



**HARVESTING  
WISDOM**

**NeighborWorks America's Native  
Partnership Gathering**

August 2023 | Chicago, Illinois



# HARVESTING WISDOM

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August 2023 | Chicago, Illinois



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### Acknowledgments

NeighborWorks America® would like to thank our network affiliates and members of the Akwe:kon working group who participated in our Native Partnership Gathering on August 24, 2023 in Chicago, Illinois. We express our gratitude for the opportunity to hear about their experiences and lessons learned working with Native partners in their communities, which will help to shape our Native American Strategy going forward.


Appreciation also goes to Seven Sisters Community Development Group, LLC for their assistance with facilitating the session and summarizing the results, to Cuny Communications who designed this report, and to those who contributed images including Seven Sisters and NeighborWorks America.

Finally, we extend a warm thank you to Ameriprise Financial whose financial contributions have helped to support the work of our Native American Partnerships and Strategies program, including the Gathering and development of this report.

#### On the Cover

Earl and Leila Tulley reside in Rock Springs, New Mexico on the Navajo Nation. They became homeowners through a lease-to-purchase program from the Navajo Housing Authority.





## What would it take to build successful partnerships with Native communities, considering the need for tribes to leverage resources to address their housing and community development needs?

### OVERVIEW

On August 24, 2023, NeighborWorks America convened a group of NeighborWorks network leaders who received Native Partnership grants to expand their work with Native organizations in their communities. In 2021 and 2022, NeighborWorks America awarded 21 Native Partnership Grants totaling \$480,000 to network organizations. During the gathering, more than two dozen leaders representing 13 of those organizations spent the day learning from each other, building relationships and sharing strategies. The group also included NeighborWorks America staff who have been engaged with the Native American Partnerships and Strategy program and serve on the internal Akwe:kon working group that focuses on Native issues. A list of session participants appears in Appendix A.

The meeting objectives included:

- Reconnecting and building new relationships.
- Harvesting wisdom by identifying what's working as well as challenges.
- Learning about NeighborWorks America's draft Native Strategy.
- Determining a collective movement towards strengthening NeighborWorks America's work in Native communities.



## WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

NeighborWorks America's President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Marietta Rodriguez welcomed participants and thanked them for joining the session. Jennifer Arndt Jones, Vice President, Community Relations at Ameriprise Financial also shared opening remarks and stressed her organization's commitment to strengthening the work of NeighborWorks network organizations (NWOs) to develop impactful partnerships in Native communities. Mel Willie, director of NeighborWorks' Native American Partnerships and strategy program, added his welcome and appreciation to network members and staff for their willingness to spend the day "talking story" about their work in Indian Country. He then turned over the session to Vickie Oldman and Joanna Donohoe, facilitators from Seven Sisters Community Development Group, LLC.

After coming together through a grounding exercise, participants rotated through a series of pairs to introduce themselves and their organizations and to share something unique about themselves and their work with Native partners. As a group, participants then shared their expectations for the gathering, which centered around peer learning, relationship building and hearing about NeighborWorks America's Native Strategy.

## Participant Expectations

### ► Peer Learning

- Hear other best practices.
- Learn issues.
- Learn how to deepen relationship with tribes.
- How to build relationships with Native communities.
- Look at innovative solutions.
- Use my "listening ears."
- Immerse myself.
- Peer sharing and share stories.
- Looking for creative ways to better serve our community.
- Increase partnerships and share models.
- Come away with better perspective.
- More knowledge around this journey.
- Take change back home.
- Learn respectful approaches and assist with empowering.
- Learn and elevate ways to support work.
- How we can better serve partners.
- Learn about what you do and listen to stories.
- Learn at deeper level and see how grants advance work.

### ► Relationship Building

- Reconnect with old friends.
- Learn about opportunities and partnerships.
- Quality time with great people and break down silos.
- Network and build relationships.
- Partner, learn and meet people.
- Build stronger relationships.
- Meet new people and peer learning.

### ► Hearing about NeighborWorks America's Native Strategy

- See how we intersect with NeighborWorks America's Native Strategy
- Work with Willie on NeighborWorks America's Native American Partnerships and strategy program.



## NATIVE AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY PROGRAM

Mel Willie kicked off this session by sharing information about the state of Indian housing and the financial capability of Native families. He explained that investments for housing in tribal communities have not kept pace with the overwhelming demand. This has caused new development to decrease, while the need for rehabilitation and maintenance skyrockets. Because tribes are not able to meet the demand for housing alone, they are seeking to leverage their resources through private partnerships and homeownership financing.

