

Acting Comptroller Rodney E. Hood
Remarks at the
Homeownership and Housing Policy Conference
National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals

March 24, 2025

Good afternoon, esteemed colleagues, distinguished guests, and members of the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals.

It is an honor to join you today at this Homeownership and Housing Policy Conference. This marks the 25th anniversary of NAHREP, a milestone celebrating a quarter century of dedication to expanding homeownership opportunities, financial empowerment, generational wealth, and economic mobility. This gathering serves as a testament to our shared commitment to advancing homeownership. As a longtime friend of NAHREP, I'm excited to share insights into the OCC's priorities for 2025 which include financial inclusion, and regulatory developments impacting homeownership.

At the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), our mission is to ensure that national banks and federal savings associations operate in a safe and sound manner, provide fair access to financial services, treat customers fairly, and comply with applicable laws and regulations. Central to this mission is our unwavering dedication to financial inclusion, a priority that I, as Acting Comptroller, hold in the highest regard.

The story of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the national banking system begins in 1863, when the National Currency Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln. As President Abraham Lincoln said in a message to Congress in 1864, the national banking system will “create a reliable and permanent influence in support of the national credit.”

Today, financial inclusion is more than just a regulatory objective; it is a cornerstone of economic empowerment. It ensures that individuals and communities have access to the financial tools and resources necessary to build wealth, invest in education, start businesses, and, importantly, achieve homeownership. Homeownership, as many of you know, is not merely about possessing property; it is about establishing roots, fostering community, attaining financial stability, and creating opportunities for generational wealth.

Generational wealth, meaning the assets passed down from one generation to the next, plays a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of poverty and building economic resilience. Homeownership has historically been one of the most effective vehicles for accumulating and transferring such wealth. However, systemic barriers have long prevented many underserved communities from accessing homeownership opportunities, thereby hindering their ability to build and sustain wealth over generations.

Recognizing these challenges, the OCC launched Project REACH – or the Roundtable for Economic Access and Change – in July 2020. This initiative convenes leaders from banking, business, technology, and community organizations to identify and reduce barriers that prevent underserved communities from fully participating in our economy. Through collaborative efforts, Project REACH aims to dismantle systemic barriers and promote innovative solutions that advance financial inclusion.

One of the critical areas of focus for Project REACH is affordable homeownership. By addressing the challenges that disadvantaged and underserved consumers face in purchasing homes, and by encouraging the development of innovative products and services that improve access to credit, we strive to make homeownership attainable. This endeavor is not just about increasing homeownership rates; it is about ensuring that the dream of owning a home, and the associated benefits of stability and wealth creation, is accessible to every individual, regardless of their background or economic status.

I want to express my deep appreciation for the work that NAHREP and its members do every day. Your dedication to promoting sustainable homeownership in the community and beyond is instrumental in shaping a more equitable housing landscape. Together, by aligning our efforts and sharing our expertise, we can create pathways to financial inclusion and generational wealth.

Thank you again for hosting this event today. I look forward to diving deeper into the challenges and opportunities we face as we work together to advance financial inclusion and generational wealth in our fireside chat.