



NWIHA
NORTHWEST INDIAN
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ABOUT US

VOTING MEMBERS

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Spring Conference

Our Spring Conference was held April 7-9 at the Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort and was hosted by [The Suquamish Tribe](#). We had **71 registrants** from our Northwest Tribes and Associate Members. Thank you to the Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort Team for providing us with great support and a wonderful facility. And thanks to all who came out and participated!



Thank You to the Suquamish Tribe

We would like to express gratitude and offer a special thank you to the **Suquamish Tribe** and the **Suquamish Tribal Housing**. With a gracious introduction to our Spring Conference, **Suquamish Tribal Chairman Leonard Forsman** gave the group a welcome and detailed some of the background of the Suquamish Tribe's history. We very much appreciate Charmain Forsman's participation!

Additionally, we would like to thank NWIHA Member **Vicki Cole, Housing Program Manager** for the Suquamish Tribe. Vicki and the Tribe sponsored and conducted a lunch tour of ongoing and completed housing projects in the area. We truly appreciate getting to see how our Members implement housing solutions for their communities. The Tribe also sponsored lunch for not just the housing tour group, but everyone in attendance at the Conference.

Special thanks once again to the host Suquamish Tribe.



Spring Conference Presentations & Training Details



Thank You to All Our Spring Conference Presenters!

For those who were unable to attend or for those who would like to revisit any of the presentations or training, we have made both videos for presentations and slide decks available on our website in the password-protected Members Portal, where NWIHA Members may view or download, for the following (please contact your Executive Director/Director if you need help remembering the password):

- **Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker;**
- **Enterprise Community Partners;**
- **The LUAK Group; and**
- **HUD/NwONAP.**

Also included are a copy of our Conference Handbook, a video of and slide deck from our Spring Conference Business Meeting, and all training materials.

[NWIHA Members Portal for Spring Conference 2026 Materials](#)

NAHASDA Reauthorization and Modernization Updates

During the Conference, **Cari Baermann and Brenda George of Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker** provided a legislative and regulatory update on the House and Senate versions of the 2026 NAHASDA Reauthorization and Modernization bills, noting that both versions include provisions related to environmental review streamlining, Section 184 updates, homeownership opportunities, annual reporting simplification, BABA exemptions, and extended lease terms on trust land. Presenters highlighted that the Senate bill contains several additional provisions not included in the House version, including expanded Native Hawaiian language and programs, broader procurement flexibility, homelessness pilot and Continuum of Care programs, codification and expanded responsibilities for the Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (TIAC), and changes affecting IHBG negotiated rulemaking authority.

Please visit the NWIHA Members Portal to see updates on how these bills progress; additionally, please visit the Portal to view or download NWIHA's active Resolution(s) concerning support for NAHASDA Reauthorization and updates on all ongoing activity regarding NAHASDA from ATNI and NAIHC.

Executive Committee Member, Liaison, and Alternate Liaison Appointment and Confirmation

After Chairwoman Sami Jo Difuntorum presented the attending membership with her appointment of **Marcus Luke II (Umatilla)** as **Member At Large of the NWIHA Executive Committee**, Marcus was unanimously confirmed. Congratulations, Marcus!

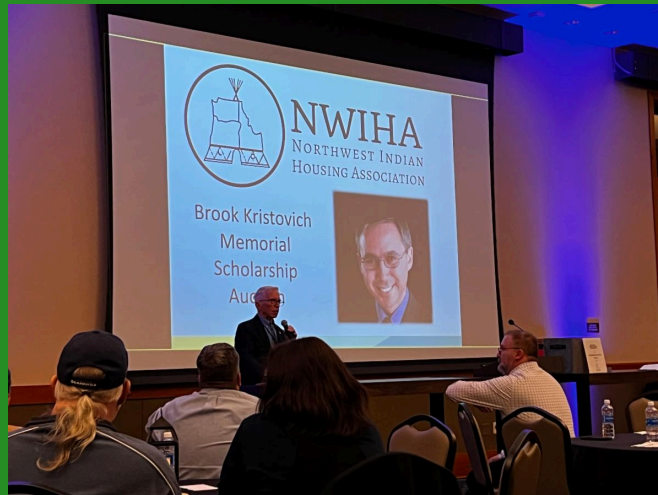
Additionally, the appointments of **Ann Jagger (Quileute)** as **AMERIND Liaison** and **Kara Horton (Port Gamble S'Klallam)** as **AMERIND Alternate Liaison** were also ratified by the Members. Congratulations, Ann and Kara!

