



TRIBAL HOUSING EXCELLENCE
✦ ACADEMY ✦



Invitation to Apply

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) has extended the application deadline for the 2022 - 2024 class of the Tribal Housing Excellence Academy (THE Academy). THE Academy is a thirty-month initiative to work with innovative native organizations in the rural west with a goal to increase housing built on native lands. THE Academy will bring together seven NAHASDA grantees, such as TDHEs, Housing Authorities, and housing departments to learn and apply best practices for managing the housing development process. We emphasize leveraging IHBG/NHHBG with other funding not yet widely accessed by native communities.

Eligible applicants are:

- NAHASDA grantees serving Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians
- Located in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming
- The organization or the housing project is located in a rural area as defined by HUD's Rural Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing Program. Please confirm by using the mapping tool on this site:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/rural-capacity-building/>

Deadline:

Applications will now be accepted through **Tuesday, April 19, 2022**. RCAC reserves the right to extend the deadline if there are not enough qualified applicants by that date.

Applying:

Please review the following packet prior to applying for information about what THE Academy offers, eligibility, the commitments required from your organization, selection criteria, and application requirements. Completed applications must be emailed to THEAcademy@rcac.org.

Cost:

There is no fee to participate. RCAC has secured grant funding to offer this program. The cost to your organization will be in the form of staff time, technology, and possible travel to participate. Please see the [Your Commitment](#) section for more details.

Travel Scholarships:

We will reimburse up to \$4,000 per organization over the whole Academy for travel expenses to any in-person trainings.

Informational Webinar A recording of the presentation and a set of slides are on RCAC's website [here](#).

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1. THE Academy Description and Expectations

Overview

The Tribal Housing Excellence Academy combines training with technical assistance and coaching to apply lessons directly to your housing project. THE Academy includes:

- Six multi-day trainings held over 18 months (in-person if possible, virtual if not)
- Case studies and activities during each training that allow you to apply newly gained knowledge
- Shorter webinars on special topics
- Individualized coaching between trainings and for up to 12 months afterward from RCAC and our consultants, all of whom are experienced in housing development, housing finance and organizational management

THE Academy will work with participants to move their housing projects forward from concept to construction. The key to our approach is in leveraging new sources of funding and our faculty's experience achieving exceptional results in developing housing on and off trust lands. THE Academy will combine on-site and remote coaching with six trainings that include intensive coursework, networking with peers, and support from seasoned housing development experts.

Each applicant must identify two staff from their organization that will serve as the housing project's lead staff, and participate in all THE Academy trainings, webinars, and homework. In addition, the Project Lead staff will arrange THE Academy coaching activities to benefit their housing project and organization. These Project Lead staff should have responsibilities for planning and developing the planned housing, and might include the executive director, development staff, admissions and occupancy staff, or rehabilitation/maintenance staff.

The two Project Leads will participate in six multiday (3 to 4 days) training sessions. These trainings will be held over 18 months beginning in summer 2022 and will cover topics paralleling the stages of housing development, such as planning; financial feasibility and analysis; housing finance; funding sources; construction management; occupancy and operations. See [THE Academy Training Topics](#) below for more detail. A combination of presentations and case studies allows participants to experience a typical housing development deal guided by experienced practitioners. The participants are able to learn from each other and build upon skills learned during the training sessions.

Between trainings sessions, and for up to 12 months afterward, THE Academy coaches will work with the Project Leads via phone, email, and on-site visits. The organization will receive coaching from different members of THE Academy faculty, so that the expertise is matched to the coaching need. See [THE Academy Coaching](#) below.