He also explained that according to Neighborworks America's 2022 [National Housing and Financial Capability Survey](#), a large portion of Native American respondents are looking for new places to live, but many lack important credit-building tools that could expand their options. The survey also found that a lack of credit is one reason why many Native Americans are concerned about their ability to meet important financial milestones. For example, Willie shared that 80% of Native non-homeowner respondents said that they don't think banks or credit unions will approve them for a mortgage.

Willie summarized NeighborWorks' growing involvement in Native communities to help address these challenges and opportunities including:

- Increasing its network to three Native affiliates.
- Hiring a director of Native Strategy and Partnerships.
- Convening the internal Akwe:kon working group.
- Providing Native Partnership grants: internal and external.
- Offering training and technical assistance.
- Conducting research and data analysis.
- Collaborating with national partners.
- Creating a Native executive leadership cohort of the [NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program](#).
- Listening and exploring new strategies to deepen impact.

He also introduced the Akwe:kon working group, which is a collaborative, cross-divisional entity within NeighborWorks America dedicated to improving NeighborWorks America's internal and external engagement in Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The stakeholders that NeighborWorks America seeks to engage through its Native strategy include representatives from American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian populations. This report refers to the three populations together as "Native" or "Indigenous" people and the places where they live as "Native" or "Indigenous" communities. The places could include Indian reservations, Alaska Native Villages or Hawaiian Homesteads as well as communities near these places. In addition, Native people living in urban settings may be referred to in the strategy as "urban Indians" living in "urban Indian communities."

Finally, Willie provided an overview of NeighborWorks' draft Native strategy and posed the question:

**What would it take to build successful partnerships with Native communities, considering the need for tribes to leverage resources to address their housing and community development needs?**



A copy of the draft Native strategy appears in Appendix B. This strategy was informed by several reports and ongoing stakeholder engagements, including:

- A qualitative data gathering effort in Fall 2019 which culminated in the March 2020 stakeholder engagement report - [NeighborWorks American's Native Strategy: Exploring Partnerships and New Opportunities for Achieving Impact in Native Communities](#).
- An internal analysis of NeighborWorks America's onsite organizational assessment process (PROMPT) in September 2020 - Native Inclusion in the PROMPT Process.
- An industry tool developed by the NeighborWorks America's Training Division in June 2021 - [Housing and Community Development Training Resources and Opportunities for Indigenous Communities](#).

- Active participation in several industry groups, including the Native Housing Intermediaries Working Group, the Federal Reserve Banking of Minneapolis Center for Indian Country Development's Lending System Focus Group and the Department of Treasury, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's Project REACH.
- The results from NeighborWorks America's 21 Native Partnership grants to network organizations working in Native communities during 2021 and 2022.
- The work of the internal Native working group Akwe:kon.
- Extensive outreach and thought leadership with Native and Native-serving organizations.<sup>2</sup>

Participants provided the following preliminary feedback about the draft strategy.

- The strategy overall is generally a healthy stretch.
- There should be more staff dedicated to this work.
- Expand research into the need for and sources of down payment assistance.
- Bring partners together to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Ensure that we bring products that work in Native communities.
- NeighborWorks could be a conduit for resources with local groups doing the work.
- There are many gaps to address beyond just affordable housing.
- We should focus on homeownership and other community development issues beyond housing.
- This is a good start, but the road map is not yet formed.
- Need an advisory committee. Nothing about us without us.
- Need a work plan and overarching goals.
- This strategy should be incorporated into NeighborWorks America's strategic plan.
- We should identify the appropriate role of Native partners of NeighborWorks network organizations.
- Support Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs).
- Take the time to build long-term relationships.
- Be flexible with how you approach this work. It takes time.
- Focus on removing systemic barriers.
- Explore rental housing options, including low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), to get to scale along with other alternative programs and private equity to leverage.

<sup>2</sup> "Native organization" means an organization that is led by a board comprising a majority of Native people. A "Native-serving organization" is viewed as any organization that makes a dedicated effort to extend its services to Indigenous populations.



## STORYTELLING AND HARVESTING BEST PRACTICES

As part of the peer sharing component of the gathering, participants learned about three NeighborWorks network partnerships with Native organizations.

