

American Indian and Alaska Native 1994 Policy Statement

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development American Indian and Alaska Native 1994 Policy Statement

The foundation for this Policy Statement is the Federal Indian Policy Statement issued by President Reagan in January, 1983 and reaffirmed by President Bush in September, 1989. That statement affirms the special government-to-government relationship that exists between American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments and the Federal government.

The relationship, which is as vital today as it was 200 years ago, is based on the U.S. Constitution, treaties, Federal laws, court decisions and the on-going political relationship between these entities.

The relationship results in a Federal trust responsibility to Indian Tribes. The primary responsibility for implementing this relationship lies within the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Department of Housing and Urban Development acknowledges that the responsibility extends to the provision of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing to the members of Federally recognized Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages residing on Indian reservations and in other Indian areas.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's policy to promote the general welfare by meeting the national goal of providing decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing for lower income families is complemented by this special Indian policy.

It is also the intent of the Department to vest in local Indian housing authorities the maximum amount of responsibility in administering their housing programs. To accomplish this objective, the Department will consult with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments, Indian housing authorities and national Indian organizations when developing legislation, regulations and policies that affect those Tribes.

The Department also encourages the development of a mutually beneficial partnership designed to assist Native Americans by: expanding homeownership and affordable housing opportunities; empowering the residents of Indian housing through the creation of jobs and economic development opportunities; enforcing fair housing opportunities; making Indian housing developments drug-free; and helping to end the tragedy of homelessness.

Based upon the foregoing, the Department of Housing and Urban Development shall:

- Recognize and acknowledge that a unique government-to-government relationship exists between the United States and Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments.
- Recognize and acknowledge that this is a special and unique legal and political relationship, founded on treaties, the U.S. Constitution, Federal laws and court

decisions, and that the Department has a responsibility to assist in providing decent, safe and sanitary housing to Federally recognized American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages;

- Recognize and acknowledge that tribal self-sufficiency and self-determination require that Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments and their political subdivisions, and in particular the Indian housing authorities, in the development and management of such housing;
- Recognize and acknowledge that there are distinct cultural practices, religious beliefs and jurisdictional rights that must be considered when housing is developed for Native Americans; and
- Recognize and acknowledge the importance of effective and efficient coordination with other Federal agencies in the development and management of such housing.

Therefore, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development shall take all appropriate actions to implement these goals by incorporating them in its planning and management activities, its legislative and regulatory initiatives and its policy development.