

Information Requests

Exhibit 1-3

Families, applicants, or the public may request copies of documentation or policies from AHFC. As an instrumentality of the state, AHFC is subject to provisions of Alaska Statutes and Administrative Code regarding the obligation to disclose public records and provide copies of those records in an expeditious manner.

1. Policy Requests

AHFC will maintain a current, electronic manual per program for viewing by the public. If there are multiple AHFC offices in a geographic jurisdiction, only one manual per program administered, is required.

Documents produced by PHD for use in the normal course of business are provided to the public at no charge. Examples of these types of documents include blank applications, blank forms, grievance procedures, AHFC policy, and HUD regulations. If a person requests a large number of these documents (over an hour to produce), staff may schedule a date when these documents will be available to the requestor.

- ✓ Staff may have up to seven (7) business days to assemble the required documents.
- ✓ If the requestor has access to a computer, staff may suggest that the requestor review the documents online at <https://www.ahfc.us/tenants/resources/manuals>. The Housing Choice Voucher, Jumpstart, Public Housing, S8 Moderate Rehabilitation, S8N Multifamily Housing, and Unassisted Housing manuals are available there.

For HUD regulations, staff may also refer the requestor to www.gpo.gov. The requestor may print his/her own copies at this location.

2. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

The federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires AHFC to make certain records available to persons who request access to these records. The Corporate Communications Officer has the responsibility for responding to FOIA requests in a timely and appropriate manner. An employee who receives a FOIA request should forward it immediately to the Corporate Communications Officer (letter, email, phone calls, etc.).

- ✓ Routine requests for AHFC documents such as news releases or applications do not go to the Communications Officer; the department receiving them should provide the requestor the information at no charge.
- ✓ FOIA requests for non-routine information can involve a charge for copying and research time. These potential charges, timeframes to respond, and the appeals

process are referenced in the Release of Information Policies and Procedures maintained by Government Relations & Public Affairs. For AHFC staff, the FOIA procedure is detailed on the Public Shared drive at [Communications\FOIA \(Freedom of Info\)](#).

3. Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies

When verifying a request is legitimate, staff may:

- ✓ Call back a requestor to verify she/he is at the agency she/he claims to represent
- ✓ Request a faxed statement that verifies the agency name at the top
- ✓ Request voice verification, if known to the staff member.

The family's file is noted whenever information is given, either the hard copy file or the computer note screen.

If staff are unsure if it is appropriate to release information to a law enforcement agency, please contact your supervisor or regional manager for guidance.

4. Requests from Other Agencies

Staff may use the guidelines under Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies to verify a requestor or request for family information is legitimate. See the Documentation Fees section to determine if it is appropriate to charge the requestor for copies.

4.A.1. Attorney Requests

If staff is contacted by an attorney with a request for documents from a family's file, those requests will be forwarded to the supervisor or regional manager. The supervisor or regional manager is responsible for coordinating the request to the Attorney General's office.

4.A.2. Subpoena Requests

If staff receives a subpoena for family records, those requests are forwarded to the regional manager. The regional manager is responsible for forwarding the request to the Housing Operations Director. The Housing Operations Director will coordinate with the Attorney General's office and determine how to prepare and submit the required records.

5. Family Requests

Only authorized persons may request copies of a family's file. The request may be for all or part of a file. AHFC currently has the following release of information forms. See each individual form's instructions for its best use.

- Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing
- Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice
- Release of Information to AHFC
- Family Consent to Release of Information

Example: Release Uses

1. A family receives a lease violation for housekeeping issues. The family wants staff to speak with a social worker regarding a service to help clean the unit.

The family may use PW21 Family Consent to Release of Information to authorize AHFC staff to speak with the social worker regarding the lease violation and its possible cure.

2. A family is repeatedly late paying his/her rent. The family gets a payee service to address the problem.
 - a. The family may use PW21 Family Consent to Release of Information to have AHFC staff speak with the payee service regarding rental payment due dates or payments not received timely.
 - b. The family may use the HUD-92006 and check the "late payment of rent" box to have AHFC staff contact the payee service regarding rental payment due dates or payments not received timely.
3. Staff pulls an EIV report and sees unreported employment income for a family member.
 - a. A current (as of the date of the EIV printout), signed Authorization for Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice must be in the file for that family member.
 - b. A third party income verification is sent to the employer to verify the income. The Release of Information to AHFC is attached to the verification.

5.A File Review Appointment

When a family requests a copy of his or her file, staff will ask if she or he wishes to review the file to select documentation from the file or just wishes a particular document. It is not mandatory for a family to attend a file review appointment.

