NHA hires temporary maintenance workers to address vacant units

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - According to the 2018 Annual Performance Report, the Navajo Housing Authority reported that it had approximately 6,391 homeownership and public rental units across the Navajo Nation as of program year ending, Oct. 31, 2018. Among those units there exist a number of vacant units and this year the NHA is implementing a maintenance repair plan to bring the inventory of those units down with the goal to increase occupancy rates.

To achieve this goal, NHA’s strategy is to hire 255 temporary maintenance technicians to improve units that have been preoccupied and are in need of move out repairs before being occupied by a family on the waitlist. The authority has invested $2 million to cover salaries and benefits for the temporary employees.

The hiring process has already begun and as of Feb. 7, the NHA has hired a total of 147 temporary maintenance technicians but needs to hire additional positions to meet the 255 hiring goal. The NHA Human Resources department hosted a series of hiring sessions throughout the month of January across the reservation and continues to recruit qualified applicants to fill the temporary Maintenance Technician positions.

Spearheading the maintenance repair plan is NHA’s Maintenance Division, which is expected to complete the repair of all vacant units within a one-year period using skilled temporary maintenance crews at the 15 field offices.

“These temporary employees will address the more than 305 public rental units that are not ready for occupancy (NRFO) meaning; these units need to be cleaned before the unit is ready for occupancy,” said Maintenance Division Director Arne Willetto. “Sometimes a unit may require more time and effort due to the degree of wear and tear before it is ready for occupancy.”

Since the implementation of the maintenance repair plan, on Nov. 1, 2018, the Division has turned over 84 units within the first three month of the plan. These turned over units are now “Ready for Occupancy (RFO)” and waiting for tenant assignment and/or acceptance.

In this issue:

Guide to Veterans Housing Assistance
Navajo Nation Council Orientation
NHA appoints new Chief Financial Officer
Now available: 2019 NHA wall calendar
Groundbreaking 60-unit apartments in WR
FY2018 Annual Performance Report

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Photo - Maintenance Department staff operate within the NHA Maintenance Division to maintain public rental stock.
In general, a unit is considered vacant due to any number of the following reasons:

1. Not ready for occupancy (Needs to be cleaned before next tenant moves in).
2. Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS Retrofit Project).
3. Insurance repair due to incident.
4. Modernization (i.e., units in Window Rock behind NHA Central Office Building).
5. Demo/Rebuild.
6. Culturally Sensitive (i.e., death in unit).
7. Ready for Occupancy (Waiting for tenant assignment and/or acceptance).

The NHA has the responsibility of the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of its affordable housing stock and conducts necessary maintenance on them periodically to ensure continued viability of the units. The vacancies are not all in a single community but are spread across the entire Navajo Nation, which spans 27,413 sq. miles across three states. Vacancies can be for different reasons but most are under contract, and either in repair or waiting to be repaired. This includes vacant units that are under construction due to modernization. The active number of units under modernization construction is 221. An additional 67 units are going thru the procurement process for contractor selection, which will increase the vacancy numbers.

An important part of the vacant units listing are the units that are “Ready for Occupancy (RFO)” which are units waiting for tenant assignment and/or occupancy. These units are offered to those on the waitlist and it is up to the applicant to choose to accept the unit being offered. Sometimes a unit is RFO, however it might be in a location less desired by the applicant and the applicant may choose to decline the offer and wait for a unit in a more preferred location.

As part of NHA’s new direction of transparency, accountability, and communication, the NHA is now publishing (on our website) the vacancy numbers to the public to show the rates change as we continue to repair, replace, modernize, and build new housing stock. By publishing this information NHA hopes to increase the amount of applications received at the local housing management offices.

In 2018, Congress included in its 2018 omnibus spending bill an additional $100 million in competitive grants to be used for new construction and rehabilitation of housing units. For the past year the Navajo Housing Authority along with other tribes have been awaiting the competitive grant source of funding which has yet to be delivered by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development.
Navajo Nation Council orientation

TSE BONITO - On Dec. 5, 2018, NHA CEO Craig Dougall and Veterans Liaison Earl Tulley presented at the 24th Navajo Nation Council Orientation. The orientation was held at the Navajo Division of Transportation.

Topics included organizational structure and roles and responsibilities of NHA Board of Commissioners and its oversight. Presenters also presented on historical financial data and educated the attendees on NAHASDA and the distribution of the Indian Housing Block Grant.

Several questions were asked ranging from land statuses to management.

NHA appoints new Chief Financial Officer

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - On Nov. 27, 2018, Cathy Long was announced as the NHA’s Chief Financial Officer after serving in interim capacity for more then year.