- **Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), Seattle, Washington** - CEO Sharon Lee provided an overview of LIHI's Native partnerships that included creating tiny home villages and apartment homes for Native community members and a partnership with a tribe's pre-apprenticeship training program to build 50 tiny houses.
- **Wyoming Housing Network, Casper, Wyoming** - Executive Director Melissa Noah shared her organization's efforts to hire a Native housing counselor to serve two tribes in the state.
- **South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition, Kyle, South Dakota** - Tawney Brunsch, executive director from Lakota Funds, and Lori Finnesand, co-CEO from GROW South Dakota, discussed their partnership to support a statewide coalition to increase homeownership opportunities on the nine Indian Reservations in the state.

Each group provided a brief overview of their partnership to the entire gathering. Based on their interests, participants self-selected a deeper storytelling breakout session to learn about one of the partnerships. The facilitators encouraged participants to actively listen for key successes and capture them on a "harvest sheet." The success themes included: leadership, partnership building, lessons learned and other insights. After the storytelling sessions, participants came back together as a large group to share what they harvested.

## What We Harvested

### ► Leadership

- Every step of the way, they engaged with the Native community to build trust and keep programs meaningful.
- They practiced open communication and listening.
- Asking permission was important.
- Leaders can shift the culture in their organizations.
- Local leaders drive the partnerships.
- A leader's commitment can contribute to success.
- The leaders had a vision.
- Sometimes leaders have to step back to allow their partner leaders to lead.
- Show up and build trust.
- Serve as an advocate to amplify partners' messages.
- Leaders can share models to be replicated in other places.

### ► Partnership Building

- Transfer customized models to Native partners.
- Let folks figure it out on their own - they know what's best for their communities.
- Make connections in a respectful way that builds capacity.
- Don't run away from tension and conflict. Sit together to come up with solutions.
- Look for ways to bridge communication issues with tribes.
- Consider shifting ownership to Native partners.

### ► Lessons Learned

- The Homeownership Assistance Fund (HAF) program provided a "foot in the door" and led to a larger partnership.
- We could fill a gap in equity through a partnership.
- Start by listing barriers and choose which to focus on.
- The grant writing process helped to refine the program structure.
- Advocacy and policy changes may be necessary to highlight inadequacies.
- It's hard to keep tribal leadership engaged, but they should always be welcomed, including tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs) in the tribe's absence.
- Sometimes you have to change the landscape with policies and funding.



### ► Other Insights

- Indian Country may benefit from looking at its own housing continuum from homelessness to homeownership.
- Stakeholders may need to be cautious about bringing in a partner who may have some history with a tribe to avoid a door closing quickly after it has just been re-opened.
- Let it be organic. Don't start with an agenda.
- Not all tribes share the same culture.
- Be intentional and genuine.
- Be aware of decades of trauma.
- Consider the inclusion of Native art.
- Don't let lack of engagement stop you. Get engaged at other levels.
- Consider opening your board to include Native community members.
- Passion drives success.
- Questions help shape the story.
- Most NeighborWorks network organizations and Native organizations are thrilled to showcase their partnerships as models for others.
- You need patience, especially with policy work.
- It takes tenacity to make system level changes.
- Consistency is key, e.g., monthly calls and/or annual gatherings.
- None of us will succeed on our own.



## A JOURNALING EXERCISE

### Integrating Learning Practice

After lunch, participants took some time to reflect on the morning's discussions. They captured their learnings in writing by responding to the following journaling prompts:

1. What are your key takeaways from this morning?
2. Describe the Native partnership you are trying to develop or grow.
3. How will you apply what you learned?



## STRENGTHENING OUR NATIVE STRATEGY

After journaling, participants divided into four small groups to discuss the four components of NeighborWorks' Native strategy: investing, the NeighborWorks network, training, and thought leadership. Each group considered the following questions and recorded their thoughts on flip charts.

1. Is our local learning reflected in this national strategy?
2. Is there anything that should be modified?
3. What should be added?

## Feedback on Native Strategy

Each breakout group presented their findings to the group at large.

### ► Investing: Deepening Our Impact in Native Homeownership

- Need to gather data to define the Native homeownership market in both urban and rural areas.
- Set target goals for increasing capital.
- Consider the need for a Native down payment assistance fund supported by banks and foundations.
- NeighborWorks America could leverage its relationships to raise funds.
- NeighborWorks Capital could assist with fund development.
- There's an opportunity to expand beyond increasing housing in Native communities to include additional services like solar, heat pumps, and electric vehicle (EV) charging. NeighborWorks America could bring together big partners like BlocPower to provide a suite of services built around housing and beyond.