1. If needed, staff will set an appointment for a mutually convenient time to review the file. Staff should allow an appropriate amount of time.
2. The appointment will be at the AHFC office where the family's file is maintained.

3. Staff will remain in the room with the file and the family.
4. Staff will provide the family with a method to mark which file pages are desired (post-it notes, file tags, etc.).

Once the family has marked all file pages desired, staff will count the pages. If the number of pages is 20 or under, staff will make the copies for the family at that time and provide the copies at no cost to the family.

6. Documentation Fees

If the copies needed are over 20 pages, the cost is \$0.25 per page. The information will not be provided until payment in full is rendered. For families unable to pay the copy fee, see the Fee Waiver procedure below.

- ✓ A Fee Waiver Request, if appropriate, must be submitted and approved by AHFC **before** any documentation copies are provided.
- ✓ AHFC **must** make the documents available within seven (7) business days of the approval, unless additional time is needed and agreed to by both AHFC and the requestor.

6.A Documents to Redact

Not all documents in the file may be copied. Staff may have to prepare a file before it is reviewed and remove documents that may not be copied or distributed. To redact a document:

1. Count the number of pages in the document.
2. Type or handwrite on a blank piece of paper the name of the document that you have removed from the file, include the number of pages in the document.
3. Type or handwrite on the same paper, "Redacted in accordance with" or "Redacted due to" and explain the reason the document was removed.
4. Place the paper in the file where the removed document was placed.
5. Copy documents as normal.
6. Once the copying process is complete, return the original documents to the file and remove the redacted information page.
7. BEST PRACTICE - enter a computer memo regarding the information copied and redacted.

Example: Redact EIV

Lawrin is head of household, and his spouse is Rosebud. Lawrin has requested a copy of the most recent examination conducted and all supporting documents.

1. The EIV is four total pages with one page containing Lawrin's information and one page containing Rosebud's information.
2. Remove all EIV pages from the file.

3. Place a single page in the file that states “Enterprise Income Verification, four pages total. Redacted in accordance with HUD regulations.”
4. Copy the entire section for Lawrin, including the single redacted information page.
5. If Lawrin wants a copy of his EIV information, staff may copy the single page containing Lawrin’s information. He may not have the EIV information pertaining to Rosebud.
6. When Lawrin is finished reviewing the file, return the EIV pages to the file and remove the single redacted information page.

6.B Fee Waiver Request

In order to qualify for a waiver, the family must complete and submit the Fee Waiver Request. When a Fee Waiver Request is submitted, staff will complete page 2 of the form to determine if a family qualifies for a waiver. Staff will either approve or disapprove the request within two business days of receipt of the request.

Determining Federal Poverty Guideline Status

Under the AHFC Use Only section of the Fee Waiver Request, staff will look up the family’s information in the computer database.

1. Staff will total the number of family members (excluding live-in aides and foster children) and enter that information on the form.
2. Staff will enter the family’s gross income on the form.
3. Staff will consult the Poverty Guidelines for Alaska table (Exhibit 1-4) to determine if the family qualifies.
4. Staff will check Yes or No on the form.
5. If the answer is no, the family must provide supporting documentation to their request for a waiver.
6. If the answer is yes, staff will provide the requested copies free of charge.

Staff does not need a supervisor’s or regional manager’s approval if a family meets the poverty guidelines. Staff will then log the request (see Tracking Log below).

6.B.1. Family Emergency or Other Reason

The family may choose to submit documentation to support the waiver request due to a family emergency or other reason. Staff will evaluate the documentation provided by the family and approve/disapprove the request.

1. Approved

Staff will contact the family and arrange a date when the documents will be available to the family.

2. Disapproved

Staff will contact the family and inform the family of the decision. Although the initial contact with the family disapproving the request may be telephonic, staff will send a copy of the disapproved Fee Waiver Request to the family for his/her records.

The family may choose to pay the documentation fees and receive the documents or may choose to ask for a review of the disapproval decision (see below).

6.B.2. Disapproval Reviews

If the family wishes to request to a review of the decision, the family will sign that section of the form. A supervisor or regional manager will review the documentation and either approve or disapprove the request. The regional manager will contact the family with his/her decision.

6.C Tracking Log

Each office will enter documentation requests in a tracking log. Tracking logs will be based on a calendar year and will be located in the Logs folder in the shared Housing Department folder. The individual logs are named with "Documents" in their file name. Once the request is logged, staff may file the Fee Waiver Request and supporting documents in the correspondence section of the file.