Expectations

We recognize that housing projects take years to develop, so our intent is to work with the selected organizations over a thirty-month period. However, our commitment will be made one year at a time and will be reviewed and renewed annually based on acceptable performance as defined by:

- Progress on housing development activities
- Full participation by the Project Leads in the trainings, webinars, and homework

- Use of technical assistance and coaching
- Reporting by the organization
- Fiscal Integrity

THE Academy will offer Project Leads and nonprofit Partner Leads (if any) an opportunity to earn a certification of completion. In order to graduate with a Tribal Housing Excellence Academy certificate, **the Project Leads must attend all sessions**, demonstrate a mastery of the materials based on test scores, submit all homework, demonstrate effort on the case studies, and submit required reports. If a Project Lead has a compelling professional or personal reason to leave a weeklong session early, or not attend a session, the Project Lead must discuss in advance with THE Academy coach and obtain approval. A Project Lead with an excused absence will be required to do make-up work as a condition of graduation. Any Project Lead who is absent from a session without discussing the absence with THE Academy coach may be asked to leave the program.

In order for the Project Lead to graduate with THE Academy certificate, the organization must also keep its commitment to allow the Project Leads the support and time (average 10 hours per week) to work on the housing project. If the organization is not making progress toward this goal by the end of the second session, the Project Leads may be asked to leave the program.

Our Goals

RCAC envisions vibrant, healthy, and enduring rural communities throughout the west. Our continued commitment to Indigenous and rural communities drives our mission to provide training, technical and financial resources and advocacy so rural communities can achieve their goals and visions. RCAC gathers feedback from participants to ensure that our work is achieving the desired outcomes, learning is taking place, and that coaching is increasing our participants' capacity to complete housing projects. In addition, RCAC has secured funding from HUD's Rural Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing Program and leveraged additional funding from Wells Fargo to support THE Academy and these funders want to monitor progress and achievements. RCAC has set the following specific goals, and we require participants in THE Academy to provide reports to measure progress and success.

By the end of THE Academy, our goal is that the seven participating organizations as a group will achieve:

- 140 units of housing in the development process
- \$1.4 million of non-HUD funding leveraged for housing
- \$700,000 of new or expanded federal funding accessed for housing
- Completion of development or rehabilitation for a minimum of 28 housing units

The long-term impact of THE Academy will be to build capacity among housing professionals working in native communities who will continue to develop housing projects consistent with self-determination.

THE Academy Training Topics

The following topics will be covered in THE Academy. They are generally taught in the same order as they would be used in the development of a housing project. There will be six trainings of 3 to 4 days each, offered in-person if possible, or virtually if not. There will also be shorter webinars offered in between.

Community Planning and Developing a Project Concept

- Planning in native communities
- Project selection
- Your management and development capacity
- Analyzing your waiting list
- The development process and stages of development

Predevelopment

- Selection, organization, and management of a development team
- Site suitability and development on native land
- Legal infrastructure and leasing for development on trust and restricted lands
- Procurement of consultants and contractors, 2 CFR 200
- Environmental review basics
- Phase 1 environmental site assessments
- Market analysis and market studies
- Establishing and maintaining your project schedule
- Appraisals for Trust property and for Fee property
- Title process for Trust property and for Fee property

Financial Feasibility Analysis

- Creating rental housing development pro formas
- Calculating homebuyer payments
- The language of leveraging and loans
- Development sources and uses of funds
- Development budgets by phase
- Rental housing operating budgets and 15-20 year projections
- Rental housing operating pro formas

Development Financing – Leveraging Your Federal Funds

- IHBG Basics
- ICDBG Basics
- Federal Home Loan Bank programs for rental or ownership
- Section 184 Loan Guarantee
- Title VI Loans
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits, calculations, applications, and partner issues
- USDA 502 Loans

Development & Construction

- Construction contracts, required clauses and construction management
- Closing financing, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Housing counseling programs
- Lease-purchase programs

Operations & Occupancy

- Introduction to property management
- Introduction to asset management
- Lease-up and occupancy
- Home sales and occupancy

THE Academy Coaching

A key component of the Tribal Housing Excellence Academy is the coaching provided to participating organizations by experienced housing development professionals. Between trainings sessions, and for up to 12 months afterward, THE Academy coaches will work with the Project Leads via phone, email, and on-site visits. The participants will receive coaching from different members of THE Academy faculty, so that the right expertise is matched to the coaching need.

