from an Alaska Housing Finance Corporation program designed to assist survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault secure housing. Underscored by October as National Domestic Violence Awareness month, AHFC released today a snapshot of Alaskans supported by its Empowering Choice Housing Program.

The Empowering Choice Housing Program, a part of Governor Parnell’s Choose Respect initiative, provides referral-based rental assistance for up to 250 survivor families a year, most of whom are families with very low income. Since the program launched in November 2012, 81 percent of beneficiaries earn a household income of less than 30 percent of median income, on average \$14,623 a year. At 72 percent, women who are heads of household with children make up the majority of supported families. Overall, 46 percent of these families are supported by welfare.

“The program provides critical support to survivors, an option to separate while not having to worry about the most basic life necessity – shelter,” said AHFC CEO/Executive Director Bryan Butcher. “Having a secure place to stay offers survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault the opportunity to put a plan in place that allows them and their children to live free from harm.”

AHFC partnered with the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to develop the Empowering Choice Housing Program. Families enter the program through referral from their local domestic violence or sexual assault support program to qualify. Families are eligible to receive the rent assistance for up to 36 months. Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault are encouraged to contact the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to find support resources near them and to ask if they qualify for the Empowering Choice Housing Program. More information is available about this and other programs benefitting vulnerable populations, including Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, at AHFC’s website: www.ahfc.us.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) is a public corporation with a long history of providing Alaskans access to safe, quality and affordable housing through home financing programs, energy efficiency and weatherization programs, public housing and more. Since 1986, AHFC has contributed \$1.9 billion to the State of Alaska’s General Fund.

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