**NOMINATIONS
& APPOINTMENTS**



Brook Kristovich Memorial Scholarship Awards

At our Spring Conference, we announced our 2026 Brook Kristovich Memorial Scholarship Award Winners. We would like to thank all who donated during 2025 who contributed to our Scholarship Fund which made these awards possible to Northwest Region Tribal students. Your generosity and commitment to Tribal education keeps the Brook Kristovich Memorial Scholarship going, and we want to thank you and let you know once again that 100% of your Scholarship donations goes to funding our yearly awards! Without further ado, here are the **FIFTEEN (!)** 2026 awardees:



Elizabeth Anderson

**Whitley Cox
Isabel Turrey
Brian Jaquith
Danielle Jaquith
Daycee King
Maiya Martinez
Makarii Martinez
Emma Patterson
Antonio Shove
Frances Ward
D'Viek Washington
Sara Hoff
Mia Winter
Saahdia Buffalo**

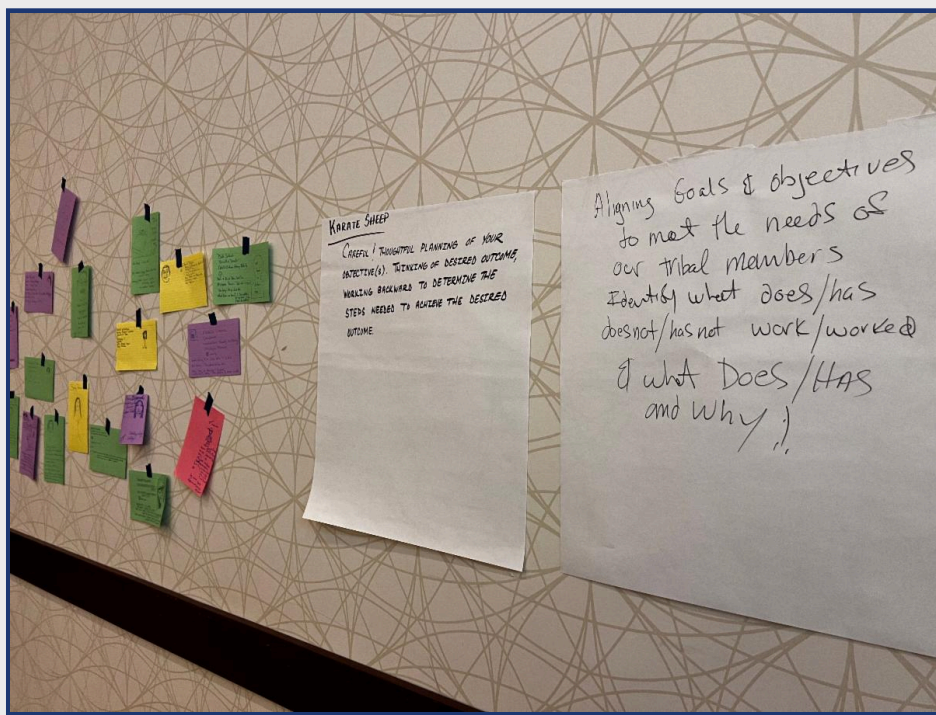
NWIHA would like to wish great luck to all the above students in 2026 and beyond!

**Special Thanks
to Associate Member:**



Tribal First graciously co-sponsored lunch for those attending our training on April 8. We would like to thank **Eric Ramos** and **Tribal First** for their Associate Membership and continued collaboration in service of our Members' needs.

**Spring Conference Training
Fundamentals of Strategic Planning:
Processes, Models, Tools, and Resources**



Trainer Rodney Clements continued our Strategic Planning training series for 2026 with Part Two: Processes, Models, Tools, and Resources. During our Fall Conference, we will continue and close out the series in Strategic Planning, so please stay tuned for more details. We will build on learnings from each session, and they are meant to be taken in series, but all Members (staff and leadership) are welcome to pick up any session they are interested in along the way!

