

# IDIS LIVE

...for the Integrated Disbursement and Information System

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Community Planning and Development

## NINETY-PERCENT MARK ON THE HORIZON

The 100 percent mark is getting closer by the day. Remember, though, that even when the entire grantee community is Live, upgrades will continue—and training will be offered to keep you up to date.

Enhancements to IDIS occur every month in response to **your** input (see article on release 3.3, page 4). Additionally, IDIS training classes and IDIS Users Group meetings will continue to be held throughout 1998. See the last page of the newsletter for training dates and sites near you. Take advantage of the opportunity to interact with your peers while learning to navigate IDIS like a master. ■

### ANNOUNCING A NEW WAY TO GET HELP

Suppose you know that you'll be performing a drawdown tomorrow, but you're not quite sure that you remember all the steps involved in the process. Wouldn't it be great if you could send an e-mail message to someone right now requesting step-by-step instructions on performing this function? Well, write down this e-mail address, because it will connect you with the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) and someone who can send you those instructions: **idis\_help@hud.gov** (field office staff should use **IDIS HELP** at **CPDPOST1**).

TAU staff will monitor the e-mail system daily. You may use it to request help with specific problems or to share your general comments and suggestions. During the e-mail system's "infancy," we'll be especially interested in your feedback on how it's

working: We've set it up for you and we want to be sure that it's meeting your needs. ■

### CDBG GPRS AND YEAR-END REPORTING

In previous *Technical Bulletins* and issues of *IDIS Live*, there has been much advice about using IDIS for year-end reporting.

For purposes of completing end-of-year reports for the CDBG program through IDIS, the compilation of data does not constitute a complete performance-report submission. IDIS does, however, permit certain reports to be run that contain information previously submitted on Grantee Performance

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Report (GPR) forms, such as the CDBG Activity Summary form (HUD 4949.2 and 4949.2a). Where

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IDIS can generate reports for CDBG activities, the former GPR forms would not need to be submitted for annual reporting purposes.

Because IDIS does not, at this time, cover information that would be required on other GPR forms, such as a GPR Cover Sheet (HUD 4949.1), Financial Summary (HUD 4949.3), One-for-One Replacement (HUD 4949.4), Rehabilitation Summary (HUD 4949.5), or Displacement (HUD 4949.6) forms, grantees using IDIS as a tool for performance-reporting will have to submit additional information along with the system-generated reports. It is recommended, therefore, that grantees continue to submit these GPR reports until IDIS is able to generate such reports. Similarly, information on new CDBG program requirements, such as excess Program Income or interest earned on revolving loan funds cannot be generated in a report format through IDIS and would therefore have to be submitted as a supplemental part of their performance report. ■

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## SUBGRANTING—SPECIAL CASES

Does your jurisdiction subgrant HOME money to organizations that are not CHDOs? If so, you create a fund type of “SU” (“Subgrant”) instead of “CR” (“CHDO”).

In order to create a subgrant with a fund type of “SU,” you must first have your local field office create the entity within the system if it does not already exist (they do this through Utilities, option 01).

Once the field office has completed this step, the ball is passed to you, the grantee. As always, just like any other type of subgrant you would create, you will begin by going to Subgranting option 01, “Create Subgrant.”

Here you will be required to enter the new organization’s UOG code (typically your UOG code) and UOG number. Next, you will type in the organization’s Program Code (“M” for “HOME”), Fiscal Year, Source Type, and Fund Type. Here’s where the twist comes in: Instead of typing “SU” for “Subgrant”—under the Fund Type column—you will type “EN” for “Entitlement.” The system will then

automatically change the Fund Type to SU when you commit the screen by pressing Enter.

Why do you have to type in EN as a Fund Type when you are trying to create a Fund Type of SU? The reason for this is that when you create a subgrant (be it CR, AD, or SU), IDIS “looks” to see where the money is coming from. For Fund Types of CR and AD, the money comes from general buckets that the system creates for you because of a HOME cap (Admin Funds) or floor (CHDO Reserve). SU money has no such originating source. SU money originates as EN (entitlement money from the grant). Thus, when the system “sees” that EN is the source, it will know automatically to change it to SU when you commit the screen.

