



Emerging Leaders Program

What is the AAHA Emerging Leaders Program?

The Emerging Leaders Program is a transformative initiative developed by the Association of Alaska Housing Authorities (AAHA) for Alaskans seeking to expand their impact and build more homes in Alaska Native communities. AAHA will select up to 25 participants from housing authorities and tribes to participate in the first cohort, set to launch at the 2026 NAIHC Annual Convention in Anchorage. The Emerging Leaders Program is part of the Alaska Housing Accelerator Academy developed with Enterprise Community Partners, which is open to a broader audience.

Who should apply?

Early to mid-career professionals employed (or endorsed) by a Regional Housing Authority (RHA) who are ready to take their leadership skills to the next level and make a lasting impact in Tribal housing development. Applicants for the Emerging Leaders Program should have at least a basic understanding of NAHASDA and career aspirations a position of authority or influence in Tribal housing. Recently appointed CEOs/Executive Directors, as well as deputies, directors, or managers are encouraged to apply. Final participant selection will allow RHAs to recommend individuals who best represent their organization's leadership development goals, supporting a cohort with diverse experiences and perspectives.

What are the eligibility requirements?

- ✓ Be currently employed by an Alaska Regional Housing Authority (RHA) or Tribe that currently submits an Indian Housing Plan to HUD.
- ✓ Secure a letter of commitment/endorsement from the CEO (or Board Chair) of an RHA.
- ✓ Identify and commit to working with a mentor for the full length of the program.
- ✓ Commit to all in-person and virtual session dates and engage meaningfully in all activities.
- ✓ Submit a final report on program learning and future application of skills in the community.

Application components

1. Applicant resume
2. Response to essay questions (1,500 words max)
3. Letter of Commitment
4. Mentor commitment form

Key dates

<u>Feb. 23, 2026</u> Applications Open	<u>March 20, 2026</u> Applications Due	<u>April 10, 2026</u> Participants Notified	<u>May 4-6, 2026</u> Session 1
<u>Jun. 30-Jul. 2, 2026</u> Session 2*-3	<u>Sept. 22, 2026</u> Session 4*	<u>Oct. 20, 2026</u> Session 5*	<u>Nov. 17, 2026</u> Session 6*
<u>Feb 2027</u> Session 7	<u>Mar 2027</u> Session 8 & Graduation	<u>April 30, 2027</u> Impact Reports & Reflections Due	

Time commitment

Participants will spend about 100 hours in programming over the course of 12 months. Asterisks (*) indicates virtual sessions led by Enterprise as part of the Accelerator Academy.



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Note: Program organizers reserve the right to adjust these dates due to unforeseen circumstances.

Program fee

The fee to attend the AAHA Emerging Leaders Program is \$2,500. (There is no charge to attend the Accelerator Academy sessions delivered by Enterprise.) A sliding scale may be used on a case-by-case basis to ensure access for all eligible participants. Organizations are expected to support participant time and travel expenses. A limited number of travel scholarships may also be offered based on demonstrated need.

How will participant selections be made?

AAHA will prioritize balanced geographic distribution of participants employed by its members (RHAs). Employees of eligible Tribes who are interested are encouraged to coordinate their application with an RHA to increase their chances of success. Keep in mind that applicants not selected for the Emerging Leaders Program may still attend sessions of the Accelerator Academy.

Program Structure and Details

The Emerging Leaders Program is offered as a series of four (4) intensive modules delivered in both in-person and online, in conjunction with the Alaska Housing Accelerator Academy. Participants will engage in mentorship, group activities, and peer-to-peer learning as part of a select cohort. The goal is to further develop leadership knowledge, skills, and experience that can be directly applied to increase the supply of quality housing throughout Alaska Native communities.

Participants are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their identified mentor and participate in check-ins throughout the program to seek guidance, ensure accountability, and enrich the overall experience. The specific meeting schedule will be determined collaboratively by the mentor, sponsoring RHA, and participant.

Class Size and Selection

The Emerging Leaders Program will be limited to a select group to maximize peer-to-peer learning and mentoring. The inaugural class will have up to 25 participants.

Statement of Support

Submit a letter of up to 2 pages from your CEO (or Board chairperson, if you're a CEO) summarizing your leadership interest and path of growth, and how program participation will benefit your organization and the Alaska tribal housing sector. Be sure to include specific examples.

Impact Report

At the close of the program, each participant will submit an Impact Report describing key skills gained and outlining how they will be applied in their organization and community.

We look forward to receiving your application and to supporting you throughout this meaningful leadership journey. Please contact us at www.aahaak.org/contact with questions.

Sincerely,

The Association of Alaska Housing Authorities Team



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Program Structure:

- 4 Core Modules delivered through a combination of in-person and online training sessions
- Individual Mentorship with an experienced housing professional throughout the program duration
- Collaborative Group learning to apply real-world contexts
- Peer Learning Network with fellow cohort members across Alaska

Core Curriculum Modules

The Academy curriculum includes the following eight modules:

1. Foundations of Tribal Housing in Alaska
2. Strategic Planning and Governance
3. Development Finance and Leveraging Resources
4. Project Development and Construction Management
5. Property and Asset Management
6. Community Engagement and Resident Services
7. Workforce Development and Organizational Capacity
8. Innovation and Future Trends in Tribal Housing

Expected Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Alaska Tribal Leadership Accelerator Academy, participants will:

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of tribal housing operations in Alaska
- Apply strategic planning and financial management skills to organizational challenges
- Navigate complex compliance and regulatory environments effectively
- Build lasting professional relationships with peers and mentors across Alaska
- Develop implementable strategies for advancing housing solutions in their communities
- Contribute to the next generation of tribal housing leadership

Application Deadline

Complete application be submitted by **March 20, 2026**.

