

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEROY QUINN, JR.
SISSETON-WAHPETON HOUSING AUTHORITY
BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON
BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS
OVERSIGHT HEARING
TO EXAMINE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS REGARDING HOUSING
NEEDS IN OUR INDIAN COMMUNITIES

August 25, 2010

Rapid City, SD

On behalf of the Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority and the 13,000 members of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a few of the innovative solutions our Housing Authority has taken to address our housing needs. I have served as the Executive Director of the Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority in Sisseton, South Dakota for the past 5 years. I am an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate.

Our Housing Authority currently owns and manages about 560 units of affordable housing consisting of 472 rental units and 88 home ownership units. We are a small Housing Authority that operates 22 housing sites in three (3) counties in Northeast South Dakota.

The mission of our Housing Authority is to strive to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for all our tribal members and seek to eradicate substandard housing along with eliminating homelessness and increasing affordable housing opportunities through the provision of supportive services and financial assistance programs.

Before I discuss the innovative solutions we have taken to address our housing needs, I want to take this opportunity to thank Senator Johnson for your leadership on tribal housing issues and helping us develop and implement new and creative tools necessary to develop culturally relevant, safe, decent and affordable housing for our tribal members.

I also want to thank Senator Johnson and the other members of the Committee for approving the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunities Act and for helping expedite and advance the Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act known as the HEARTH Act. Both of these bills are vital to our tribe as we serve many veterans and recognize the need to reform the federal leasing requirements and allow us to speed up the leasing process for individual tribal members which will allow them to get into their new homes much quicker. Another bill that I would like to thank Senator Johnson for sponsoring is the Public and Indian Housing Drug Elimination Program which will help us reduce the use of illegal drugs in our affordable housing areas.

I also want to acknowledge the continued efforts of the Committee in our joint task of improving housing conditions for Indians across America. I am proud to relate to you today several of the innovative solutions we have developed at our Housing Authority under the opportunities presented under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act. I will provide written testimony for the record that asks for more coordination of the Federal Agencies that have resources available to American Indians.

Since NAHASDA became law in 1997, the Housing Authority has developed an excellent working relationship with the South Dakota USDA office of Rural Development and has built 56 subsidized Section 515 units. This is a critical program because unlike NAHASDA, the 515 program provides rental subsidy to low income families. We have also collaborated with USDA Rural Utilities to successfully apply for and receive over \$2,000,000 in set-aside funds to assist in the development of water and waste water systems in several of our new affordable housing developments. We have also built and occupy a 7,300 square foot housing administration building built in cooperation with USDA. We were recently informed that Rural Housing Services has set a five year goal to provide funding for 200, 504 grants and 150 home loans under the 502 program. In short, we have benefited greatly from our relationship with the South Dakota Rural Development office and their outstanding staff. It is my understanding that our relationship with USDA is unique and not all tribal housing programs have enjoyed the successful partnership we have experienced. While this relationship is not necessarily innovative, we believe that tribes with significant unmet housing and infrastructure needs cannot succeed without developing a similar relationship with USDA.

The second activity our Housing Authority has innovated is the creation and capitalization of the Dakota Nation Housing Development Corporation. This corporation, created in 2005, has successfully developed approximately 50 sites designated for the development of affordable housing. In addition, they have successfully applied for and built a 24 unit affordable housing complex funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credits and a 21 unit three- bedroom housing project.

The third activity we are involved with was the creation of **T-YAMNI**, a one-stop homeownership program that represents the Housing Authority, Development Corporation and our Homebuyers Program. This entity is providing support for our tribal members with financial literacy programs, homebuyer education classes and loan origination assistance utilizing all lending resources available. The program is designed to be an entry way to homeownership with resources and support provided by the staff.

The final innovation I would like to share with you is the Housing Authority's purchase of a local 29 unit motel. Ten of the units are set aside to provide transitional housing for eligible members of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate. The transitional units are supported by income from the operation of the remaining 19 motel units. So far, the project has been a success and is self supporting.

I also want to report that our Housing Authority is rehabilitating 30 of our low rental units with the stimulus funding we were awarded last year. We were able to create several jobs with the funding. We are on schedule to complete the rehabilitation project in a timely manner and within budget.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share some of our success stories. I am looking forward to working with you and the other members of the Committee as we continue to meet the housing needs of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate; which includes assisting 550 families on our current housing waiting lists.