As always, if you need any help when executing this process (it can be tricky!) please do not hesitate to contact the CPD Technical Assistance Unit at 1-800-273-2573. TAU staff will be happy to help you through the process. ■

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## ADDING A CHDO: A FOLLOW-UP

In the last issue of *IDIS Live*, we explained the methodology for adding a CHDO in IDIS. There have been some instances reported, however, of grantees being required to build an activity **prior** to executing the Create Subgrant function in Subgranting. If this happens, please contact the Technical Assistance Unit at 1-800-273-2573. The system should **not** require that you build an activity prior to creating the subgrant. If you experience this problem, we would like your help in documenting it so that our programmers may further define the solution. ■

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## USERS HURRY TO HARTFORD

The most recent IDIS Users Group meeting was held in Hartford, Connecticut, on October 15th. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity for grantees to meet one another and share their ideas with HUD—not to mention learning the latest about upcoming changes to IDIS.

Eighty-five participants gathered in Hartford. **Mary Ellen Morgan**, from the HUD field office in Hartford, and **Raymond Jordan**, the Connecticut

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State Coordinator, extended a warm welcome to everyone.

A major topic of discussion at the meeting was the handling of Program Income in IDIS. **Lincoln Burruss**, from HUD Central, demonstrated how to receipt Program Income and explained what happens to it when a draw is performed. (Remember to receipt only the Program Income that you actually have on hand.)

**Joseph Berlant**, with the City of Schenectady, helped Lincoln to demonstrate Activity Funding. Users also reviewed how to create Admin funds and create and reduce subgrants for HOME. Participants reviewed upcoming enhancements to IDIS, such as edits coming for the HOME program, improvements to reports, and methods of marking a voucher as a “final payment” in order to release funds in an activity back to the grant.

Special thanks to **Ann Mack**, with the Hartford HUD office, for helping to organize this meeting. ■

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## F9 TROUBLES ON SCREEN C04MH09

Have you ever pressed F9 to save your changes on the HOME Rental Housing Completion Screen and later discovered that the changes had not been saved? We have investigated the problem, and it appears to occur only on a user’s first trip through the screen. The developers are working to correct this glitch.

In the meanwhile, to save your initial changes to screen C04MH09, press Enter and then F7. Keep your eyes tuned to future issues of *IDIS Live*, where we’ll be sure to let you know of the problem’s ultimate resolution. ■

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## HOLIDAY REMINDER

IDIS is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM EST when HUD is open for business. The system is **not** available on Federal holidays. The system was unavailable on Monday, October 13 (Columbus Day) for this reason, and it will likewise be unavailable on the following Federal holidays:

- November 11 (Veterans’ Day)

- November 27 (Thanksgiving)
- December 25 (Christmas)
- January 1, 1998 (New Year’s Day)

The system **will** be available on Friday, November 28, the day after Thanksgiving, and Friday, December 26, the day after Christmas.

When IDIS is down, it is not inactive: This time is used to run batch cycles and updates with other systems, such as the HUD Financial System, and to upload enhancements and fixes into the Production region so that they may be tested adequately before they become available for use across the country.

Watch for a list of 1998 Federal holidays in the January 1998 issue of *IDIS Live*. ■

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## CHANGES FORTHCOMING: STATES AND EDI

Two major changes to IDIS are under way: bringing states into the system and providing grantees with an electronic data interchange (EDI) capability.

The first state slated to go Live is Delaware. If all things go according to plan, Delaware will be Live by the first week in December. Next on the schedule will be a larger state with more complex processing requirements—Pennsylvania. We’ll keep you posted.