### ► The Network: Strengthening Native Partnerships

- Offer peer learning with Native partners, e.g., LIHTC and other housing development training.
- Provide training on the history of Native tribes with local cultural awareness to support entry into partnerships with Native organizations.
- Formalize technical assistance process for NeighborWorks network organizations partnering with Native communities.
- Expand access to NeighborWorks Training Institutes (NTIs) for Native partners of network organizations by providing extra training scholarships.
- Enable NeighborWorks network organizations/Native partner teams to attend Native housing training opportunities together.
- Build on the resources that NeighborWorks network organizations have.
- Provide grants for Native partners with advice from NeighborWorks network.
- Offer a Native Community Leadership Institute (CLI) – separately or as a cohort of an existing CLI.
- Balance expectations around NeighborWorks network affiliation.
- Identify funding, resources, and engagement opportunities with non-network Native groups and projects.

### ► Training: Building Native Housing Leaders

- Create an advisory committee with Native representation.
- Conduct risk mitigation with NeighborWorks network launching new relationships with Native organizations by providing training on how to build partnerships with Native organizations in a good way, e.g., [ML 251 - Developing Successful Partnerships with Native Organizations](#).
- Co-host site visits to tribal communities.
- Create a curriculum that encompasses the current nuances of tribal communities.
- Offer place-based training in Native environments.
- Ensure all NeighborWorks training is culturally competent with at least one case study from Indian Country.
- Focus on affordability.
- NeighborWorks America's Training Division should take Native geographies into account when planning the location of NTIs and other trainings.
- Piggy-back Native events with NeighborWorks America's trainings.
- Survey to determine top training topics and share results with internal and external partners.
- Offer training that builds capacity for affiliation.
- Hire faculty with background with tribal communities. You can't build capacity without understanding.
- Provide periodic relationship building opportunities with training, faculty and network.
- Set aside permanent funding for Native training so we are not stressed financially.
- Provide training updates in a weekly blast.

### ► Thought Leadership: Elevating Native Housing

- Define Native housing.
- Native leaders outside of NeighborWorks are vital for strategy planning.
- Can network organizations partner with CLI teams to bring in training, especially Native-led teams?
- One of NeighborWorks America's strengths is the ability to convene large groups of people and institutions. It should consider how it can inspire other national organizations to adopt internal policies that recognize, engage with, and support Indigenous communities.
- Share communication pieces on innovative partnership examples and data (like Willie shared).
- Can grants continue, be impactful, and broaden the scope of who is at the table?
- Partner with Native-led organizations to bring Native representation to convenings. Focus on intermediaries, not just tribal leadership.
- Tribes need ownership of data. Census data is inadequate and underrepresents tribal populations, poverty and needs. County level averages gloss over needs. Could NeighborWorks help with this?
- Rather than creating new events, co-sponsor and have a presence at Native-led events.
- Get the banks in the room to be educated and create change through Native-led conversations.
- Educate practitioners not just in housing but also in social services.
- The gap between availability of assistance and ability to implement = technical assistance.
- Consider a media strategy to pitch, write and amplify success to show what is possible.



## NATIVE PARTNERSHIP GATHERING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following overall recommendations emerged from the gathering as ways to enhance the implementation of NeighborWorks America's Native strategy.

**Create a Native Partnership grantee cohort.** Create a space for grantees and their Native partners to come together to share best practices and learn from each other. Consider organizing standalone meetings in Native communities. Include Akwe:kon working group in the cohort. Create formal communication channels for updates and peer sharing.

**Thoughtfully engage Native Partnership grantees.** Make it clear in their grant agreements that grantees are expected to participate in future cohort gatherings. Consider whether grants should include funding for time and travel expenses for both the grantees and their Native partners to participate.

**Work closely with all relationship managers.** Engage all Relationship Managers to make sure they encourage groups to apply for Native Partnership grants and actively participate in future cohort gatherings. Expand relationship managers' cultural competency by providing an opportunity for them to attend the course [ML 251 - Developing Successful Partnerships with Native Organizations](#), either at an NTI or place-based training.

**Create a Native advisory committee.** Determine who should be a part of the advisory committee and what their roles would be. Define the range of potential Native partners, including the three Native-led network organizations, Native partners of network grantees, network organizations with large Native populations in their service areas, national Native intermediaries, and Native departments at national non-Native intermediaries.

**Dedicate funding to support Akwe:kon working group.** Funding could help to cover salary and travel expenses to participate in the Native Partnership grantee cohort, in-person working group meetings, more visits to Native communities, and a communications budget to capture storytelling of Native partners.

