# New Start Voucher Program Landlord Information

Enrolling as a participating landlord in the New Start Voucher program allows you to receive timely and dependable payments from AHFC while providing Alaskans with safe, quality, affordable housing. For some, it's a challenge to find housing at an affordable price. By accepting vouchers, participating landlords are stabilizing specific populations. These include seniors and disabled persons who wish to live independently for a longer period of time, along with individuals and families that otherwise could not afford a private rental.

## About New Start Vouchers

New Start Vouchers are available in 12 Alaska communities: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Petersburg, Sitka, Soldotna, Valdez and Wrangell.
Here are the basics:

- Alaska Housing maintains a waitlist for qualified applicants. Before receiving a voucher, applicants are screened by Alaska Housing for program and income eligibility.
- Tenants who are approved for voucher assistance search for housing in the private rental market and go through the landlord's standard application, screening and approval process, just like any other renter.
- AHFC, the renter, and the landlord enter into a contractual relationship that is covered under Alaska's Landlord Tenant Act.
- Tenants are initially responsible for paying approximately 28.5% of their gross income to the landlord for rent.
- The remaining balance of rent is paid by AHFC directly to the landlord or property management firm.

## Benefits for Landlords

- Alaska Housing pays a timely and dependable rental subsidy directly to you via direct deposit every month.
- You set the amount of security deposit according to local practice and AHFC offers deposit assistance.
- You choose your tenants.
- Participation will help to fill your rental vacancies while providing Alaska families safe, quality, affordable housing.
- Access to AHFC resources:
    - Alaska Housing Locator is an online search tool available to all Alaskans in search of a rental, and is highlighted as an essential resource to every Voucher participant. List your properties here.
    - AHFC has a digital newsletter specifically for landlords. Sign up for *Landlines* here.

### Who Qualifies for Voucher Assistance

- A family whose income does not exceed 50% of the area median income is eligible to apply with Alaska Housing for a voucher. There is no minimum income requirement. Specific income limits are set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are based on family size and the community in which the rental unit is located.
- AHFC screens each family for program eligibility. Each applicant has a housing navigator who is available to provide support and assistance during the process.

### How Prospective Tenants Are Reviewed & Approved

Landlords still review and approve prospective tenants. Your regular application and screening process still applies, including:

- Meeting and interviewing applicants.
- Running background checks.
- Reviewing past rental history.
- Asking for employer and/or personal references.
- Using your own lease (AHFC requires an initial lease term of one year).

### How Does the Unit Qualify?

- The family provides Alaska Housing with the completed voucher leasing packet to schedule an inspection of the unit. Alaska Housing reviews the packet to confirm the unit is within the family's budget.
- Alaska Housing schedules a HUD inspection. The inspection ensures that the unit is safe, sanitary and meets federal guidelines. The landlord, family and an Alaska Housing inspector must attend this first inspection.
- If the unit passes inspection, the family is eligible to receive subsidy.
- If the unit fails, the landlord has an opportunity to correct failed items, and Alaska Housing returns to verify the corrections.

### What is reasonable rent?

The rent amount charged for the unit must be comparable to similar units with similar features and amenities in the same neighborhood. Alaska Housing cannot accept a rent that is not reasonable.

### How are the tenant, landlord and AHFC related?

Alaska Housing begins assistance on a unit when the unit passes an inspection and the family takes possession of the unit.

The family signs a lease agreement with you as landlord and you sign a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract with Alaska Housing.

The HAP contract covers Alaska Housing's obligations for subsidy payments to the landlord, your responsibilities to keep the unit in compliance with federal inspection standards, and the terms under which you may terminate the lease agreement with the tenant family. Alaska Housing is not a party to the lease. You are responsible for enforcing the terms of the lease with the tenant family.