Please visit our Members Portal for more details on the Spring Conference training and for links to materials from the entire Strategic Planning series.

Thank you, Rodney and we will next see you for part three in September in Coos Bay, Oregon at the Ko-Kwel Casino Resort for our Fall Conference!

Native Housing Leadership Accelerator: Executive Competency in NAHASDA, Governance, Strategy, Funding, and Operations

Beta Testing with The LUAK Group

As part of the continued development of the NWIHA Native Housing Leadership Accelerator: Executive Competency in NAHASDA, Governance, Strategy, Funding, and Operations program, a breakout session during the Spring Conference was held with beta testers representing several tribal housing authorities across the Northwest region. Participants included Casey Godwin of the Siletz Tribal Housing Authority; Kara Horton of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Housing Authority; Clyde Abrahamson and Adam G. Schooley of the Spokane Indian Housing Authority; Doug Marconi of the Nez Perce Tribal Housing Authority; and Melinda Sprague and Pamela Culbertson of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

The session served as a structured course review and debrief following the participants' hands-on review of the Canvas-based certification materials. Participants walked through the student experience, tested module flow, reviewed quizzes and assignments, and provided practical feedback from the perspective of tribal housing professionals who understand the day-to-day realities of Indian housing operations.

A major objective of the session was to assess whether the certification is clear, usable, and appropriately rigorous for executive-level tribal housing staff. Participants discussed the course navigation, assignment formats, module sequencing, quiz structure, discussion boards, cohort interaction, and the overall self-paced learning experience. The group affirmed that the course has a strong instructional flow, clear module progression, and meaningful applied assignments that require participants to connect training content to real housing authority scenarios rather than simply complete multiple-choice knowledge checks.

Key takeaways included the importance of making the Canvas experience more accessible for first-time users. The group recommended adding a course-specific tutorial walkthrough, clearer pre-course instructions, an acronym and definition sheet, and an overview video explaining the full certification process and what participants are working toward. The participants also noted that assignments are best completed on a computer rather than a phone or tablet, while mobile devices may be useful for reviewing lessons and module content.

The breakout discussion also identified several technical and instructional improvements before launch. These included converting certain assignments into fillable PDFs, strengthening instructions for the Individual Development Plan, cleaning up outdated Canvas pages and assignments, adjusting end-of-module surveys to complete/incomplete rather than graded, correcting minor quiz issues, and ensuring the course platform supports sequential progression from one module to the next.

Participants also emphasized the value of cohort-based learning. They discussed how structured discussions, peer accountability, confidentiality, and shared problem-solving can strengthen the certification experience. The group noted that tribal housing professionals often face similar challenges across communities, even when local governance, politics, and staffing structures differ. The cohort model was viewed as an opportunity to normalize policy sharing, professional support, and applied leadership development across housing authorities.

Another important theme was the distinction between “training” and “certification.”

Participants discussed the need to frame the program as a serious executive-readiness certification, not just another training course. They recognized that the program’s applied assignments, board or council presentation components, executive decision-making scenarios, and capstone expectations are designed to build real leadership capacity. This was especially important in discussions about preparing participants to present professionally to boards, tribal councils, and other governance bodies.

Overall, the breakout session confirmed that the certification is on the right track. Participants found the course structure useful, the content relevant, and the applied assignments meaningful. Their feedback will guide final refinements before launch, including improvements to course navigation, assignment formats, student instructions, discussion structures, and Canvas cleanup.

Next Steps

Next steps include incorporating the beta tester feedback into the Canvas course shell, correcting minor quiz and discussion issues, developing a student-facing walkthrough video, adding the acronym and definition sheet, converting priority assignments into fillable formats where appropriate, and refining course instructions for clarity and accessibility. The beta testers may also continue reviewing the revised course materials as the program moves toward its first full cohort launch.

The session demonstrated the strength of regional collaboration and the value of building this certification with input from experienced tribal housing professionals. Their feedback will help ensure the final program is practical, rigorous, culturally grounded, and responsive to the real leadership demands facing tribal housing organizations.

For AMERIND Members ONLY!!!



