

Fed Housing Study Reports

A major, two-year federal study of Alaska Native peoples' housing, 90 per cent of which is considered sub-standard, has recommended broad changes in current programs to meet Native housing needs.

The survey was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and conducted by Naramore Bain Brady & Johanson, architectural/planning/economics firm of Seattle and Anchorage.

Main requirement stressed in the study is the tremendous volume of existing need and failure of past programs to meet that volume. "At present delivery rates, 30 years would be required to provide the housing units needed by Alaskan Native people through 1980," according to David Harworth, partner-in-charge for NBBJ.

Other problems cited in the study include tendency of federal agencies to impose "Lower 48" standards on housing for the unique and diverse Alaskan cultural and geographic environment and lack of coordination among agencies providing complementary housing and support programs.

Recommendations stress the

absolute necessity of local Alaskan Native involvement, centralization of the housing delivery process within the state to improve overall coordination, allocation of sufficient time and resources and the need for flexibility and sensitivity to respond to the widely varying physical, economic and cultural environments of the Alaska Native communities.

The project involved site visits to over sixty Native villages throughout the state and detailed survey interviews with nearly 800 Native households. It features extensive and continuing involvement of local and regional technical experts, state and federal agencies, Native groups, including Alaska Federation of Natives, and individuals.

"This resulted in an unusual and extremely useful degree of direct participation in the study process by individuals and groups with extensive practical experience in Alaskan Native housing needs," according to Roger Wagoner, NBBJ project manager.

The study team determined that, while many modifications of existing finance and delivery programs will be required, drastic dismemberment of existing programs and organizations

would not be necessary.

The 250-page final report has been forwarded to HUD offices in Washington, D.C. Copies of the report are available at the offices of NBBJ in Anchorage and Seattle.