

ONHIR Transition & DOI Listening Session

Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office (NHLCO) – Fact Sheet

WHO WE ARE

Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office (NHLCO)

An office of the Navajo Nation responsible for safeguarding the rights, lands, homes, and well-being of Navajo families impacted by the Navajo–Hopi Land Settlement Act and the federal relocation program.

NHLCO works directly with communities still facing unresolved relocation obligations, including housing, grazing, land-use, and infrastructure needs.

CORE FACTS

- The Navajo–Hopi Land Settlement Act remains federal law
- Federal relocation responsibilities do not end because ONHIR is administratively closing
- Certified applications, appeals, and unresolved cases remain pending
- Thousands of Navajo relocatees—especially elders—have waited decades for completion of federal obligations

IMPACTS NHLCO IS SEEING ON THE GROUND

Unresolved relocation issues directly affect:

- **Housing:** overcrowding, substandard conditions, lack of replacement homes
- **Land Use:** conflicts over homesites, access, and land status
- **Grazing & Livestock:** permit uncertainty and range management impacts, confusion over federal vs. tribal authority
- **Infrastructure:** roads, utilities, and community services are strained or absent

As federal processes slow or shift, these burdens increasingly fall on Navajo Nation programs and chapters.

KEY CONCERNS WITH THE CURRENT TRANSITION DISCUSSION

1. **Authority Gaps**
Who has legal authority to make decisions if ONHIR staff retire and the MOU takes effect?
2. **Continuity of Services**
How will pending applications and appeals be processed without interruption?
3. **Funding Protection**
How will the remaining ONHIR funds be safeguarded exclusively for relocation obligations?
4. **Accountability**
What enforceable plan exists to ensure responsibilities are completed—not deferred?
5. **Tribal Coordination**
Why is the Navajo Nation not formally embedded in transition planning?

NHLCO POSITION

- Listening sessions are important—but **listening alone is not sufficient**
- Any transition must be: Lawful, transparent, fully resourced, and coordinated with the Navajo Nation

NHLCO stands ready to work with DOI to ensure relocation obligations are completed without placing relocatees into administrative limbo.

BOTTOM LINE

Federal responsibility continues until the work is finished.

Administrative changes must not result in silence, delay, or abandonment of Navajo relocatees.

Prepared by Sarah Slim, Executive Director, Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office for the Department of the Interior, Listening Session 3/19/2026.