The 2026 AMERIND Safety Poster Contest Is Here Again— Another Chance to Highlight Your Local Artists!

AMERIND has announced their 2026 poster contest. **If, and only if!!!, your Tribe is an AMERIND member**, it can begin hosting its contest to decide the winners to represent your Tribe at the regional level. Please select one winner from all entries you receive for the following categories:

- K-3rd
- 4th-6th
- 7th-8th

Then, you may submit your Tribe's winner from each category (for a total of three winners) by email to info@nwiha.org or by mail to NWIHA, PO Box 7653, Olympia, WA, 98507-7653.

To be considered, entries must be RECEIVED no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, July 10, 2026.

On Monday, July 13, 2026, all NWIHA members (Voting and Associate) will begin the judging process by voting on their favorite entries that will be posted through a survey/voting link. Regional winners will be submitted to AMERIND and

announced via NWIHA website and email notification on July 31, 2026. National winners will be announced at the AMERIND Annual Meeting in August 2026.

Please click on the red button below to download the AMERIND Safety Poster Contest flyer for rules of the contest and details on how students must submit their entries!

AMERIND 2026 Safety Poster Contest Flyer

Updates & News from NwONAP



NAHASDA 30!

On February 4th, PIH Assistant Secretary Ben Hobbs issued a [Dear Tribal Leader letter](#) announcing NAHASDA30—a special initiative celebrating 30 years of NAHASDA's impact. Tribal leaders, Tribal housing practitioners, and stakeholders are invited to join us in honoring this milestone by sharing your Tribal community's NAHASDA30 story.

Learn more at www.hud.gov/nahasda30.

Via Washington State Department of Commerce Program:

OZ 2.0 census tract designation nomination form applications accepted until May 28

Opportunity Zones (OZs) are federally designated tracts meant to spur investment in undercapitalized communities. A revised program is being rolled out, and Commerce is accepting applications to designate new opportunity zones (OZs) in Washington state.

The new program features permanent changes to the policy's geographic targeting criteria, incentive structure and reporting requirements. The U.S. Treasury issued its determination of population census tracts eligible to be designated as OZs, and Commerce updated [the Washington OZ 2.0-eligible census tract GIS map](#) to reflect this final guidance.

After the application period closes, Governor Bob Ferguson will select up to 25% of eligible census tracts as opportunity zones and forward those to the U.S. Treasury during a 90-day window beginning July 1.

To learn more, visit the Commerce OZ 2.0 funding opportunities listing and determine next steps to submit a designation nomination application.

To learn more about the program itself, [visit the Commerce Opportunity Zones Program](#) landing page.

ROSS Rapid Response Program

HUD is excited to announce the Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Rapid Response Program (RRP), a one-time funding opportunity designed to help HUD-assisted communities respond quickly to unexpected disasters and urgent social needs.

RRP funding can be used for service coordination and limited direct services to support residents affected by emergencies, including -but not limited to:

- Natural disasters (e.g., wildfires or hurricanes)
- Public health crises (e.g., gun violence, environmental hazards, or community contamination)
- Economic disruptions (e.g., sudden closure of a major employer impacting residents)

Where can I learn more?

- Read the [Announcement Page](#).
- Read [Notice PIH 2025-23](#) for full program and application details
- Review the ROSS RRP [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

BABA Resources

[BABA HUD Exchange Page](#)

The [BABA for Tribal Recipients](#) landing page in HUD Exchange hosts previously recorded trainings, presentation slides, guidance, notices, and AONAP points of contact.

Be sure to bookmark this page for future BABA resources!

NAIHC Events Reminder:

May 4-6: 52nd Annual Convention & Tradeshow May 7-8: Housing Our Relatives Summit

Join the National American Indian Housing Council in Anchorage, Alaska, for two impactful events advancing Native housing and community development: the **52nd Annual Convention & Tradeshow** and the **Housing Our Relatives Summit: Collaborative Solutions for Native Communities**.

These are **two distinct events with separate registration fees**, each serving a unique purpose, from education, networking, and industry engagement to focused, solutions-driven dialogue centered on Tribal communities and families. While attendees may register for either event individually, we strongly encourage participating in both for a more comprehensive experience connecting peers, leaders, and partners from across Indian Country.

