

## **Kodiak Island Housing Authority: Building Better Futures Through Affordable Housing**

Kodiak Island Housing Authority (KIHA) is dedicated to providing safe, high-quality, and affordable housing solutions across Kodiak Island. Whether you're looking to rent or own, their wide range of programs helps lay the foundation for a brighter future in our community. KIHA's mission is to create opportunities for resident self-sufficiency and economic independence while ensuring access to safe, decent, and affordable housing.

With Kodiak being one of the most expensive places to live in the U.S., KIHA is tackling the housing shortage with over 300 affordable, well-maintained rental units. They offer rentals for American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) residents, non-AIANS, seniors aged 55+, and individuals requiring accessible units. Many properties come with resident services, such as after-school programs and light housekeeping.

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour several KIHA properties, and I was thoroughly impressed. The renovations, which included replacing carpets with sleek wood flooring by local company Alaskan Flooring, are a testament to KIHA's commitment to supporting the Kodiak economy. The properties, especially those at Woodside Manor, stood out for the outstanding services they offer to families. The youth and adult activity center are free of charge and provides supervised after-school programs, snacks, homework help, and a space for kids to interact and play. There are also adult workshops, including cooking classes in partnership with Kana, and the property even offers a bus service to ensure children get to school safely.

KIHA also has a **Rental Assistance Program**, paying up to 70% of the rent for Alaska Native and American Indian residents, and a similar **Student Rental Assistance Program** for students pursuing secondary education. These initiatives provide significant relief in an otherwise high-cost housing market.

For those interested in purchasing a home, KIHA offers fantastic **Homebuyer Opportunities**. With a variety of loan programs like Alaska Housing Finance Corporation loans and USDA Rural Development Loans, residents can build or buy with as little as 2.25% down. This can make homeownership as affordable, if not more so, than renting.

Homeowners aren't left out either. Through KIHA's **Weatherization Program**, they offer assistance with energy efficiency, accessibility upgrades, and maintenance challenges — a crucial service on the Emerald Isle where the climate can be tough on homes.

KIHA's **Family Investment Center** and **Life Builders Program** help tenants and their families by offering educational and employment support, ensuring that they not only have a place to live but can also build a sustainable future. The organization follows up with tenants, ensuring they are meeting rental requirements, applying for assistance programs, securing jobs, and even supporting those recovering from substance dependency.

Currently, KIHA has about 12 units available, and they are actively seeking more applicants who qualify for their housing programs. Their focus on essential workers such as teachers, grocery store employees, and firefighters means that their housing options benefit the whole community.

If you or someone you know could benefit from these programs, I encourage you to explore KIHA's offerings and spread the word about the affordable housing solutions that are helping to shape a stronger, more sustainable Kodiak Island.