**Make the Native strategy transparent and measurable.** Incorporate the Native strategy into NeighborWorks America's strategic framework and scorecard. Develop metrics, an implementation timeline and a feedback loop for the strategy. Get started by identifying available resources and setting realistic goals and milestones for year one, but don't lose that long-term audacious vision.

**Follow the approach - "nothing about us without us."** Develop a premise that NeighborWorks will always include Native voices in its Native strategy.



## WRAP-UP

Participants concluded the session by identifying the following immediate next steps, and what they liked about the session (pluses) and what they wished could have been different (wishes).

## Immediate Next Steps

- Determine how the Native Partnership grantees can stay connected through communications and future meetings.
- Share Willie's slide deck and the notes from today's session.
- Share input about NeighborWorks Native strategy with the Akwe:kon working group.
- Create a formal vehicle to share the evolution and implementation of the NeighborWorks Native strategy.
  - ▶ Should this be posted on a website? Shared through a dashboard? Or included in newsletter articles?
  - ▶ Provide a call to action! We want to stay involved!
- Create a cohort and consider what it could look like. Could it include the following?
  - ▶ Quarterly meetings.
  - ▶ Representation from external parties - Native organizations and communities.
  - ▶ Co-chairs who could develop the agenda.
  - ▶ Organizing by key topics, learning experiences, general updates, what we are struggling with, etc.
  - ▶ Including housing experts.
  - ▶ Sharing what's happening in the field.
  - ▶ Inviting guest speakers and storytellers.
  - ▶ Integrating the Native Partnership work.
  - ▶ Encouraging peer sharing and learning.
  - ▶ Replicating other NeighborWorks America cohorts.
  - ▶ Determining cohort membership that includes a variety of voices.

## Pluses

- ▶ Enjoyed being in the room with such brain power.
- ▶ Grateful that we are a network organization.
- ▶ Lots of great contacts.
- ▶ Hear stories both informally and formally.
- ▶ Allows us to not feel isolated.
- ▶ Appreciated that you spent time to ground us and bring us together.
- ▶ Leadership of Mel and Seven Sisters.
- ▶ Agenda with great attributes.
- ▶ Invitation for being here.
- ▶ Being in person.
- ▶ Opportunity to listen and learn.
- ▶ Great conversation.
- ▶ Appreciate what I've heard.
- ▶ Ability to help to steer the Native strategy.
- ▶ Hearing Mel's story.
- ▶ Continued conversations.
- ▶ Thoughtful feedback on Native strategy.
- ▶ When we talk, we are saying the songs and prayers of our ancestors.
- ▶ Openness about ways to learn.
- ▶ "We can do this."

## Wishes

- ▶ For us to recognize the power of the collective to support Native populations.
- ▶ Take it to next level.
- ▶ Let's not have the same conversation next year. We want results.
- ▶ Bring my partners to be part of the conversation.
- ▶ Share your stories with me.
- ▶ This group can problem solve to impact the system.
- ▶ Keep momentum going.
- ▶ More Native organizations to share about what's working.
- ▶ To continue to be involved with work.
- ▶ Wish I didn't have a deadline that distracted me.
- ▶ Would love for NeighborWorks America to present at the OFN Native gathering.
- ▶ Find resources to build relationships.
- ▶ Anxious to see how it will be implemented.
- ▶ To continue to be a part of this group.
- ▶ Work is part of my heart.
- ▶ Explore the cohort model.
- ▶ Wish we could take you to our tribal community.
- ▶ Continue to learn from Native partners.

## Conclusion

Throughout the Native Partnership gathering, NeighborWorks network organizations were excited to share their experiences working with their Native partners. They appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback about NeighborWorks America's draft Native strategy and seemed eager to see the strategy finalized and incorporated into NeighborWorks' overall strategic plan and scorecard.

They were enthusiastic about the opportunity to continue to collaborate with each other through the creation of a Native partnership cohort which would also invite their Native partners to the table. In addition, participants were appreciative of this forum to discuss strategies with NeighborWorks staff to leverage strengths and advance opportunities for Native communities.