[Please visit the NAIHC events website for agendas and more details.](#)

ATNI Event Reminder:

May 17-21: ATNI Midyear Convention

ATNI Conventions are where members convene for discussion, presentations and the work of the committees in regard to policy, legislation, and the future of Indian Country in the Northwest

[Please visit the ATNI Midyear Convention event website for agendas and more details.](#)

Member News & News from Indian Country

Oregon Launches \$10M Tribal Housing Fund with Upfront, Noncompetitive Grants



[From the February 21, 2026 Edition of Tribal Business News Online](#)

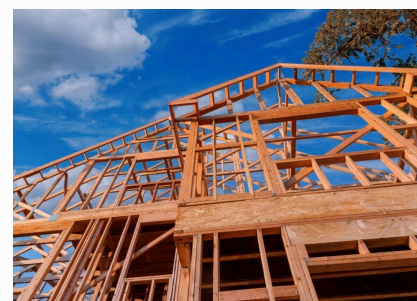
[Press release from Oregon Housing and Community Services](#)

The State of Oregon has launched a new \$10 million Tribal Housing Grant Fund dedicated exclusively to the state's nine federally recognized Tribes. Administered through Oregon Housing and Community Services, the program is notable for providing noncompetitive, upfront funding with streamlined reporting requirements—an approach Tribal housing leaders say removes longstanding barriers that have often limited Tribal participation in state housing programs.

Under the program, each Tribe will receive a base allocation of \$400,000, with additional funding distributed according to enrollment figures. Eligible uses include land acquisition, infrastructure development, rehabilitation, homelessness response, shelters, and new housing construction. Tribal housing leaders emphasized the importance of flexibility, especially in rural areas where Tribes often must reacquire land and extend water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure before housing can be developed.

The initiative was developed through more than a year of Tribal consultation and has been praised nationally as a potential model for state-Tribal collaboration in housing. Leaders from the National American Indian Housing Council noted that meaningful state investment in Tribal housing remains relatively rare despite ongoing housing shortages throughout Indian Country. The program's emphasis on self-determination and local decision-making aligns closely with broader Tribal housing principles reflected in the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA).

Federal Initiatives and Tribal Strategies Expand Pathways to Indigenous Homeownership



[From April 1, 2026 Online ICT.com News](#)

A recent article from [ICT News](#) highlights growing national attention on expanding Indigenous homeownership opportunities through federal housing programs and Tribal-led development strategies. The piece emphasizes that homeownership remains one of the most important pathways for long-term family wealth creation in the United States, yet Native communities continue to face major barriers including limited mortgage access on trust land, infrastructure shortages, underfunded housing programs, and historically inequitable lending practices.

The article discusses how Tribes, Tribal housing entities, and federal agencies are working to strengthen pathways to ownership through programs such as HUD Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantees, Tribal housing development initiatives, and infrastructure investment. Tribal leaders interviewed stressed that successful homeownership strategies must be community-driven and culturally responsive, particularly in rural and reservation communities where housing markets and land tenure systems differ significantly from conventional models.

The piece also underscores that increasing Indigenous homeownership is not solely about housing production, but about strengthening Tribal self-determination, economic stability, and intergenerational wealth-building. Housing advocates noted that sustained federal investment, flexible financing tools, and stronger partnerships between Tribes and lenders will remain critical to addressing the housing shortages affecting Native communities nationwide.

Associate Members



First of all NWIHA would like to welcome new Associate Member **Seattle Indian Services Commission and Mahoney Group!**

NWIHA asks that you please consider all our Associate Members when you need any of the services or products they provide. To find out more information regarding any of our Associate Members, just click on their logo below.



Diehl & Co. LLC
joediehl.com



RICEfergusMILLER





Upcoming Meeting

Ko-Kwel

CASINO RESORT | COOS BAY



Our Fall Conference will be held September 15-17, 2026, at the Ko-Kwel Casino Resort in Coos Bay in North Bend, Oregon. Included in our Fall Conference will be NWIHA Leadership Nominations and Elections: please reach out to info@nwiha.org if you have any questions about serving as a Liaison, Alternate Liaison, or Executive Committee Member.

Northwest Indian Housing Association | nwiha.org

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