A graduate of Northern Arizona University, Long has been with NHA for over 11 years with her previous role as Fiscal Manager within the Treasury Department.

Long will be responsible for NHA’s financial direction. The CFO overlooks several departments including; Finance, Accounting, Treasury, and Grants Management.

Radio forum covers Veterans Housing policies

ST. MICHEALS, Ariz. - On Nov. 7, 2018, the Navajo Housing Authority hosted a live radio forum which was broadcast on two radio stations, KTNN and KWRK. The topic of the radio program was regarding the newly adopted Veterans Housing Assistance Polices.

Discussions included an overview of the history, eligibility requirements and program information of the Veterans Housing Assistance Policies (VHAP), followed by a Q&A session.

The full video recording of the program is available online at www.hooghan.org/veterans.

Navajo Housing Authority 2019 wall calendars now available

- 24”x 36” glossy poster paper.
- 12 months with holiday dates.
- Contact information for Housing Management Offices and Maintenance.

Pick-up a calendar at any one of our 15 Housing Management Office or at the NHA Central Office located in Window Rock, Arizona.
INTRODUCTION
Thank you for taking the time to read this brief introduction to the Navajo Housing Authority Veterans Housing Assistance Policy that went into effect October 1, 2018. The information presented in this advertisement is to educate potential applicants regarding the programs benefits and eligibility requirements. We know that each potential applicant is different and may have specific needs and accommodations, therefore we encourage every head of household Navajo Veteran or widow(er) or Gold Star parent to visit any of our NHA Housing Management Offices to see how the program will help them. We hope that the information presented below will help prepare you if you decide to apply for the program. The NHA designed this program with the goal of assisting more Veterans while remaining financially responsible.

GUIDE TO VETERANS HOUSING ASSISTANCE

THE PROGRAM

Housing Application
It is important NHA abides by rules and regulations set forth by NAHASDA and Navajo Nation laws. To ensure compliance NHA asks for the following documents.

- APPLICANTS CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION
- SALARY OR GRANT VERIFICATION FORM
- INVOLUNTARY/SUBSTANDARD DISPLACEMENT CERTIFICATION FORM
- VERIFICATION OF NON-HOUSING ASSISTANCE RENTAL HISTORY FORM
- MAP TO CURRENT RESIDENCE
- CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Who Can Apply?
Any head of household Navajo Veteran or widow(er) or Gold Star parent who meets the income and veterans policies program requirements are eligible for benefits. All veterans may apply for the Veterans housing program, however dishonorably discharged veterans will not be eligible for veteran housing benefits. For more information and FAQs please visit us online at hooghan.org/veterans. You may also visit one of our Housing Management Offices. Call 928-871-2600 or visit our website for office locations and contact information.

Veteran
- Housing Application
- Income verification
- Social Security Card
- Certificate of Indian Blood
- Honorably discharged with DD-214

Widow(er)
- Housing Application
- Income verification
- Social Security Card
- Certificate of Indian Blood
- Shall have ONE (1) OF THE FOLLOWING THREE (3):
  - Death certificate of deceased veteran; DD-1300, Report of Casualty; DD-2064, Certificate of death
  - Valid Marriage License:
    - Marriage License (Church, Navajo Nation, Traditional Navajo wedding, Common Law, or validation of marriage by court decree)
  - DD-214 of deceased Veteran as honorably discharged
WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Any head of household Navajo Veteran or widow(er) or Gold Star parent who meets the income and veterans policies program requirements are eligible for benefits. All veterans may apply for the Veterans housing program, however dishonorably discharged veterans will not be eligible for veteran housing benefits.

Who is Ineligible?

Criminal background and convicted felons per policy, applicants assisted before through other federal programs, or applications lacking all supporting documents. Dishonorably discharged veterans will not be eligible for veteran housing benefits.

Non-Low Income

A Veteran non-low income family (above 80% but below the 100%) may not receive the same assistance as a low income veteran family. Other options may apply.

BENEFITS

Public Rental

The selected eligible Veteran or widow(er) or Gold Star parent applicant and or tenant(s) whose total family income is below the 80% Adjusted Median Income based on HUD’s income limits may have a Veterans discount of up to fifty dollars ($50) toward their monthly rent payment.

Homeownership

In accordance with NAHASDA, total family income (below 80% median income) will determine income eligibility for a low income Veteran family. Eligible veterans interested in homeownership can benefit for a one-time discount of up to $10,000 to go towards the purchase price of the home.

Existing Units

In the case of an existing home, a one-time discount assistance up to, but not to exceed $10,000 may be applied to a current eligible veteran home buyer’s remaining amortization balance, after all equity accounts are applied, as assistance toward the purchase price of the unit. If the payoff balance is less than $10,000, any unused portion of the $10,000 will not be paid out or transferred.

