

Exhibit 2-5 Policy Overview

Old Policy	New Policy
Exhibit 2-2	All in this exhibit.
--	2-5.2.D ANDVSA preference for Bethel, Cordova, and Nome

Forms

AP101 Preferences

AP113 Verification of Displacement due to Domestic Violence

AP114 Verification of Homelessness

AP115 Verification of Substandard Housing

AP119 Verification of Homelessness by an Alaska School District

AP124 Empowering Choice Housing Program Referral

AP125 Change to Waiting List Application Status

Administrative Desk Manual

None

Exhibit 2-5

Local Preferences

Effective July 1, 2012, AHFC no longer offers any local preferences. Applications are ranked on a waiting list according to date/time received or through a lottery method. Active waiting list applications received before July 1, 2012 are eligible to be ranked according to the preferences in effect at that time. Below are procedures for proper waiting list ranking.

2-5.1 TWO WAITING LISTS

AHFC will maintain two waiting lists until the preference waiting list is exhausted. Staff will work the older preference waiting list first. Applications received July 1, 2012 and later for open waiting lists will go on the date/time waiting list. This list will be worked once the older preference list is exhausted.

2-5.1.A Adding to a Current Application

After June 30, 2012, no new applications are placed on the preference waiting list. If current applicants wish to add an additional program to their application, families must complete a new application and go on the date/time list.

2-5.1.B Reinstated Application

Staff may need to reinstate an application on the older preference waiting list. That is okay. Reinstate the application as required and leave it on the older list.

2-5.1.C Exhausting the Preference Waiting List

Once the preference list is exhausted, staff will not place any applications on that list to re-open it. All applications will go on the date/time list, and staff will work that list in accordance with waiting list procedures.

2-5.2 PREFERENCE CATEGORIES

AHFC adopted several local preferences used to rank applicants on the waiting list. A Preferences information sheet is available as form AP101.

A family may qualify under Category A or B, but not both; otherwise, applicants who verify two or more preferences will receive the combined value of the points. Families can combine Category C with either Category A or Category B preference points. AHFC must re-verify that preferences are valid prior to the offer of assistance.

2-5.2.A 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 below.

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.

Families may qualify under only one “Displacement” category as listed below. Families cannot combine Category A and Category B preference points.

1. Due to Domestic Violence (20 points)

- a. **Definition.** 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 (6) months. A victim of domestic violence who currently resides with the perpetrator is considered “displaced.”
- b. **Documentation.** Receipt of an AHFC Verification of Displacement due to Domestic Violence (form AP113) from an authorized shelter or counseling agency or written verification from the court, police records, or a physician. The applicant must also certify that the perpetrator will not reside with the applicant family without advance AHFC approval.

2. Due to Natural Disaster (20 points)

- a. **Definition.** 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.
- b. **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.

3. Due to Family Reunification (20 points)

- a. **Definition.** 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.
- b. **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.

2-5.2.B Category B, Condition of Housing

Families cannot combine Category A and Category B preference points. Families may qualify under only one "Condition of Housing" category as follows.

1. Homelessness (16 points)

- a. **Definition.** A person imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of Congress or state law is not considered "homeless." A family is considered homeless only when they reside in one of the following places.
- 1) A place not meant for human habitation; i.e., a car, park/camp, sidewalk, or abandoned building.
 - 2) An emergency shelter, which might include a church.
 - 3) Transitional or supportive housing for persons who qualify because of homelessness.
 - 4) In any of the above places, but is being treated in a hospital or other medical facility for 30 days or less.
 - 5) A family with children that meets the U.S. Department of Education definition of homelessness **AND** receives services from an Alaska School District under the McKinney/Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- b. **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 Verification of Homelessness (form AP114), 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 Verification of Homelessness by an Alaska School District (form AP119) signed by an Alaska School District 'homeless liaison' or designee.

2. Substandard Housing (16 points)

- a. **Definition.** Residency in a single-room-occupancy (SRO) unit is not considered "substandard housing." The housing unit must meet one of the following conditions.
- 1) Is dilapidated – does not provide adequate shelter and endangers the health and safety of a family.
 - 2) Lacks operable indoor plumbing or cooking facilities.
 - 3) Contains an unsafe or inadequate source of heat or electrical service.
 - 4) Is not a year-round residence in Alaska: e.g., a camp trailer, tent, shop, or garage.

- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Living in a hotel or motel not meant for long term residency.

- b. **Documentation.** A letter, on letterhead, or the AHFC Verification of Substandard Housing (form AP115), 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 Verification of Substandard Housing 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.

3. Rent Greater than 50 Percent of Income (Rent Burden, 14 Points)

- a. **Definition.** 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.
- b. **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.

2-5.2.C Category C, Family Circumstances

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

1. Working, Disabled, or Elderly Family (2 Points)

- a. **Definition.** Either the head, spouse, or co-head is:
 - 1) Currently employed, including those on Family Medical Leave and Workman’s Compensation, or
 - 2) Disabled based upon documentation from a medical professional or receipt of disability payments, such as SSI, SSA, Interim Assistance, or Adult Public Assistance, or
 - 3) 62 years of age or older.

- b. **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 of age or greater.
- 2. Terminally Ill (4 points)**
- a. **Definition.** The head, spouse, or co-head has an incurable, terminal illness.
 - b. **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.
- 3. U.S. Veteran (2 Points)**
- a. **Definition.** 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.
 - b. **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 URS identification card to document an unmarried “Former Spouse Protection Act” beneficiary.

2-5.2.D Bethel, Cordova, and Nome Public Housing Program

Public Housing waiting list preferential placement is provided to applicants referred through use of an Empowering Choice Housing Program Referral (form AP124) by the following ANDVSA member agencies only:

City	Approved Referral Source
Bethel	Tundra Women’s Coalition
Cordova	Cordova Family Resource Center
Nome	Bering Sea Women’s Group

2-5.3 PREFERENCE VERIFICATION

Staff must verify preference requests prior to the offer of assistance. The family’s failure to obtain verification will negate the preference, and the family’s application must be reassigned on the waiting list according to date and time and any remaining verified preferences. Staff will send the Change to Waiting List Application Status (form AP125). Staff will include the appropriate Informal Review form with the letter.

2-5.4 BRIDGE HOME PROGRAM

The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services runs the Bridge Home Program which is funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide a stable housing environment with intensive services. Services include living skills development as well as employment training.

AHFC helps support this program by allowing Bridge Home participants to apply for its Housing Choice Voucher waiting lists and retain their preferences while being housed with the Bridge Home Program. AHFC considers the housing offered by Bridge Home transitional in nature.

Do not remove any condition of housing preferences granted to families that can provide documentation of their participation in the Bridge Home Program.

2-5.5 HOME TBRA PROGRAM

Families receiving TBRA may want to apply for an AHFC waiting list. TBRA families will be ranked and worked in the appropriate order according to the policy for that waiting list. Staff will remember that TBRA assistance is considered transitional assistance and will apply any preferences that may be in effect at the time of application to an AHFC waiting list.

2-5.6 GRIEVANCE

An applicant may request and receive an Informal Review based on the denial of a requested preference. AHFC will not grant an Informal Review to an applicant request based on the preference categories, definitions, or verification requirements. AHFC need only justify its decision to award or deny the preference.