# NOTES

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## APPENDICES

- m Appendix A: Session Participants
- m Appendix B: Draft Native Strategy



## APPENDIX A

### Session Participants

#### NeighborWorks Network Organizations

Name	Organization
Tawney Brunsch	Executive Director, Lakota Funds
Scott Cooper	Executive Director, NeighborImpact
Shawna Engen	Chief Financial Officer, NeighborWorks Pocatello
Lori Finnesand	Co-CEO, GROW South Dakota
Cheyenne Garrett	Project Marketing Specialist, Community Housing Development Corporation of North Richmond
Susan Hammond	Relationship Manager, Fahe, Inc.
James Harrington	Vice President of Business Resources, Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma
Sharon Lee	Executive Director, Low Income Housing Institute
Virgil Looney	Department Strategist, Community Housing Development Corporation of North Richmond
Florence Ludka	Chief Financial Officer, Oweesta Corporation
Laura Meadows	Executive Vice President of Lending, Fahe, Inc.
Erica Mills	CEO, NeighborWorks Umpqua
Julia Nelmark	President & CEO, Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation
Melissa Noah	Executive Director, Wyoming Housing Network
Jamie Olson	Director of Lending, Oweesta Corporation
Fern Orié	Chief Programs Officer, Oweesta Corporation
Vivian Rahwanji	Director of Operations, Community Housing Development Corporation of North Richmond

#### NeighborWorks America Staff

Lee Anne Adams, Senior Vice President, National Initiatives  
Steven Barbier, Senior Relationship Manager  
Keith Getter, Senior Relationship Manager  
Leon Gray, Senior Relationship Manager  
Lisa Hasegawa, Regional Vice President, Western Region  
Cormac Molloy, Senior Manager Curriculum & Training  
Sheila Owens, Senior Vice President, Communications & Marketing  
Kathryn Watts, Senior Vice President, Field Operations  
Mel Willie, Director, Native Partnerships & Strategy

#### Sponsor

Jennifer Jones, Vice President, Community Relations, Ameriprise Financial

#### Facilitators

Vickie Oldman, Partner, Seven Sisters Community Development Group, LLC  
Joanna Donohoe, Partner, Seven Sisters Community Development Group LLC



# APPENDIX B

## NeighborWorks America's Draft Native Strategy



Building Capacity for Affiliation	Create a path to affiliation by launching targeted services for Native organizations.
	Strengthen data/metrics on the needs in Native housing and homeownership.
Resource Tools for Partnership	Provide a virtual presence with targeted messaging, information, and updates.
	Using existing programs, research and enhance the study of partnerships with Native communities.
Empower NeighborWorks Organizations	Peer learning: regularly gather network organizations that are building partnerships and engaging with Native communities.
	Document and share best-practices and lessons learned in Native partnerships.



Leverage NeighborWorks specialized expertise	Target the study and advancement of strategies that support Native housing.
	Integrate initiatives across divisions, departments and programs that enhance the Native Strategy.
Identify and advance solutions	Convene thought leaders and change-makers who are engaged in Native housing and community development.
	Support interagency/interorganizational working groups to identify solutions to address systemic challenges.
Support a national dialogue	Keep Native housing topics and issues at the forefront of national discourse through providing regional and national seminars, presentations and speaking engagements.
	Identify key data and research that strengthens the discourse on Native housing and community development.



**Training: Building Native Housing Leaders**

<b>Cultivate cultural competency</b>	Increase NeighborWorks America staff's understanding of topics and issues that will enhance their work around Native housing.
	Share Native voices in housing and community development across NeighborWorks America's training, convenings and symposia.
<b>Building housing leaders from within</b>	Prioritize key training topics to build capacity within Native organizations.
	Support the Achieving Excellence Native cohort and uplift their work and experience in the program.
<b>Support the industry</b>	Develop targeted training opportunities for key Native housing stakeholders including Tribal leaders, lenders, intermediaries, government partners, and urban Native organizations.
	Engage in regional and national partnerships to support the sustainable development of Residential Construction Professionals (surveyors, appraisers, contractors, inspectors, etc.) on trust land.

**Investing: Deepening our Impact in Native Homeownership**

<b>Increase access to capital and other resources</b>	Leverage the interagency and philanthropic partnerships to build regional and national resources.
	Enhance partnerships with policy and research centers and institutes to strengthen the case for increased access to capital.
<b>Native Partnership Grants &amp; Scholarships</b>	Expand the number of smaller grants for organizations developing partnerships and measure the impact.
	Provide a limited amount of larger grants for organizations deepening their impact with tribal communities.
<b>National products to build wealth</b>	Research and develop a national down payment assistance program for Native communities.
	Develop an evaluation program on the local and national levels customized for measuring success metrics in Indian Country





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