



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Baranof Island Housing Authority partners with Alaska Housing to distribute up to 12 months rent and utility assistance for eligible Sitkans
AlaskaHousingRelief.org is now live with eligibility checker and registration portal

SITKA – Under the recently passed federal omnibus package, renters in Alaska impacted by COVID-19 may be eligible for up to 12 months of assistance to pay for their rent and/or utilities. Baranof Island Housing Authority (BIHA) announces today their partnership with Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), which will provide a single reference and application portal for Sitka renters seeking to learn more information and apply for the financial assistance.

Residents of the City & Borough of Sitka are invited to visit www.AlaskaHousingRelief.org now to use an eligibility checker and to register for the program. Applications will be accepted until March 5, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.

“As the pandemic continues, more help is needed for those struggling to pay their monthly rent. This new program will provide rent relief to a great number of Sitkans. Our partnership with AHFC simplifies the application process and allows residents to learn more and apply online at AlaskaHousingRelief.org from their phones, tablets, and computers. If any local help is needed, just call BIHA at 747-5088 - our office staff is available and ready to assist,” said **Cliff Richter, BIHA’s Executive Director**.

BIHA and other regional housing authorities, the Municipality of Anchorage and AHFC received separate federally funded awards that combine to total more than \$200 million. Each entity independently recognized the possibility of creating significant confusion among residents if each were to develop their own application and review process and are partnering to provide residents of the City & Borough of Sitka with a single access point for assistance.

“Our partnership cuts through the red tape, leverages our individual connections and resources but ultimately brings peace of mind to those who have lost income and are seeking help. They now have to look to a single place: AlaskaHousingRelief.org,” said **AHFC CEO/Executive Director Bryan Butcher**.

The relief is available to renters who have experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and meet area income criteria defined by the federal government, which in the City & Borough of Sitka is an annual income less than **\$71,280**.

Eligibility requirements for spending the money are set by the U.S. Department of Treasury as a condition of the FY2021 Omnibus and COVID Relief and Response Act that was signed into law at the end of 2020. Mortgage relief is not an eligible expense.

Under Alaska Housing Rent Relief, up to 12 months of financial assistance can be provided to pay rent and/or utility expenses, including past due balances, with the possibility of extended assistance for an additional three months. Payments will be directed to landlords, property managers and utilities.

Alaskans who previously received federally funded housing assistance are eligible to participate in this program. Additional information is available at www.AlaskaHousingRelief.org or by calling or texting the word "relief" to (833) 440-0420.

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