

# Preferences

**Preferences are only valid for applications submitted prior to July 1, 2012.** A family may qualify under Category A or B, but not both. Otherwise, points are combined for applicants who verify two or more preferences. AHFC will re-verify preferences prior to admission.

## Category A, Displacement

A “displaced” family is one who temporarily resides in transient facilities such as motels, hotels, or shelters; temporarily resides as a household guest; or is otherwise “homeless” or living in “substandard housing” as defined in preferences B.1 and B.2. Families may qualify under only one “Displacement” category.

A family living in “standard, permanent replacement housing” is not displaced. “Standard, permanent, replacement housing is defined as: (1) decent, safe, and sanitary; (2) adequate for the family size; and (3) that the family is occupying pursuant to a lease or occupancy agreement.

### A.1 Due to Domestic Violence (20 points)

A person who is a victim of domestic violence as defined in Alaska Statute, Section 18.66.990(3). The domestic violence must have occurred within the past six months. A victim of domestic violence who currently resides with the perpetrator is considered “displaced.”

**Documentation:** Receipt of an AHFC Domestic Violence Verification form from an authorized shelter or counseling agency, or written verification from the court, police records, or physician. The applicant must also certify that the perpetrator will not reside with the applicant family without advance AHFC approval.

### A.2 Due to Natural Disaster (20 points)

Qualifying families are those whose homes become uninhabitable due to a natural disaster such as an earthquake. The disaster must have occurred within six months of the application date.

**Documentation:** A letter, on agency letterhead, from a federal, state, or local government office certifying that the applicant’s housing is uninhabitable due to a natural disaster.

### A.3 Due to Family Reunification (20 points)

Eligibility occurs when inadequate housing is a primary factor preventing the reuniting of foster care children

with their biological parent(s), or to prevent children from going into foster care and the family is working with the Alaska Office of Children’s Services. Inadequate housing is defined as any of the conditions found under the “homelessness” or “substandard housing” preferences, or something other than “standard, permanent, replacement housing” as defined above.

**Documentation:** A letter from the Alaska Office of Children’s Services stating that inadequate housing is a primary factor preventing family reunification. For children returning from foster care, the letter must state that custodial visits or unification are scheduled to occur within six months. For prevention of children entering foster care, the letter must state that current, inadequate housing is a primary factor contributing to the potential removal of the children.

## Category B, Condition of Housing

Families may qualify under only one “Condition of Housing” category. Families cannot combine Category A and Category B preference points.

### B.1 Homelessness (16 points)

A family is considered homeless only when they reside in one of the following places. A person imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of Congress or state law is not considered “homeless.”

- A place not meant for human habitation; i.e., a car, park/camp, sidewalk, or abandoned building.
- An emergency shelter, which might include a church.
- Transitional or supportive housing for persons who qualify because of homelessness.
- In any of the above places, but is being treated in a hospital or other medical facility for 30 days or less.
- A family with children that meets the U.S. Department of Education definition of homelessness AND who receives services from an Alaska School District under the McKinney/Vento Homeless Assistance Act.



**Documentation:** A letter, on letterhead, from a shelter, transitional, or supportive housing agency where the family resides; OR a letter, on letterhead or the AHFC Homeless Verification form, from a social worker, social service agency, health care official, family intervention advocate, or school official having firsthand knowledge that the family lives in one of the places listed above; OR a completed AHFC McKinney/Vento Homeless Assistance Act form signed by an Alaska School District 'homeless liaison' or designee.

### **B.2 Substandard Housing (16 points)**

The housing unit must meet one of the following conditions. Residency in a single-room-occupancy (SRO) unit is not considered "substandard housing."

- Is dilapidated – does not provide adequate shelter and endangers the health and safety of a family.
- Lacks operable indoor plumbing or cooking facilities.
- Contains an unsafe or inadequate source of heat or electrical service.
- Is not a year-round residence in Alaska: e.g., a camp trailer, tent, shop, or garage.
- Discharge from a hospital or medical facility within 30 days where the terms of release require suitable housing (defined as "standard, permanent, replacement housing") where none is available.
- Living with friends or relatives in overcrowded conditions. "Overcrowding" is defined as more than two (2) persons per sleeping area to include living rooms and family rooms.
- Living in a hotel or motel not meant for long term residency.

**Documentation:** A letter, on letterhead, or the AHFC Substandard Housing Verification form, from a government agency, counselor, clergy, social worker, social service agency, health care official, family counselor, or school official having firsthand knowledge of one of the above conditions; OR a combination of two (2) AHFC Substandard Housing Verification forms from two persons having firsthand knowledge that the family meets one of the above conditions, such as landlords, employers, private resident lease holder, neighbors, or other individuals, subject to AHFC approval. At its discretion, AHFC may accept hotel, motel, or campground receipts in lieu of an agency letter or Substandard Housing Verification forms.

### **B.3 Rent Burden Greater than 50 Percent of Income (14 points)**

Applies if the applicant pays at least 50 percent of gross monthly income for rent and utilities for at least 30 days prior to the applicant's request for the preference.

**Documentation:** Proof of income, a copy of the lease or occupancy agreement, and the most recent rent receipt and utility receipt if the family pays utilities. AHFC will only consider the actual amount paid for rent or utilities.

### **Category C, Family Circumstances**

Families may qualify for one or more of the following. Families may combine Category C preference points with Category A or Category B preference points.

#### **C.1 Working, Disabled, or Elderly Family (2 points)**

Either the head, spouse, or co-head is:

- Currently employed, including those on Family Medical Leave and Workman's Compensation, or
- Disabled based upon documentation from a medical professional or receipt of disability payments, such as SSI, SSA, Interim Assistance, or Adult Public Assistance, or
- 62 years of age or older.

**Documentation:** AHFC will apply the preference to applicants declaring wages or disability benefit income, subject to verification when assistance is available; or to those who declare their age is 62 years or greater.

#### **C.2 Terminally Ill (4 points)**

The head, spouse, or co-head has an incurable, terminal illness.

**Documentation:** An attending physician must verify terminal illness. Verification must include a diagnosis that life expectancy is estimated to be three years or less, and evidence that the terminal nature of the illness meets the criteria for disability, as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act.

#### **C.3 U.S. Veteran (2 points)**

A veteran is defined as: One who has served in the armed forces and has been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions; OR the unmarried widow of the veteran; OR an unmarried former spouse eligible for "Former Spouse Protection Act" benefits.

**Documentation:** AHFC will apply the preference to applicants declaring VA income subject to verification when assistance is available. A letter from the Armed Services or Veteran's Administration, or DD214 discharge papers or proof of VA benefits. A DD173 URFS identification card to document an unmarried "Former Spouse Protection Act" beneficiary.