

News Release

National American Indian Housing Council



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Native Americans – More ‘Homes’ for the Holidays

Washington, DC (11-22-06)—While many Americans are making their way home for the Thanksgiving holiday, Native Americans are celebrating as well, in many cases, celebrating their improved chance of owning a home.

Recent data for the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), which was released by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) for 2005, shows that Native Americans increased their number of mortgage originations.

From 2004 to 2005, the number of conventional home purchase loan originations expanded among Native Americans (+5.4%), but much more so among whites (+19.2%), and the total population (+18.6%). However, for the latter two categories, the expansion represented significant decreases in terms of proportion of applications (whites -4.4%; total -3.5%), while Native Americans showed a slight gain in that regard (+0.5%).

This encouraging trend reflects progress in Native Americans’ mortgage literacy, according to the **National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC)**.

Mortgage Opportunities Expand

While Native American homeownership is still lower than the national average 56%* vs. 68%, according to 2000 Census statistics, there are signs that the rate is improving and more loans are being made to Native American borrowers.

Mortgage opportunities are improving for Native Americans, particularly through the Housing and Urban Development Department’s Section 184 Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program. Created in 1992, the program provides 100 percent reimbursement to private lenders in case of default. As of July 2006, it had facilitated **3,505** loans. Another boon to mortgages is Fannie Mae, which at 2005 year-end had purchased **\$1.056 billion** in investments on tribal lands for **9,505** units over the past 5 years.

NAIHC Promotes Homeownership with Website and Training

To help boost homeownership rates among Native Americans, **NAIHC** launched a new website on September 25, 2006: www.NativeAmericanHomebuyer.com. The site has already seen **26,000 page visits**, and is expanding with new items such as advanced mortgage calculators that offer features like:

- How will prepaying change my loan?
- Simple Savings Calculator
- How much house can you afford?

—MORE—

*2000 Census Data shows that 56% of Native Americans own their homes nationwide. However, this rate is not reflective of the type of loan (i.e. a mortgage could be rent-to-own) or quality of the home. The effective homeownership rate in Indian Country for 2000 was 50%. (*Housing and Economic Development in Indian Country*: produced by Rutgers University and published by the Fannie Mae Foundation in 2006.)

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“This website is guiding Native American homebuyers through basic considerations such as how much home they can afford, and steering them away from predatory lenders and toward their tribe’s homebuyer counselors,” said **NAIHC Chairman Marty Shuravloff**.

In addition, **NAIHC** recently conducted a series of specific training seminars for its members focusing on “Planning for Homeownership Projects.” This will continue in 2007 with a seminar on “Housing as Economic Development” planned. Also, **NAIHC** recently conducted a seminar on “Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for Tribal Homeownership Programs.” Additionally **NAIHC’s** Homebuyer Team teaches the **Pathways Home** “train-the-trainer” program across the country. Pathways Home has certified **439 homebuyer trainers** overall.

Ask the Experts Forum Coming Soon

In honor of **Native American Heritage Month** **NAIHC** will conduct an “Ask the Indian Housing Experts” forum for the media on **November 29, 2006**. Available **NAIHC** experts are scheduled to include **Shuravloff**, Acting Executive Director **Dennis Daniels** (formerly of HUD’s Office of Native American Programs), Field Service Director **Luke Toyebo**, and Office of Governmental Affairs Director **Wendy Helgemo**.

The forum will be conducted via conference call, and news media are welcome to participate. Further details will be released at a later date. For media questions, please contact Kim Hayes, (202) 454-0931 or khayes@naihc.net.

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The National American Indian Housing Council assists tribes and tribal housing entities in reaching their self-determined goals of providing culturally relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and quality affordable housing for Native people in Indian communities and Alaska Native villages.

“A Tradition of Native American Housing”

www.naihc.net