Coaches will provide guidance on homework, and assistance tailored to the needs of participants' housing project and organization. The Project Leads must make use of THE Academy coaching, requesting topics as appropriate and communicating coaching needs. Examples of the coaching available are:

Planning	Development Process
Needs Assessments/Market Analysis Project Concept	Development Budgets Scheduling Procurement Scopes of Work for Consultants Due Diligence/Studies
Financing	Land
Indian Housing Block Grant Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant Title VI Loans 184 Loans ICDBG Bank and CDFI Loans FHLB Affordable Housing Program Low Income Housing Tax Credits USDA 502 Loans Deal Structuring with Multiple Sources Financial Feasibility Analysis	Lease Development BIA Approval Process Master Lease Leasehold Mortgaging Buying Fee Land Site Feasibility
Homeownership	Rental Housing
Applications and Intake Qualifying Homebuyers Housing Counseling Post Occupancy Housing Counseling Lease to Own Programs USDA Self-Help Housing Program	Project Operating Budgets 15-30 Year Operating Projections Property Management Asset Management Maintenance Schedules Roles & Responsibilities
Construction	Organizational Management
Construction budgets Procurement Construction bidding Construction contracting Construction management	Policies of all types Financial Management/Bookkeeping Procurement Policies/Procedures Preparing RFPs, IFBs Admissions & Occupancy Uniform Administrative Requirements

THE Academy Sponsor



Founded in 1978, **Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides training, technical and financial resources and advocacy so rural communities achieve their goals and visions. RCAC provides a wide range of community development services for rural and Indigenous communities, agricultural workers, and community-based organizations in thirteen Western states and the Pacific Islands. RCAC has strong core services and expertise in affordable housing development; environmental infrastructure (water, wastewater and solid waste); economic and leadership development; and community development finance. Our services are available to communities with populations of fewer than 50,000, other nonprofit groups, [Tribal organizations](#), farmworkers, colonias, and other specific populations. RCAC has an annual operating budget of more than \$15 million and more than 160 employees working from field offices throughout our service region. The U.S. Department of the Treasury certified RCAC as a Community Development Financial Institution in 1996.

RCAC's Core Values:

- Leadership: identifies innovative strategies to further rural community and economic development and inspires partners to achieve great outcomes
- Collaboration: achieves superior results by respectfully and inclusively identifying partners
- Commitment: works with passion and dedication to improve rural communities and the lives of their low-income residents
- Quality: produces exceptional work products to help our partners meet their goals
- Integrity: practices the highest professional standards and cultural competency in our work

To find out more about RCAC visit www.rcac.org.

THE Academy Thanks

RCAC is grateful to Dave Castillo and his team at Native Capital Access, now a part of Native Community Capital, who collaborated with RCAC to design and launch THE Academy.

[Native Community Capital](#) is a Native Community Development Financial Institution (Native CDFI) certified by the U.S. Department of Treasury. Native Community Capital is a private, non-profit corporation helping to meet the housing, community- and economic development as well as small-business financing needs of American Indian communities primarily but not exclusively in the Southwest U.S.

2. Application Information

Eligibility

- **Applicants:** Eligible applicants are NAHASDA grantees, such as Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs), Housing Authorities, tribal/village housing departments, and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. A NAHASDA grantee may choose to include a not-for-profit development Partner Lead which may be from an instrumentality of tribal government or nonprofit organization.
- **Geographic Eligibility:** Eligibility is restricted to organizations that build housing on native lands within the following states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
- **Rural Eligibility:** The organization or the housing project is located in a rural area as defined by HUD's Rural Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing Program. Please confirm your eligibility by using the mapping tool on this site:
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/rural-capacity-building/>
- **Site:** The applicant must attach proof of site control for the housing project in the form of a lease, option to lease, warranty deed, option to purchase, tribal resolution or similar.

