

## TRIBAL HOUSING OFFICIAL OR OTHER HOUSING OFFICIALS

### ON-SITE INTERVIEW GUIDE

*[Note: This guide is intended for respondents in tribal housing offices or other offices within the tribal/village government that include housing among their responsibilities, but that are not the Tribally Designated Housing Entity for NAHASDA. Since the organizational structure will vary for each tribe, not all questions will apply to all respondents.]*

#### **Introduction/Purpose of the Study**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a researcher from the Urban Institute, a non-profit research organization located in Washington, DC. With me today is [name and affiliation]. I'm here today because the Urban Institute, on behalf of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is studying the housing conditions and needs of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians across the United States. The study will describe housing needs and socioeconomic conditions in Indian Country. It will provide HUD with information on how current programs are operating, the extent to which housing needs are being addressed, and demographic and economic trends. It will also answer questions about home ownership in Indian Country and the impacts of the recent financial crisis. This is a three and a half year study that includes analysis of census and administrative data, surveys and in-person interviews, and selected case studies.

[Name of tribe/village] is one of 24 sites we are visiting in to conduct these in-person interviews with tribal leaders, Tribal Housing Offices and Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHE), other housing officials, and program staff. Interviews will cover the way the tribal staff is organized and its relationship to the TDHE; tribal staff views on the performance of the TDHE; perceptions of social/economic conditions; housing preferences; housing conditions; and key challenges. These interviews will provide important qualitative information on local institutional arrangements, particularly as they relate to housing, housing problems and the implementation of housing programs.

We will use what we learn today and from other interviews to contribute to a report on housing conditions and needs among Native Americans. This report will be submitted to HUD to inform

the federal government of housing challenges.

**Confidentiality Statement** *[Interviewer must read this]:*

Before beginning the interview, I (we) want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and remind you that your participation is voluntary. I (we) know that you are busy and will try to be as brief as possible. We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. The interview today should last about an hour. This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review. We are interested in learning about your ideas, experiences, and opinions about housing in your tribal area/village. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.

In addition, before we start, I want to let you know that although we will take notes during these interviews, information is never repeated with the name of the respondent in any reports or in any discussions with supervisors, colleagues, or HUD. When we write our reports and discuss our findings, information from all the people we speak with is compiled and presented so that no one person can be identified.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**A. Respondent's Present/Previous Role in Housing Programs or Tribal Governance**

1. Could you tell us your current official position within the government of this tribe or village?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Have you had other positions in the tribal housing program? (If YES), what positions did you have? In total how many years have you worked in the tribal housing program?
4. Have you served the tribal/village government in other governmental positions besides your current position? (If YES): Could you tell us what those positions were and how many total years you have served?

**B. Tribal Geography, Demography and Economy**

1. This is a map of your reservation. Will you please describe the geography of the reservation and how it varies in terms of physical terrain, climate, settlement patterns, access to transportation, shopping, employment, education, etc.?
2. Can you describe the population of your reservation, such as population size; proportion that are Native American; proportions that are enrolled members of this tribe; elderly; youth; other population characteristics.
3. What is your overall assessment of the economic conditions in the area? (Probe: Have you witnessed an impact of the recession on employment, economic activity, and need for housing? Please describe the changes over the past 3-4 years).
4. Have there been any significant changes in the tribal economy, or tribal economic development, over the past 5 years, for example, new industries, gaming, new businesses or employers? (If YES): Describe.
5. Are most adults employed? On or off the reservation? Main employers/industries?
6. Describe your perception of poverty and unemployment in this area? Is this a general problem? Has this changed over time?
7. Generally, are residents of the service area migrating away to other places, or are people, members of this tribe, other Native Americans, non-Indians or others moving here. Has this changed over time? Describe.

**C. Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) and Tribal Organization of its Housing Programs**

1. Please describe your office/organizational unit:
  - a. What are the major activities of this office?
  - b. What is the geographical area that your organization serves (e.g., reservation/village only; reservation/village plus surrounding/border areas; tribal service areas)?
  - c. How many people work for this office? What are their jobs?
2. Please describe where this office fits in the tribal organizational structure. [If possible have respondent walk through an organization chart with you.]
3. Are there particular challenges your office faces in carrying out its responsibilities? (If YES): Please describe the main challenges.

