

National American Indian Housing Council's Briefing Paper

Recommended Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request for Tribal Housing Programs

March 2, 2009

Many Federal programs serve as valuable resources for Indian tribes to meet multiple and acute housing needs of their People. Funding levels have been reduced or remained stagnant since the passage of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996. Funding levels for tribal housing programs need to be increased.

Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG). Fund the IHBG at \$854 million dollars. The IHBG is the single largest source of capital for housing development, housing-related infrastructure, and home repair and maintenance in Indian Country. This funding level will not meet all tribal housing needs, but will at least keep pace with the increased cost of housing construction, energy costs and other inflationary factors since 1997. Any allocation of funds to satisfy the Formula Current Assisted Stock litigation should be derived from additional appropriations or another source and should not be allowed to cause harm to block grant recipients.

Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG). Fund the ICDBG at \$100 million dollars. These funds are essential to the tribal economies and community development efforts. ICDBG funding has actually decreased 17 percent since fiscal year 2004. We need these vital funds restored.

Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA). Restore NAIHC's T&TA funding to \$4.8 million dollars. Tribal housing authorities rely on T&TA to effectively implement their housing programs. Decreased funding has required the National American Indian Housing Council to reduce, and in some cases eliminate, much-needed capacity building efforts on behalf of Indian Housing Authorities. By a unanimous vote at the 2008 NAIHC Annual Membership meeting, a NAIHC resolution was passed to set aside IHBG funds for NAIHC's T&TA program. NAIHC membership has expressed a concern about the quality of training provided by HUD contractors and have not developed a budget recommendation for HUD's T&TA program at this time.

Section 184 Loan Guarantee. Continue to fund the Section 184 Program at the FY 2009 President's recommended \$9 million dollars. The Section 184 loan program has been less successful in Indian communities where housing economies are less developed, where employment and income levels are lower, and where residents live on trust or allotted lands. In other areas the Section 184 Program has shown success. The default rate for the Section 184 Program, notably, remains at less than 1 percent.

Title VI Loan Guarantee. Continue to fund Title VI at the FY 2009 President's recommended \$2 million dollars. Title VI could spur housing and other community development efforts, particularly if accompanied by an increase in IHBG funding that would serve as an adequate, consistent, and reliable source of income to secure the loan.

Native Hawaiian Housing. The funding for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant should be increased to at least \$20 million to address the significant needs for low-income and affordable housing on Native Hawaiian Home Lands. The Section 184A Loan Guarantee Program should continue to be funded at the \$1 million level.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Housing Improvement Program (HIP). There is significant Congressional support for increasing the HIP funding to \$50 million. HIP grants serve the neediest of our communities; our elders and extremely low-income people. HIP provides for modest home acquisition, rehabilitation, renovation, and repair. As waiting lists for new homes grow and housing stock ages, this program helps to keep homes safe, healthy and habitable.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Programs. Restore and adequately fund USDA's primary housing loan programs, particularly the Section 502 direct home loan program, the Rural Community Development Initiative, and HUD's Rural Housing and Economic Development programs. Tribes rely upon these programs and reduction in these programs will harm tribal housing development.

NAIHC is the only national organization that promotes, supports, and encourages Indian tribes and tribally-designated housing entities (TDHEs) in their efforts to provide culturally-relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. NAIHC has a membership of 267 tribes and TDHEs, representing nearly 460 Indian tribes, and provides its members with training, technical assistance, research, communications and advocacy.