



*A Tradition of Native American
Housing*

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supportive Housing, Homelessness and Housing Needs Discussed at NAIHC Press Conference during its 36th Annual Convention in Minneapolis

WASHINGTON—May 25, 2010—The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) in conjunction with the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the American Indian Development Corporation of Minneapolis examined the supportive housing movement, homeless and housing needs in Indian Country at a press conference today during NAIHC's 36th Annual Convention and Trade Show.

“The state of Indian housing is in a crisis. Too many of our Native people are living in over crowded, substandard homes. But with the work and research from groups like the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the American Indian Development Corporation, more and more Indian housing needs are being addressed,” said NAIHC Chairman Marty Shuravloff. “About half of Native American homes are considered inadequate by any reasonable standard which may cause tribal members to migrate to urban communities only to find themselves without shelter and living on the street. Thankfully there are programs in places like Minneapolis to remedy these situations.”

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) featured its American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative, a partnership with Enterprise Community Partners, tribes and American Indian non-profits which uses public, government and private funding to provide housing and services for Native people who are homeless and living in severely overcrowded housing. CSH also discussed the first ever survey on reservation homelessness conducted in 2006 by six tribes in Minnesota in partnership with CSH, Wilder Research and Minnesota Department of Human Services. Much of the data has been used to assess the Indian housing situation in relation to Indian homelessness in urban areas and on reservations in Minnesota. CSH and Enterprise have been working proactively to partner with tribes to provide technical assistance, leverage funding and create new housing on and off tribal lands.

George Stone, Director of the Minnesota Program, Corporation for Supportive Housing reflected that “With Native Americans representing about 1.5% of the U.S. population but a staggering 8% of the national homeless population, CSH works with our partners, Enterprise Community Partners, tribes and non-profits to end homelessness for the 90,000 Native Americans who are homeless or under-housed across the country. We are proud to join with NAIHC today to advance this goal.”

The American Indian Community Development Corporation’s (AICDC) mission is to assist Minneapolis’ Native American community members acquire safe, affordable and healthy homes to strengthen their communities. Aside from the housing advocacy AICDC provides, it also has a number of projects that cater to the Indian community’s housing needs. AICDC’s Anishinabe Wakiagun provides housing for American Indians coping with late-stage alcoholism who would otherwise be living in transient communities. AICDC takes an asset based approach to create a holistic Community Development and housing vision to meet the needs of the local American Indian Community.

“By looking at the American Indian community assets we build on our strengths this creates a solid base on which to build, the resiliency of American Indian Community in the Twin Cities area is well documented,” said Michael Goze, CEO, American Indian Community Development Corporation. “AICDC is committed to the continued improvement of quality of life of our community from our babies to our elders.”

Nearly half of Native American households on Indian lands pay over 30% of their income for housing expenses compared to 23% of U.S. residents. It is reported that about 70% of income of Native American clients in Minneapolis is spent on housing. This large percentage makes it difficult for tribal members to sustain housing.

“There is a high Native population in Minneapolis which makes it a hub for housing issues. NAIHC is dedicated to working with urban housing organizations to help more tribal members find affordable homes,” said NAIHC Executive Director Mellor C. Willie. “We have learned much from the work both CSH and AICDC has conducted and we look forward to partnering with them on projects in the future.”

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The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) was founded in 1974 as a 501(c)(3) corporation. NAIHC is the only national organization representing housing interests of Native people who reside in Indian communities, Alaska Native Villages, and on native Hawaiian Home Lands.