

SUBCHAPTER K—HOUSING

PART 256—HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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§ 256.1 Purpose.

The purpose of the part is to define the terms and conditions under which assistance is given to Indians under the Housing Improvement Program (HIP).

§ 256.2 Definitions.

As used in this part 256:

Agency means the current organizational unit of the Bureau that provides direct services to the governing body or bodies and members of one or more specified Indian tribes.

Appeal means a written request for review of an action or the inaction of an official of the Bureau of Indian Affairs that is claimed to adversely affect the interested party making the request, as provided in part 2 of this chapter.

Applicant means an individual or persons on whose behalf an application for services has been made under this part.

Area Director means the officer in charge of a Bureau of Indian Affairs area office, or his/her authorized delegate.

Bureau means the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Child means a person under the age of 18 or such other age of majority as is established for purposes of parental support by tribal or state law (if any) applicable to the person at his or her residence, except that no other person who has been emancipated by marriage can be deemed a child.

Cost effective means the cost of the project is within the cost limits for the category of assistance and adds sufficient years of service to the dwelling to

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satisfy the recipient's housing needs well into the future.

Disabled means legally blind; legally deaf; lack of or inability to use one or more limbs; chair or bed bound; inability to walk without crutches or walker; mental disability in an adult of a severity that requires a companion to aid in basic needs, such as dressing, preparing food, etc.; or severe heart and/or respiratory problems preventing even minor exertion.

Family means one or more persons maintaining a household.

Household means persons living with the head of household who may be related or unrelated to the head of household and who function as members of a family.

Independent trades person means any person possessing the ability to perform work in a particular vocation.

Indian means any person who is a member of any of those tribes listed in the FEDERAL REGISTER pursuant to 25 CFR part 83, as recognized by and receiving services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Indian tribe means an Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe pursuant to Pub. L. 103-454, 108 Stat. 4791.

Permanent members of household means adults living in the household that intend to live there continuously from now on and any children defined as a *child* in this part.

Secretary means the Secretary of the Interior.

Service area means the reservations (former reservations in Oklahoma), allotments, restricted lands, and Indian-owned lands (including lands owned by corporations established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act) within a geographical area designated by the tribe and approved by the Area Director to which equitable services can be delivered.

Servicing housing office means the tribal housing office or bureau housing assistance office administering the Housing Improvement Program in the service area in which the applicant resides.

Standard Housing means a dwelling that is decent, safe, and sanitary.

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this definition, standard housing must meet each of the following conditions:

(i) General construction must conform to applicable tribal, county, State, or national codes and to appropriate building standards for the region;

(ii) The heating system must have the capacity to maintain a minimum temperature of 70 degrees in the dwelling during the coldest weather in the area;

(iii) The heating system must be safe to operate and maintain and deliver a uniform heat distribution;

(iv) The plumbing system must include a properly installed system of piping and fixtures;

(v) The electrical system must include wiring and equipment properly installed to safely supply electrical energy for lighting and appliance operation;

(vi) Occupants per dwelling must not exceed these limits:

(A) Two bedroom dwelling: Up to four persons;

(B) Three-bedroom dwelling: Up to seven persons;

(C) Four-bedroom dwelling: Adequate for all but the very largest families;

(vii) The first bedroom must have at least 120 sq. ft. of floor space and additional bedrooms have at least 100 sq. ft. of floor space each;

(viii) The house site must provide economical access to utilities and must be easy to enter and leave; and

(ix) Aesthetics and access to school bus routes must be considered.

(2) The following exceptions apply to the standards in paragraph (1) of this definition:

(i) If access to a particular utility is not available and there is no prospect of access becoming available, then the standard relating to that utility does not apply; and

(ii) In regions of severe climate, the size of the house may be reduced to meet the region's applicable building standards.

Substandard housing means condition(s) exist that do not meet the definition of *standard housing* in this part of the rule.

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Superintendent means the Bureau official in charge of an agency office.

[63 FR 10134, Mar. 2, 1998, as amended at 64 FR 13896, Mar. 23, 1999]

§ 256.3 Policy.

(a) The Bureau of Indian Affairs housing policy is that every American family should have the opportunity for a decent home and suitable living environment. The Housing Improvement Program will serve the neediest of the needy Indian families who have no other resource for standard housing.

(b) Every Indian who meets the basic eligibility criteria defined in § 256.6 is entitled to participate in the program. Participation is based on priority of need, regardless of tribal affiliation.

(c) Tribal participation in and direct administration of the Housing Improvement Program is encouraged to the maximum extent possible. Tribal involvement is necessary to ensure that the services provided under the program are responsive to the needs of the tribes and the program participants.

(d) Partnerships with complementary improvement programs are encouraged to increase basic benefits derived from the Housing Improvement Program fund. An example is the agreement with Indian Health Services to provide water and sanitation facilities for Housing Improvement Program houses.

§ 256.4 Information Collection.

The information collection requirements contained in § 256.9 have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3507 *et seq.* and assigned clearance number 1076-0084. The information is collected to determine applicant eligibility for services and eligibility to participate in the program based on the criteria referenced in §§ 256.9 and 256.10. Response is required to obtain a benefit. The public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average thirty minutes per response, including the time for reviewing the instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form.

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§ 256.5 What is the Housing Improvement Program?

The Housing Improvement Program provides a grant to fund services to repair, renovate, replace or provide housing for the neediest of the needy Indian families having substandard housing or who are without housing and have no other recourse for assistance.

§ 256.6 Am I eligible for the Housing Improvement Program?

You are eligible for the Housing Improvement Program if:

(a) You are a member of a Federally recognized American Indian tribe or Alaska Native village;

(b) You live in an approved tribal service area;

(c) Your annual income does not exceed 125 percent of the Department of Health and Human Services poverty income guidelines. These guidelines are available from your servicing housing office;

(d) Your present housing is substandard as defined in § 256.2; and

(e) You meet the ownership requirements for the assistance needed, as defined in § 256.8, § 256.9, or § 256.10;

(f) You have no other resource for housing assistance;

(g) You have not received assistance after October 1, 1986, for repairs and renovation, replacement or housing, or down payment assistance; and

(h) You did not acquire your present housing through participation in a Federal government-sponsored housing program that includes provision for the assistance referred to in paragraph (g) of this section.

[63 FR 10134, Mar. 2, 1998; 64 FR 13896, Mar. 23, 1999]

§ 256.7 What housing services are available under the Housing Improvement Program?

There are three categories of assistance available under the Housing Improvement Program, as outlined in the following table