Your Commitment

In order to participate in THE Academy, your organization must commit to the following:

- Staff time for the two Project Leads to participate in all six training sessions, and additional webinars. The comprehensive nature of THE Academy may necessitate evening sessions if trainings are held in-person. Organizations should *not* expect the Project Leads to be available to work on their regular work assignments when they are at THE Academy training sessions.
- Partial travel costs for any in-person trainings. We will provide travel reimbursements up to \$4,000 per organization over the whole Academy to help offset these costs.
- Technology access to attend virtual training sessions and webinars.
- Staff time to work on the pre-identified housing project between training sessions, applying lessons learned.
- Complete and submit all assigned homework before training sessions.
- Utilize and accept technical assistance and coaching, requesting topics as appropriate.
- Complete and submit quarterly reports and a final report about the progress of the housing project, names and amounts of funding applied for or secured, and what lessons or tools from THE Academy have been utilized.

Timelines and Selection Process

We anticipate the following general timeline:

Event	Date
Released Invitation Announcement	December 13, 2021
Informational Webinar	January 18, 2022 A recording of the presentation and a set of slides are on RCAC's website here .
Application Due Date	April 19, 2022, by 5:00 PM Pacific Time Email to THEAcademy@rcac.org
Applicant Assessments	March – April 2022 THE Academy faculty and coaches will visit (in-person if possible, remotely if needed) with top applicant organizations to meet with executive staff and board members. We will assess the applicant's capacity to participate in THE Academy, and the viability of the planned housing project. This also allows all parties to learn more about each other and potential projects that we might work on together.
Announce Selections	May 2022
Kick-off Webinar	TBD, May 2022. The two Project Leads from each selected organization shall attend
Training Sessions	Approximately quarterly. If it is possible to meet in-person, the trainings will be held in various states in the Western US most convenient to the selected organizations.
Webinars	Additional webinars will be scheduled between training sessions.

Selection Criteria

The most competitive applications will come from organizations that can show a commitment of resources toward a specific housing development project or rehabilitation project is in place or achievable within the program period. Of equal importance is consent from the organization's governance body for staff time to participate in THE Academy.

The following are the selection criteria that RCAC will use to evaluate applications and select participants. Be sure your application addresses these issues:

- **Organizational Readiness:** The organization has been in operation for at least five years and can demonstrate basic organizational systems in place, a supportive board of commissioners/directors and executive staff, and governmental support for a specific housing development site and project. Participating organizations should have a clear and ongoing commitment to housing development, and a feasible plan for continued salary support for the Project Leads. The organization should be able to demonstrate that it has developed or rehabilitated housing in the past five years and has actively attempted to leverage funding other than NAHASDA funds.
- **Project Readiness:** The organization has one or more specific housing development projects or significant housing rehabilitation projects that will serve as the selected organizations' working case study throughout THE Academy. The project(s) must appear feasible, manageable, and able to be

implemented based on the likelihood of project funding, site feasibility, timeline and milestones. Organizations do not need project financing commitments in order to apply. However, organizations identifying projects with advanced readiness to proceed will receive higher consideration.

- **Staff Readiness:** The organization must identify two staff members who will serve as Project Leads. The Project Leads will attend and complete the work of THE Academy and serve as the development team throughout the 30-month period. The individuals proposed should be those whom the organization feels are best qualified to drive the development and operations of a housing project, fully participate in all THE academy sessions, and share lessons learned with their organization including with appointed and elected leaders.
- **Project Leads** must be able to commit an average of 10 hours per week to their selected housing project. The most successful Project Leads will have high school reading and writing competency in English; the program involves extensive reading, often in class. The participants must also have basic high school level math skills and be minimally comfortable with manipulating ratios and fractions. ***Applicants who have questions about these issues or require reasonable accommodation or accommodation for Limited English Proficiency should contact Eileen Piekarz at (775) 741-7861 or epiekarz@rcac.org before applying.*** Refresher math webinars can be offered as a resource for those who need support. Project Leads must have access to a personal computer with word processing and spreadsheet software. They will be expected to have a working knowledge of a spreadsheet program. Participants who are not currently comfortable with using a computer spreadsheet program are responsible for completing introductory classes on their own before attending training sessions. Project Leads must also have access to an internet connection and the ability/permissions to download virtual meeting or training software such as GoToTraining, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams.

