AHFC Rental Assistance for Victims - Empowering Choice Housing Program (ECHP)

FY2019 Request: **$1,500,000**
Reference No: **60777**

AP/AL: Appropriation
Category: Health/Human Services
Location: Statewide
Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2023

Project Type: Life / Health / Safety
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)
Contact: Les Campbell
Contact Phone: (907)330-8356

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:
Rental Assistance for Victims addresses the needs of homeless or near-homeless families who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. These same families might otherwise qualify economically for the federal Housing Choice Voucher program. However, because demand for vouchers far exceeds the supply, the targeted families are unlikely to receive assistance in time to address their immediate needs. These funds will combine with up to $1,000,000 (before sequestration adjustments) of federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to fully fund 185 housing vouchers. AHFC will administer the funds through the same mechanism and locations as the federal Housing Choice Voucher program.

Funding:	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	Total
1139 AHFC Div	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$9,000,000
Total:	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	$9,000,000

☐ State Match Required ☐ One-Time Project ☐ Phased - new ☐ Phased - underway ☑ On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required ☐ Amendment ☐ Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	Amount	Staff
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:
Sec1 Ch1 SLA2017 P7 L14 SB23 $1,500,000
Sec1 Ch2 SLA2016 P6 L28 SB138 $1,500,000
Sec1 Ch38 SLA2015 P6 L24 SB26 $1,500,000
Sec1 Ch18 SLA2014 P61 L25 SB119 $2,000,000
Sec1 Ch16 SLA2013 P76 L25 SB18 $1,500,000

Project Description/Justification:
The purpose of this authorization is to provide a referral-based transitional housing assistance program, the Empowering Choice Housing Program (ECHP), designed to meet the housing needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Program Description

ECHP addresses the needs of homeless or near-homeless families who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. These same families might otherwise qualify economically for the federal

Housing Choice Voucher program. However, because demand for vouchers far exceeds the supply, the targeted families are unlikely to receive assistance in time to address their immediate needs. These funds will combine with up to $1,000,000 (before sequestration adjustments) of federal Department of Housing and Urban Development funding to fully fund the 185 vouchers. AHFC will administer the funds through the same mechanism and locations as the federal Housing Choice Voucher program.

AHFC is the federally-authorized agency responsible for administration of the Alaska Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program. Congress appropriates funding through HUD, which is then distributed by formula among public housing authorities. The HUD allocation of vouchers to Alaska consists of 4,275 regular vouchers and another 560 special program vouchers. Eligible families are those whose family income is below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). Nearly all families served are at or below 30% AMI, which is below the federal poverty line.

Over the decade, demand for voucher assistance has far exceeded the supply with approximately 4,400 families on AHFC waiting lists. AHFC administers its waiting lists by date and time. Due to federal budget declines and recent sequestration cuts to AHFC's federal funding, housing choice vouchers have had periods where no vouchers could be issued. Obtaining voucher assistance can be a very long process given current waiting lists and prolonged holds on voucher issuance. The Empowering Choice Housing Program (ECHP) is a referral program that will ensure a streamlined process for providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The ECHP is a partnership program with the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA), and the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA), whereby AHFC provides transitional tenant-based rental assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, whose primary mission is to represent victim services programs throughout the state that provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, shall assist those programs in providing referrals for program participants based on their expertise to determine displacement due to domestic violence or sexual assault.

A primary duty of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is to implement, maintain, and monitor Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault crisis intervention and prevention programs in consultation with authorities in the field. CDVSA approved programs shall provide referrals of program participants to AHFC (DVSA Programs).

In order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the program, data monitoring is ongoing and continuing. Data to be monitored includes, but is not limited to, the number of vouchers issued in each participating community, number of vouchers in shopping status, number of vouchers leased, number of available vouchers in each participating community and the average housing assistance payments for each participating community.

The projected outcomes include:

- Rental assistance for up to 185 households statewide who are displaced from permanent housing or otherwise at risk of displacement because of a recent or reoccurring instance of domestic violence as defined by Alaska Statute, Section 18.66.990(3); and
- Provide voucher assistance in the twelve communities where AHFC currently offers a housing choice voucher program.