



SOUTH DAKOTA  
**Native Homeownership  
Coalition**

[www.sdnativehomeownershipcoalition.org](http://www.sdnativehomeownershipcoalition.org)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Coalition Launches Task Force to Increase Homeownership Opportunities for Native American Veterans**

**Pierre, SD – October 26, 2016** – This week, the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition announced the formation of a new committee that will work to increase access to homeownership resources for Native American veterans. The committee will be co-chaired by Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Larry Zimmerman, and Manaja Hill, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s Veteran Service Officer. The working group will be focusing on veterans’ homeownership matters and specifically address housing stock and land issues, homebuyer education, and subsidies.

“The key step for this committee is bringing the tribes and the state together,” says Secretary Zimmerman.

Hill explains that there are many resources for Native American veterans available, but committee members have found that, in some cases, veterans are not aware of the all of financial and housing counseling resources available that would make their homeownership goals more attainable.

“We will be connecting **all** of the programs with the specific needs of the veteran,” Hill says. This would include programs available through the tribe, county or state, and the network of organizations that promote homeownership opportunities in Native communities through the Coalition.

In order to do this, the committee will produce guides that will serve as a centralized information resource for South Dakota’s Native American veterans. In order to be more accessible, the guides will use “veteran’s lingo” says Secretary Zimmerman who is a veteran himself. Hill, also a veteran, adds that information in the guides will be categorized by each of the state’s nine tribes since “tribes are not cookie cutter,” and each offers unique benefits.

Hill hopes that their work will be used as a model by other states to help even more veterans. He believes that low-income rental programs “are the foundation of poverty” and that “our vets deserve more.” He says, “Homeownership gives our veterans a sense of pride. They have



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some thing to take care of. These are things that they are familiar with from being in the service.”

The Coalition launched the Native Veterans Homeownership Committee during its planning session as a pre-cursor to the South Dakota Housing Development Authority’s 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Conference. The planning session was attended by nearly 100 individuals from tribal, state, and federal agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations, colleges, and financial institutions. In addition to the launch of the veterans committee, the pre-conference event also included working groups that will shape the Coalition’s activities for the next year, and informational sessions on the Coalition’s new statewide impact tracking system for homeownership practitioners and housing needs assessments conducted recently on the Cheyenne River and Rosebud Reservations.

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**About the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition**

The South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition was born out of a need to expand homeownership opportunities for Native Americans in the state of South Dakota. Created in 2013, the Coalition is a diverse group of agencies, institutions, and organizations that works to increase homeownership opportunities for South Dakota’s Native people to build strong and healthy communities. Its growing group of stakeholders includes approximately 75 representatives of South Dakota’s tribes, federal and state agencies, tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs), nonprofit organizations, housing developers, lenders, and community development financial institutions. The South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition works to increase Native homeownership rates by strategically leveraging knowledge and resources among stakeholders and other key entities. More information about the Coalition can be found at [www.sdnativehomeownershipcoalition.org](http://www.sdnativehomeownershipcoalition.org).