4. Who administers the NAHASDA Indian Housing Block Grant program for the tribe/village? Describe the organizational relationship between your organization and the NAHASDA grantee.

5. Other than NAHASDA funds, does your tribe/village have additional funds specifically devoted to housing?

(If YES): Are those funds administered by the same people administering the NAHASDA funds?

(If NO): How and why are they administered separately?

6. Does your organization administer any of those funds? If so, please discuss which funds/programs and your organization's role.

7. Are you aware of the factors that influenced the tribe/village to adopt the current organizational structure to manage its housing program? (If YES): Could you tell us what the major factors were?

8. Has administration of the Block Grant changed in any way since the Block Grant was first received?

9. NAHASDA was first implemented in 1998. To the best of your knowledge, did NAHASDA make it easier for the Tribe/Village to administer housing funding, more difficult, or not change very much as compared to what was the case prior to 1998?

10. On average, has the amount of funds you have received for housing under NAHASDA been roughly comparable to what your Tribe/Village received prior to NAHASDA?

[If NO]: Could you tell us if your funding has been significantly higher or significantly lower than pre-NAHASDA? Why has funding changed?

11. What would you change about NAHASDA if you were in a position to do so?

#### **D. Tribal/Village Housing Stock and Needs - Availability, Affordability, and Quality**

*[Determine appropriate questions to ask based on responses to C.13 through C.16 ]*

1. Some tribal/village members qualify for housing assistance and others don't. In your view, is there sufficient assisted rental housing available for those who qualify?

[If NO]: Is there a waiting list? Has the number on the waiting list increased, decreased, or stayed about the same in the past 3 years? How long does it take for people to get assisted rental housing?

2. How about assisted owner occupied units?

3. In your view, is there sufficient housing on or near your reservation or village to meet the needs of tribal/village members who don't qualify? (If NO): What are the barriers that limit the availability of such housing?
4. How would you characterize the physical condition of assisted housing properties compared to private housing on your tribe's/village's land? (ask separately for rental and home ownership). (If difference between assisted and private): What are the differences? (If assisted housing deteriorates faster): Why?
5. Including both tribal/village members who do and do not qualify for housing assistance programs, how would you characterize the need for additional housing in your community? [Low, Moderate, High]. (If High): Please describe the factors contributing to this level of need.
6. Are there subgroups of residents in your tribe/village that are specifically in need of housing assistance, such as homeless, youth, substance abusers, single parent households, or the elderly? (If YES): Describe the conditions of these groups.
7. Does the existing housing stock on your reservation or village have a sufficient number of residences that are suitable for people with physical disabilities?
8. From your observations, about what percentage of households on your reservation/village would consider their housing situation to be "overcrowded"? Please include both assisted and non-assisted housing.
  - a. Is the overcrowding you refer to year-long or are there seasonal variations? If there are seasonal variations, please describe when the seasonal influx occurs and the factors contributing to it.
  - b. Could you indicate the two most important factors contributing to the overcrowding to which you refer?
9. How many homeless shelters operate in this tribal area? Are they open year-round? (If NO): What months are they open?
  - a. Can you estimate how many people stay in these shelters when they are open?
  - b. How many beds do they have? How many beds would be needed to meet peak demand?
10. Do you think there is a need to build new housing or rehab some existing housing in order to better address the cultural traditions of your tribe?
 

[If YES] Could you indicate the types of culturally relevant features that should be incorporated into some or all of your housing stock? Has your tribe/village undertaken any such efforts?

11. On average, do you think that your existing assisted housing stock is appropriate for the climatic and environmental conditions normally prevalent in your location?  
  
