

ASSESSMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN, ALASKA NATIVE AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN HOUSING NEEDS

(February 2012)

In December 2010, the Urban Institute was awarded a contract to conduct a congressionally mandated national Assessment of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing Needs. The study is being conducted for the Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD - Contract No. C-CHI-01092/GS-23F-8198H). Institute staff are conducting the work with support from three subcontractors: NORC at the University of Chicago, Econometrica Inc., and Support Services International (SSI). As specified in HUD's Statement of Work:

The study will consider a wide range of issues by using the Census information describing the needs of the Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian populations – the study will consider not only their housing conditions, but their socio-economic situations as well, to give a broader context to housing needs. The passage of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) of 1996 fundamentally changed the way federal funding is delivered to tribal people. Thus issues surrounding the changes NAHASDA introduced are a key part of the study.

The Urban Institute conducted a similar assessment in 1996.¹ HUD's Statement of Work also noted this earlier work and stated: "That report presented a complete overview of the housing situation of most American Indians and Alaska Natives. It is proposed that the current study update that work. A separate report on Native Hawaiians was also published by HUD in 1996 and should similarly serve as a model for the new report."

The 1996 study offered clear measures showing that "the housing problems of American Indians and Alaska Natives were more severe than those of non-Indians in all parts of America." It also showed that while earlier HUD programs (now often referred to as the 1937 act programs) had indeed made important contributions to housing conditions in Indian Country, they nonetheless had serious defects. The report went on to outline the comparative benefits of a block grant approach, informing the debate that ultimately led to the acceptance of that approach in NAHASDA.

The goals of the current study are to again provide clear, credible, and consistent information that can inform policy in ways that enable tribes to more effectively use resources to improve housing conditions.

Reports

The new study will yield one major volume on the circumstances of American Indians and Alaska Natives with findings in three main areas:

- The determinants of housing needs, emphasizing trends in demographic, social and economic conditions.

- Housing conditions and needs.
- Housing policies and programs, focusing on the role of NAHASDA.

The study will also yield a second stand-alone volume on the housing conditions and needs of Native Hawaiians.

Sources of Information

The study will require the collection of a substantial amount of information from three main types of sources:

Background Interviews and Literature Reviews - reviews of relevant research literature published since 1996 and interviews with people knowledgeable about conditions and trends in Indian Country and about the evolution of the policy environment, particularly with respect to housing and housing services. A panel of experts has been set up to advise on all aspects of the work.

Data from Secondary Sources. All analysis of data from secondary sources will be conducted by Urban Institute staff and consultants.

- The first and most extensive source will be data files from the, ***U.S. Bureau of the Census***. These will include: (1) both long-form and short-form (SF1 and SF3) data from the 2000 decennial census; (2) data from the American Community Survey (ACS); 1 and 3 year data as of 2009 for counties and larger areas, 2005-2009 5 year data for AIAN areas and other smaller geographies; (3) data from the 2010 decennial census; and (4) data for selected areas from the American Housing Survey.
- The second source involves various ***HUD administrative data files***. These include files maintained by HUD's Office of Native American Programs and information from files related to the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) funding formula.
- The third category is made up of a series of ***national data files for small areas maintained by the Urban Institute***, which will be used for analysis of changing conditions in AIAN tribal areas and other places of AIAN residence.

Primary Data Collection. Understanding what secondary data can tell us about AIAN housing needs is critical, but cannot substitute for direct learning about actual conditions on the ground as seen through the eyes of residents and program administrators. Direct observation of housing conditions is also essential. Primary data collection in this project will include:

- A major ***in-person household survey*** in 40 sampled AIAN tribal areas (target 1,280 households interviewed). These interviews will be conducted by tribal members who have been recruited and trained for this purpose by NORC. They will entail "walk-through" observations of housing

conditions, and interviews with the households focused on how they view their own housing conditions and their views on assisted housing programs.

- A *telephone survey of tribal housing offices* (national sample of 80 entities that administer the Indian Housing Block Grant program under NAHASDA) emphasizing experience with programs and policies but also covering views on changing problems and needs.
- More in-depth *in-person interviews with local housing officials, tribal leaders and community leaders* in 24 of the 40 tribal areas selected for the household survey. These interviews will also emphasize experience with programs and policies but will include views on changing problems and needs.
- A *telephone survey of lenders* that originate home loans in Indian Country (sample of 35, weighted toward those have been the most active lenders in tribal areas).
- *Site visits to 5 urban areas with concentrations of Native American populations and telephone interviews with staff at Urban Indian Community Centers* and other informed individuals in 25 other urban areas.
- *Telephone interviews concerning the assessment of Native Hawaiian housing needs*, with directors of homestead associations (approximately 50), selected Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL) staff, and representatives of key stakeholder organizations.

The household survey and tribal housing office telephone survey will be managed by NORC. The site visits and in-person interviews will be conducted by staffs of the Urban Institute and subcontractors. The lender survey and data collection pertaining to urban Indians will be conducted by Urban Institute consultants. The information collection pertaining to Native Hawaiians will be led by Econometrica, Inc. and NORC.

Outreach to Tribes

To assure that the surveys in tribal areas will be conducted in a culturally sensitive manner, an extensive outreach program is planned. After the 40 site sample has been drawn, study staff will immediately begin reaching out to each selected reservation and native village. The steps are:

1. Research the tribal history and tribal leadership for each reservation or native village selected and gain advice on working with the tribes from knowledgeable advisors and HUD staff
2. Through email or phone, identify a tribal contact that should be sent the project information and accompanying materials.
3. Provide informational material to a tribally-designated contact for dissemination. This will include a brochure, a fact sheet about the project, reports or briefs of projects conducted by NORC, and endorsement letters.
4. Conduct a follow-up call at a pre-arranged time with the tribal contact to address any questions and inquire about tribal IRB or research protocols and requirements. Then take next steps as advised by the contact.
5. Conduct a presentation for tribal leaders, either by phone or in person, that addresses:
 - The study and its importance/benefit to the tribe;

- An overview of questions to be asked in the household survey;
 - A description of NORC's role in the project (i.e., impartial data collector);
 - NORC's Pledge of Confidentiality and Ethics Standards; and a review of survey tasks, including preparing a list of addresses on tribal lands (if required), hiring and training field interviewers, conducting interviews and housing observations, and providing respondent incentives.
6. Meet with the tribal contact or other designated person to discuss next steps.

Key Personnel

- HUD Technical Representative (GTR): Jennifer Stoloff, Jennifer.A.Stoloff@HUD.gov
- Urban Institute: Principal Investigator: G. Thomas (Tom) Kingsley, tkingsley@urban.org
- Urban Institute: Project Manager: Nancy Pindus, npindus@urban.org
- NORC at the University of Chicago: Carol Hafford, Suzanne Bard
- Econometrica, Inc.: Richard Hilton, Charles Hanson
- Support Services International (SSI): Walter Hillabrant

¹*Assessment of American Indian Housing Needs and Programs: Final Report*, by G. Thomas Kingsley , Virginia E. Spencer, John Simonson, Carla E. Herbig, Nancy Kay, Maris Mikelsons and Peter Tatian. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996.