NAHASDA Knowledge: The Project Leads should have a working knowledge of NAHASDA and the Indian Housing Block Grant or Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant as applicable. Project Leads should have taken NAHASDA Essentials or Intermediate NAHASDA in the past three years. If not, the Project Leads must commit to attending one of these courses within 12 months of acceptance into THE Academy. These free courses are provided by HUD several times each year around the country. Check the ONAP training calendar frequently to find the upcoming offerings.

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih/codetalk/calendar

3. Application Requirements

Applicants should submit one electronic copy via email to THEAcademy@rcac.org. Applications should use a standard 11 or 12-point type and 1" margins. Please include the following information:

- Cover letter signed by the head** of the TDHE, Housing Authority, tribal/village housing department or similar that includes a **vision (outcome) statement** for what your organization would like to see happen over the next three years because of participation in THE Academy.
- Letter of commitment** from the TDHE Board, Tribal/Village Council, or equivalent governing body in support of the housing project and the applicant's participation in THE Academy.
- Eligibility Map.** Print the map for either the organization or housing project address from this website:
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/rural-capacity-building/>
- Names, contact information and brief bio of each Project Lead and other Senior Staff** (up to 2 pages total). For the Project Leads, include when NAHASDA Essentials or Intermediate NAHASDA was taken, or a commitment to take one of these within 12 months of acceptance into THE Academy.
- Narrative description of the organization** no more than 4 pages in length which addresses the Selection Criteria and includes the following (with suggested length of each):
 - Brief organizational history (1/2 page)
 - Accomplishments/prior housing development projects (1/2 page)
 - One sentence bio of each member of the governing body (Board of Directors/Commission if TDHE, Tribal/Village Council if tribal department) including tenure, committee membership and relevant knowledge or skill. (1/2 page)
 - Information about the area where the project is to be located area such as tribal/community demographics, area median income, and economic or statistical information. (1/2 page)
 - Organizational chart (1 page)
- Project Information.** Identify the housing project(s) your organization is working on that have a good chance to be in construction or completed by 2024 and will serve as your working case study for THE Academy. Include the following information:
 - Name of project
 - Whether homeownership or rental
 - Whether new construction or significant rehabilitation
 - Potential number of units
 - Location of project
 - Description of project
 - Attach Evidence of site control in the form of a lease, option to lease, warranty deed, option to purchase, tribal resolution or similar. Simply saying it is trust land is not sufficient, you must demonstrate the NAHASDA grantee has control/withdrawal/lease.
 - Describe the remaining approvals needed such as environmental clearance, archeological clearance, easements/R.O.W., B.I.A./T.S.R., etc. Address whether utilities such as water or sewer are available or need to be developed.
 - Planned project financing sources, including sources, amount and status (committed or pending)
 - Expected development costs. A Sources and Uses statement can address each of these.

- **Organizational Information.** Please attach:
 - Copy of Tribal Charter/Code/Ordinance or Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws (and any amendments)
 - Copy of 501c3 determination (if applicable)
 - Most recent audited financial statements
 - Current year to date financial statements including a Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet, Statement of Activities/Income Statement, and Budget to Actual Expenditures
 - Current Indian Housing Plan or Native Hawaiian Housing Plan

- **Partner Information (if any).** If the applicant wishes to include a Partner Lead from a not-for-profit development partner, please provide:
 - Brief organizational history of the partner organization (1/2 page)
 - Accomplishments/Prior development projects (1/2 page)
 - Name, contact information and a brief bio of the Partner Lead (1/2 page)
 - Description of the roles of the applicant and the partner in developing and operating the project (1/2 page)
 - Signed MOU or development agreement between the applicant and the partner

- **Self-Assessment.** For the instructors' planning purposes, complete and submit the provided Management Capacity and Development Capacity Assessment forms to reveal areas of strength and areas of need. These are not part of the applicant selection criteria but must be submitted along with the application.