

# News Release

National American Indian Housing Council



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Adam McMullin, 800-284-9165 or [amcmullin@naihc.net](mailto:amcmullin@naihc.net)  
Larry Frank, 800-284-9165 or [lfrank@naihc.net](mailto:lfrank@naihc.net)

## NAIHC Field Services Are Critical to Financial Education in Indian Country

WASHINGTON—April 28, 2005—Today at a policy briefing on Capitol Hill, **National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) Field Services Director Luke Toyebo, Jr.** addressed the importance of financial education in Indian Country as it relates to homeownership.

At the briefing, hosted by the Native Financial Education Coalition (NFEC), speakers pointed out that the lack of investment in Indian Country has provided tribal people little opportunity to learn money management skills in a credit based economy. As tribes gain in homeownership they need the general understanding of how to sustain it. NAIHC supports a proposed recommendation that financial education be mandatory for those buying a home.

“Financial literacy is not innate; it is learned,” said **Toyebo**, who directs NAIHC’s training programs in Indian communities geared toward financial awareness. The lack of financial awareness leaves many tribal members vulnerable to predatory lending which, as research has shown, hits Indian Country particularly hard.

“It is crucial for tribal members to understand the importance of financial education in order to facilitate successful homeownership in Indian Country,” said **NAIHC Executive Director Gary L. Gordon**.

Shrinking federal allocations, as pointed out by several speakers at the briefing, means tribes must find effective ways to leverage their funds. As the leading Indian housing technical assistance and training provider in Indian Country, NAIHC is helping tribes with that leveraging process through these extensive training programs. Expanding its emphasis on promoting homeownership and the necessary related skills, NAIHC will conduct its first stand-alone seminar on “*Planning for Homeownership/Mortgage Finance*” **May 10-12** in Denver, Colo. The seminar will include a number of NAIHC Field Services staff and banking representatives who will educate tribal leaders on the importance of financial preparedness when buying a home. For more information about the seminar, visit [www.naihc.net](http://www.naihc.net).

### NAIHC Awards Scholarships

Toyebo pointed out that NAIHC’s scholarship program has been very successful in helping people attend training sessions by covering tuition and/or travel related expenses. This frees up more money at the local level so that tribes can then build more houses and provide more direct services to their members.

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*NAIHC assists tribes and tribal housing entities in reaching their goals of providing culturally relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and quality affordable housing for Native people in Indian communities and Alaska Native villages.*

*NAIHC...A Tradition of Native American Housing.*

[www.naihc.net](http://www.naihc.net)