Submission Instructions

Submit applications online at www.aahaak.org/emerging-leaders.

For questions about the program or application process, please contact Cynthia Gurisko, Program Manager at cgurisko@aahaak.org.



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Part I: Applicant Application

Personal Information

Full Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Current Employer/Organization: _____

Organization Type (check one):

- Alaska Native Village
- Regional Housing Authority (RHA)/Tribally Designated Housing Entity (TDHE)
- Alaska Native Corporation
- Regional Native Association
- Other: _____

Job Title: _____

Length of Employment in Current Position: _____

Total Years of Experience in Tribal Housing or Related Field: _____

Education Background

Highest Level of Education Completed:

- High School Diploma/GED
- Some College
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other: _____

Field of Study: _____



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Relevant Professional Development or Certifications:



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Application Essay Questions

Please provide thoughtful responses to the following questions. Use additional pages if necessary.

Question 1: Career Goals and Program Alignment (Maximum 500 words)

Describe your career goals in tribal housing and how the AAHA Emerging Leaders Program will help you achieve them. What specific skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from this program?

Question 2: Community and Organizational Impact (Maximum 500 words)

How do you plan to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the program to benefit your organization and community? Please provide specific examples of challenges you hope to address or initiatives you hope to advance.

Question 3: Leadership Experience (Maximum 300 words)

Describe a leadership challenge you have faced in your work or community. How did you approach it, and what did you learn from the experience?

Sponsor Information

Sponsoring Regional Housing Authority: _____

Sponsor Contact Person: _____ Sponsor Title: _____

Sponsor Email: _____ Sponsor Phone: _____

Mentor Information

Mentor Organization: _____

Mentor Name: _____ Mentor Title: _____

Mentor Email: _____ Mentor Phone: _____

Applicant Certification

I certify that the information provided in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I understand and agree to maintain regular (minimum monthly) meetings with both my mentor and my sponsoring regional housing authority, provide progress updates, and document action items as required for successful completion of this program.

I understand that participation in the AAHA Emerging Leaders Program requires:

- Attendance at all in-person training sessions
- Completion of all online coursework and assignments
- Active participation in mentorship throughout the 10-month program
- Engagement in group projects and peer learning activities
- Submission of a final Impact Report upon program completion



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I commit to applying the knowledge and skills gained through this program to advance tribal housing in my organization and community.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Appendix A: RHA Sponsor Letter Requirements

The RHA letter should:

- Be addressed to the Emerging Leaders Program Selection Committee.
- Be written and signed by the RHA President/CEO or Board Chair (no designee signatures).
- Clearly state that the RHA supports the applicant's participation in the full ten-month program, including in-person sessions, online coursework, mentorship, and group projects.
- Confirm that the RHA will provide the necessary organizational support for the applicant to fully participate (for example: work time, travel approval, access to relevant information or projects, and any other resources the RHA commits).
- Affirm that the RHA understands the time commitment and will allow the applicant to dedicate work hours as needed to fulfill program requirements.
- Briefly describe why the RHA is sponsoring this applicant, highlighting:
 - Their professional strengths and leadership potential.
 - How their participation will benefit the RHA and the broader tribal housing community in Alaska.
 - How the RHA anticipates the applicant will apply knowledge gained through the program to advance organizational and community goals.
- Include the sponsor's name, title, organization name, and contact information (email and phone).
- Be dated within the current application cycle.

Prompts to guide the RHA letter

To help Presidents/CEOs or Board Chairs draft their letter, you can provide these prompts:

- Describe your role in the Regional Housing Authority and how you know the applicant.
- How long have you known or supervised the applicant, and in what capacity (e.g., direct supervisor, executive leadership, board relationship)?



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- What stands out about this applicant's professional strengths and leadership potential within your organization?
- Why did your organization choose to sponsor this individual for the Emerging Leaders Program at this time in their career?
- How do you expect the applicant's participation in the program to benefit your RHA's work and the broader tribal housing community in Alaska?
- What specific organizational support and resources will your RHA provide to ensure the applicant can fully participate in all aspects of the ten-month program?
- How do you hope the applicant will apply the skills and knowledge gained from the Academy in their role after completion of the program?

Appendix B: Mentor Commitment Form

Mentor Information

Mentor Name: _____

Organization: _____

Job Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Preferred Contact Method: Email Phone Text Video Call

Mentee Information

Mentee (Applicant) Name: _____

Mentee's Organization: _____

Mentor Commitment and Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I understand and commit to the following responsibilities through the duration of the program.

- Serve as mentor throughout the Emerging Leaders Program (April 2-26 – January 2027).
- Meet regularly with the mentee to provide guidance, support, and professional development
- Participating in mentor orientation and periodic check-ins with AAHA program staff
- Providing constructive feedback on the mentee's work and projects
- Sharing my knowledge and expertise in tribal housing to support the mentee's learning



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- Communicate proactively with AAHA staff if conflicts or challenges arise
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding mentee's professional development and organizational information
- Supporting the mentee in applying knowledge gained to their organization and community

I understand that this is a significant commitment to the mentee's professional development and to strengthening tribal housing leadership in Alaska.

Mentor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____