[If NO] Could you indicate the two most common deficiencies in your existing housing stock?
12. Do you think that the quality and availability of housing on the reservation or village affects the ability of your tribe to promote economic development on the reservation or village (e.g., keeping essential workers on the reservation, attracting investment and employers)? Discuss.
13. What would you say is the approximate percentage of households on your reservation or village that have access to the Internet either through broadband or satellite connections? Has the Tribe and/or households on the reservation encountered any major barriers in gaining access to the Internet? (If YES): Could you describe those barriers?
14. Has there been any attempt to integrate any of the so-called “new” or “green” energy efficient technologies into your new or rehabbed assisted housing stock? Into any of your housing stock? (If YES): Could you indicate what technologies/approaches have been employed?
15. Have you encountered any barriers in attempting to employ new or green technologies? (If YES): What have they been?
16. In the past 5 years, what have been the main challenges in providing housing for your tribe/village? What have been the main successes? Please describe the factors you considered in your response.

## **E. Leveraging Funding**

*[Determine appropriate questions to ask based on responses to C.13 through C.16 ]*

1. Has your tribe or village been contributing to its housing programs with funds derived from commercial enterprises or natural resources? Please elaborate.
2. Has your tribe or village pursued funding from other government programs, besides NAHASDA, to support development projects you initiate (including infrastructure)? How

have these efforts worked so far? What are the major barriers in leveraging public funding in this way?

3. In what types of projects have you been able to leverage public funding in this way? Which of these projects have been most successful and why? (For projects that appear innovative, probe to get ample description of approach).
4. Has your Tribe /Village participated in NAHASDA's Title VI loan guarantee program?  
[If YES] Please describe (number/size of loans, purpose)  
[If NO] Why not?
5. Has your tribe or village pursued funds from private sources to support development projects you initiate? How have these efforts worked so far? What are the major barriers in leveraging private funding in this way?
6. In what types of projects have you been able to leverage private funding in this way? Which of these projects have been most successful and why? (For projects that appear innovative, probe to get ample description of approach).
7. Has private market activity (businesses as well as housing development) been expanding in this reservation? If so, what are the main reasons? What has the tribal government done to support that? (If private market activity has not been expanding in this reservation): what are the reasons?
8. Can you identify a legislative or regulatory change by the federal or state government that would enhance your community's ability to leverage funding for your housing programs and community development efforts? (If YES): What would that change be?.

#### **F. Homeownership and Section 184 Program**

1. Has your tribe, village, housing entity, and/or individual households chosen to participate in ONAP's Section 184 mortgage program?
2. If yes, when you began to promote the Section 184 program, did you encounter any significant reluctance on the part of households? (If YES): What factors appeared to discourage participation?

3. When you began to promote the Section 184 program, did you encounter any significant reluctance on the part of mortgage lending institutions? (If YES): What factors appeared to discourage participation?
4. If your community is not participating in the Section 184 program, could you tell us why?

#### **G. Other Tribal Programs and their Coordination with Housing**

1. Who is responsible for constructing and maintaining the infrastructure (road, water/sewer lines, utility connections, etc.) for your tribe/village's housing units? (Probe for any differences between assisted units and other housing units).
2. Does the tribe/village provide funding for these activities and, if so, what is the source of these funds?
3. Does the tribe or village coordinate infrastructure development and maintenance activities with other governmental entities (federal, state, counties, municipalities, other tribes, etc.)? (If YES): Please describe these activities.
4. Have you encountered any significant problems in achieving effective coordination? (If YES): Could you describe the nature of those difficulties?
5. Has the Tribe or Village developed a mid- or long-term plan to coordinate infrastructure development with the development of housing? (If YES): Please describe key aspects related to housing.
6. Are there other tribal programs that coordinate their activities with housing (e.g., environmental, economic development, health)? (If YES): Please describe these activities (e.g., shared staff, outreach and information exchange, combined application or enrollment activities, education programs, transportation)?
7. Are there housing-related services you would like to see offered by the tribe that aren't available at present?
8. Is there any topic or issue you expected us to cover that we have not brought up yet? (If YES): Please describe the issue(s) and explain why you think it/them to be important.