Purchase of Renovated Home

In the case of a vacant and renovated home, that has a completed value appraisal, a subsequent qualified veteran home buyer may qualify for a one-time discount assistance up to but not to exceed $10,000. The discount will be applied as a first payment toward the equity balance of the home. In addition to the monthly payment a minimum administrative fee may apply.

New Development/Construction

In the case of a new development home a one-time amount not to exceed $10,000 will be applied as a first payment toward the equity balance of the unit. This will include the veterans’ monthly house payment, determined by family income and other factors. In addition to the monthly payment a minimum administrative fee may apply.

Other Benefits

Preference and Deductions Points

Applicants may qualify for other preference points and deductions such as, dependent deductions, accessibility, child care, medical, elderly, earned income of minors, and travel expenses. Calculated preference points will determine where you will fall on the waitlist for housing assistance.

Service Related Disability

Veteran applicants who have service connected disability income will continue to report their income, however the service connected disability income is excluded from income calculations for monthly rental payments or homeownership payments.
WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Nov. 1, 2018, the Navajo Housing Authority hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for a 60-unit multi-family apartment complex and a multi-purpose facility to be built in Window Rock, Ariz. Plans for the new development would also include a laundromat and multi-functional rooms to accommodate community and family functions. A crowd composing of 50 community members, NHA officials and dignitaries gathered at the project site located directly North of the Window Rock Post Office.

“NHA is looking to serve all underserved groups on the Nation, regardless of income,” said NHA CEO Craig Dougall. “In order to support economic growth and development of the Nation, NHA is contributing by providing housing options to the workforce closer to their place of employment.”

The project is estimated to have a construction budget of $12-15 million and will plan to utilize various mixed funding sources to accommodate a variety of income levels. A certain percentage of units will utilize NAHASDA funds and will be available for low income families while another percentage of units will conceivably be funded by Low Income Tax Credit or other non-NAHASDA funding sources, making those units available to mid-to-high income tenants Dougall explained.

“There is a great need for housing on the Navajo Nation and NAHASDA alone will not meet that need,” Dougall said. “In order to meet that need we will need to embrace the concept of mixed income financing so that we can bring to life similar projects like this throughout the Navajo Nation,” Dougall added. “Housing is economic development and we are looking to partner with other entities to boost new development in the near future.”

Dwayne Waseta, NHA Chief Operating Officer was present and provided an overview of the project. “The project that we have here is the fruit of our labors that started a year and a half ago with a round table discussion with leadership and NHA management,” said Waseta. “The project here is in the first stages of selecting a developer who will start doing the planning for the development area to see what we can actually develop.”

Edward K. Dee is a member of the Navajo Nation and is employed in Window Rock as the Director of the Office of Navajo Government Development. He was invited to the groundbreaking to talk about his personal experiences as they relate to the need of tribal housing here on the Navajo Nation.

Dee describes his daily commute of 128 miles from Chilchinbito, Arizona to Window Rock, Arizona as unsustainable and tiresome especially during the winter months. On one occasion Dee’s supervisor advised him to stay in the office because the wintry road conditions were unsafe to drive such a long distance.

Other speakers included Executive Staff Assistant for the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice-President Elmer Begay whose message centered on the need of homes to be built on the reservation. It’s going to take land, leadership, community and government to work with the people and NHA.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. was also in attendance and congratulated the NHA for their vision. Smith also looked forward to other future developments around the Navajo Nation and expressed that it would help in stimulating economic development of those areas.

UPDATE: NTUA has notified NHA via email that due to drought over the years the Black Rock waterbed has decreased and wells in the area may not have enough water to serve this development. NHA will work with NTUA to see if there is a resolution to the problem.
NHA Board approve formal amendment to the Program Year 2019 Indian Housing Plan

Twin Arrows, Ariz. – On Dec. 17, 2018, during a Regular Board Meeting held at the Twin Arrows Casino Resort, the NHA Board of Commissioners approved formal amendments to the PY-2019 Indian Housing Plan by a vote of 4 - 0.

The formal amendment increases the planned expenditures from $69,516,199 to $135,059,199 which is an increase of 94 percent as compared to the original IHP. The amended amount includes $51,552,763 in funding sources other than NAHASDA i.e Low Income Tax Credits, Non-Program, etc.

A large amount, $40 million, is attributed to the planned acquisition of units including those currently managed by Chuska, Casamero, Netherwood, Lexington and Sandstone Housing for a total of 1,400 units.

