

2023 Rural Housing Outreach

ACTIVITY:

B. Housing for high-needs rural populations (12 C.F.R. § 1282.35 (c) (2))

OBJECTIVE:

3. Champion efforts that promote or sustain homeownership for Native American populations.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

<i>Objective's components detailed in the Plan</i>	<i>Corresponding actions taken</i>	<i>Explanation of any deviations from the Plan (if applicable)</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue expansion of partnership with Oweesta Corporation to support the education needs of Native American consumers and increase the pipeline of mortgage ready homebuyers.	Target met through 2023 actions; see subsequent implementation steps.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the effectiveness of activities completed in 2022 and identify opportunities to improve and/or expand access to homebuyer readiness services to Native American populations.	Based on needs identified in 2022, Fannie Mae created resources in 2023 for housing counseling organizations looking to gain HUD approval and join Oweesta Corporation's (Oweesta) Native Housing Counseling Network (NHCN).	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expand the Native American HUD approved intermediary network by adding one additional local housing counseling organization. One additional organization is meaningful as it represents substantial growth within this sector and requires significant staff capacity. The process to become a HUD approved agency also became more rigorous in 2021, likely requiring technical assistance in advance.	As a result of Fannie Mae's support, including technical assistance, Oweesta's NHCN onboarded three new organizations, resulting in a total of 14 HUD organizations participating in the network.	



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serve 1,100 participants through the Native American Intermediary network in 2023 and increase the number of households who achieve “mortgage readiness.” This target participant size is meaningful and would increase the total number of Native American consumers served by HUD-approved counselors in FY 2020 by 7.5%.	The partnership with Oweesta served 1,338 households, of which 1,111 were identified as Native American or Alaska Native. Of these households, 590 tangibly improved their financial capacity.	
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SELF-ASSESSMENT RATING OF PROGRESS:

- Target met
- Target exceeded
- Target partially completed
- No milestones achieved

IMPACT:

- 50 – Very Large Impact
- 40
- 30 – Meaningful Impact
- 20
- 10 – Minimal Impact
- 0 – No Impact

IMPACT EXPLANATION:

1. How and to what extent were actions under this objective impactful in addressing underserved market needs, or in laying the foundation for future impact in addressing underserved market needs?

Empowered by Fannie Mae’s support, Oweesta onboarded three new organizations to its NHCN, totaling 14 organizations participating in the network throughout 2023. As a result, the network provided housing counseling services to 657 households through a group education setting, and 681 through one-on-one counseling, totaling 1,338 households served in 2023. Of these, 590 households improved their financial capacity, which includes credit score improvement, increased savings, and decreased debt, and 19 purchased a home during the same calendar year. Improving financial capacity will lead to greater housing stability and ultimately increase the number of individuals who are better prepared to purchase a home in the future.

In order to drive this collective impact through its network, Oweesta partnered with experts to create two different toolkits. “Learning Circles” is a toolkit specifically designed to assist individuals as they study and prepare for their individual HUD Certification exam. Oweesta consistently hears from members that the exam is incredibly challenging and is a source of much frustration to both the individual and their organization. The toolkit walks through how to use study tools and study plans, provides tips, explains how to register for the exam, and provides a much-needed segment on management support. The HUD Approval Toolkit provides checklists, templates, and examples for an organization to consider as they go through the process to meet HUD approval.

In one instance, Oweesta staff and a specialist hired by Fannie Mae traveled onsite to provide in-person technical assistance to an organization working to formalize their policies and procedures to accommodate their growing housing counseling program. Since that visit, the organization has continued to utilize and build on the lessons shared.



2. What did the Enterprise learn from its work about the nature of underserved market needs and how to address them?

Retroactive analysis of 2022 activities validated prior technical assistance and informed 2023 technical assistance. Specifically, after experts who were contracted by Fannie Mae provided support, Oweesta observed: 1) 2022 findings could be considered as future training opportunities, and 2) Fannie Mae's approach of providing support to both network members and to Oweesta was an effective training strategy. These observations helped identify both areas of focus as well as engagement methods in 2023.

Direct engagement with network members in 2023 provided the most insight about topics and issues that, if addressed, would produce increased access to high-quality housing counseling in Indian Country. For example, with support from Fannie Mae in 2023, Oweesta hosted 11 virtual calls. These calls featured seven guest speakers on a variety of topics of importance to housing counseling organizations: homebuyer readiness, manufactured housing, down payment assistance, individual HUD Certification, advocacy, HUD-approved work plans, staff management, and partnerships with mortgage lenders. Finally, the network convened an in-person three-day workshop and networking event. The event covered many facets of the housing counseling program, including financial management, marketing, quality counseling, and planning. The event highlighted the value of networking and learning from other organizations.

3. Optional: If applicable, why was the Enterprise unable to achieve the Plan target?

N/A