Other amendments to the IHP include funds for Whippoorwill Assisted Living Facility and Birdsprings Assisted Living Facility. Also included is new construction of rental housing units in various parts of the Navajo Nation for a total of 179 additional units. The HUD VASH program was also amended to include 20 new vouchers for eligible Veterans.

The amended IHP will need to be recertified by Navajo Nation President before it is accepted by HUD.

NHA submits PY-2018 Annual Performance Report, meets 91 percent of its expenditure goals

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Housing Authority has met 91 percent of its program goal by spending $82 million for the fiscal program year ending September 30, 2018.

The PY-2018 Annual Performance Report (APR) was submitted successfully to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on Dec. 27, 2018. In reference to CFR 1000.521, HUD has 60 days to review and make any recommendations, if any.

On Dec. 6, 2018, the NHA APR was posted on the NHA website for public review and comments. The APR was also announced in the Dec. 13, 2018 issue of the Navajo Times. The APR was made available for public review in accordance with NAHASDA.

No comments were received by the deadline, which was Dec. 21, 2018. According to the 2018 APR, the NHA managed approximately 6,391 homeownership and public rental units across the Navajo Nation during the past fiscal year. NHA also had over 200 housing units in various phases of development; which included demolition, rehabilitation, modernization, and construction.

Some highlights of the APR included;

- $14.5 million on Planning and Administration which include activities such as management, planning, assessment, environmental, feasibility, construction, finance, hiring, IT, procurement, etc.
- $17.8 million on Operation and Maintenance of 1937 housing units.
- $1.1 million on Operation and Maintenance of NAHASDA units.
- 30 modular units were completed in Ojo Amarillo under New Construction of Rental Housing with an additional 208 units in Planning and Design phases across the Navajo Nation.
- 5,136 households were served
- Issued 20 vouchers through the Tenant Based Rental Assistance program.
- 313 Households served through the Tenant Based Rental Assistance program

Our housing partner Southwest Indian Foundation completed 7 units under the New Construction of Homeownership Housing.

3 group homes were completed for the St. Michaels Association for Special Education.

5 duplex units completed for the Chinle Nursing Home.

17 units were completed to meet federal accessibility requirement for disabled persons.

Completed Street repair to serve over 326 units in various locations around the Navajo Nation.

Issued 20 vouchers through the VASH program.

313 Households served through the Tenant Based Rental Assistance program.

5,136 households were served through youth services, mortgage counseling and other housing services related activities.

The APR also included many carryover projects that were near completion and may be reported as completed in next year’s APR.

What is the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) program?

The Indian Housing Block Grant Program (IHBG) is a formula grant that provides a range of affordable housing activities on Indian reservations and Indian areas. The block grant approach to housing for Native Americans was enabled by the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA). Eligible IHBG recipients are Federally recognized Indian tribes or their tribally designated housing entity (TDHE), and a limited number of state recognized tribes who were funded under the Indian Housing Program authorized by the United States Housing Act of 1937 (USHA). With the enactment of NAHASDA, Indian tribes are no longer eligible for assistance under the USHA. An eligible recipient must submit to HUD an Indian Housing Plan (IHP) each year to receive funding. At the end of each year, recipients must submit to HUD an Annual Performance Report (APR) reporting on their progress in meeting the goals and objectives included in their IHPs. Eligible activities include housing development, assistance to housing developed under the Indian Housing Program, housing services to eligible families and individuals, crime prevention and safety, and model activities that provide creative approaches to solving affordable housing problems. - Source - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
10 Fun Winter Ideas to do:

You may have to have an adult help you with some of these activities. As always be safe, dress warm and have fun.

1. Go sledding.
2. Build a snowman.
3. Enjoy hot chocolate with your family.
4. Bake cookies.
5. Take pictures of the winter landscape.
6. Tour the Navajo Nation Museum.
7. Story Telling with Masani/Nalii.
8. Have a family game night.
9. Visit your local youth center.
10. Make Valentine’s Day Cards.

Do It Yourself Valentine’s Day Card Idea

Please have an adult help you with this activity.

What you will need:
* Card Stock Paper
* Colored Construction Paper
* Pencils
* Crayons/Markers
* Glitter
* Scissors

Instructions:

Step 1: Cutout the Heart Shape.
Step 2: Trace on Card Stock Paper and cut out heart shape stencil.
Step 3: Trace Stencil onto Construction Paper.
Step 4: Cut out the traced hearts.
Step 5: Cut a set of parallel lines, long enough for a pencil to slide through.
Step 6: Decorate the Construction Paper.
Step 7: Personalize.
Step 8: Slide Pencil through cut lines.

New Year’s Resolutions

Write down your top three 2019 New Year’s Resolutions:

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________