What is EDI capability? Electronic data interchange is a process by which jurisdictions will be able to document activities on a local database of their own and then electronically ship the data (the “data interchange” part) to IDIS. In order to be able to use EDI, however, grantees must be able to capture all the data required by IDIS in a database of their own. Many big cities, counties, and states currently do this. EDI will initially allow grantees to ship documentation on activities only, and not on funding or drawdowns. The EDI pilot phase begins this month with Los Angeles county! Stay tuned to future issues of *IDIS Live* for updates. ■

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## HUD HOSTS IDIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

On Friday, October 10, seven grantees from around the country came to HUD Central for a one-day IDIS Advisory Committee meeting. The Advisory Committee exists to provide a forum in which experienced IDIS users can share their input regarding the current state of IDIS and consult directly with HUD on ways of improving the system. The grantees attending were from Jacksonville, Florida; Rochester, New York; York Co., Pennsylvania; DeKalb Co., Georgia; Lake Co., Illinois; Morris Co., New Jersey; and Ramsey Co., Wisconsin. Users contributed straightforward insight into how IDIS can be enhanced.

The most exciting aspect of the meeting for the committee was getting a preliminary look at proposed CDBG housing screens, which were presented by the Office of Block Grant Assistance. Grantees provided great feedback on these screens, which should help make their eventual release to the general IDIS community much smoother.

Some of the Advisory Committee's suggestions for improvements to the system included

- giving grantees EDI capability (see ""Changes Forthcoming: States and EDI");
- providing a "go to" functionality so that the user can go directly to a particular screen rather than through a series of screens or menus to get there;
- adding a "Total Amount" field on the Create Voucher screen;
- allowing users to save vouchers in "draft" status;
- accommodating HOME matching funds; and
- providing more lines on the Accomplishments Narrative screen (and a diary date).

This meeting also provided committee members the chance to grade us. The parts of the system that received the highest marks, or "As," were the drawdown module (people *are* able to get their money); the "responsiveness of HUD staff"; the

enhanced recordkeeping ability that is made possible by IDIS; IDIS Users Groups; and *IDIS Live*. Receiving more mixed reviews, and thereby highlighting some areas that need improvement, were reporting and future changes to the system. Advisory members suggested that we, the IDIS staff, find a better way to advise you of upcoming changes to the system. (One way we try to do that is through *IDIS Live*.) ■

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## RELEASE 3.3 PROVIDES NEW FUNCTIONS

On Friday, October 24, IDIS was enhanced to allow for some new functions. These changes were implemented in response to feedback and requests from end-users like yourselves.

Here's what changed and what's new:

- You may now retrieve an activity via the revise or view options on the C04MA59 screen using only the HUD Activity Number. You no longer need to enter the project and year to access the desired activity.
- The Summary of Activities report (C04PR03) was enhanced to reduce the number of activities shown. Now the report will list only those activities that were "active" for a given year. The report will also provide a full description of the activity from the MA01 and MA04 screens, as well as information on draws made throughout that program year. (For more information on the Summary of Activities report, see *IDIS Live* 12, page 2.)
- The Maintain Plan Process was added. A new screen (C04MK08) was added in the Plan Project submenu area to allow you to update your field office information, if needed.
- The Maintain Drawdown screen (C04MD53) was enhanced to allow the revision of vouchers for line items with negative balances. This will allow a drawdown with a negative value to be revised to reflect adjustments, collections, summary draws, or differences.

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In addition, an interim release in October 1997 (unnoticed by most IDIS users) gave HUD field office and Headquarters staff the ability to view your Activity Funding and Subgrant details! ■

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## ***IDIS KEYSTROKE SAVER***

### **ERROR**

Grab a red pen and turn to page 18 in your *IDIS KeyStroke Saver for Multi-funded Grantees*. In the left-hand column, under the heading “Status (HOME TBRA Setup),” item 2 is incorrect. Cross it out and write in “Rental assistance to this tenant has ended.”

This error was discovered during the course of a hotline call to the Technical Assistance Unit. Kudos to **Stephanie Newburg**, of Dakota County, Minnesota, who discovered the discrepancy between the *IDIS User Manual* (which is correct) and the *KeyStroke Saver*. She may have saved all of us a bit of time and trouble. ■

## **IDIS AT A GLANCE FLOW CHART**

On the next page you’ll find a flow chart titled “IDIS Processing At a Glance,” which has been provided in response to requests from many IDIS users. Here, for the first time, you can see the main processing steps of IDIS laid out on one page. In order to streamline and condense this information, peripheral modules of IDIS, such as subgranting, reports, and Program Income have been left out.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you review the flow chart:

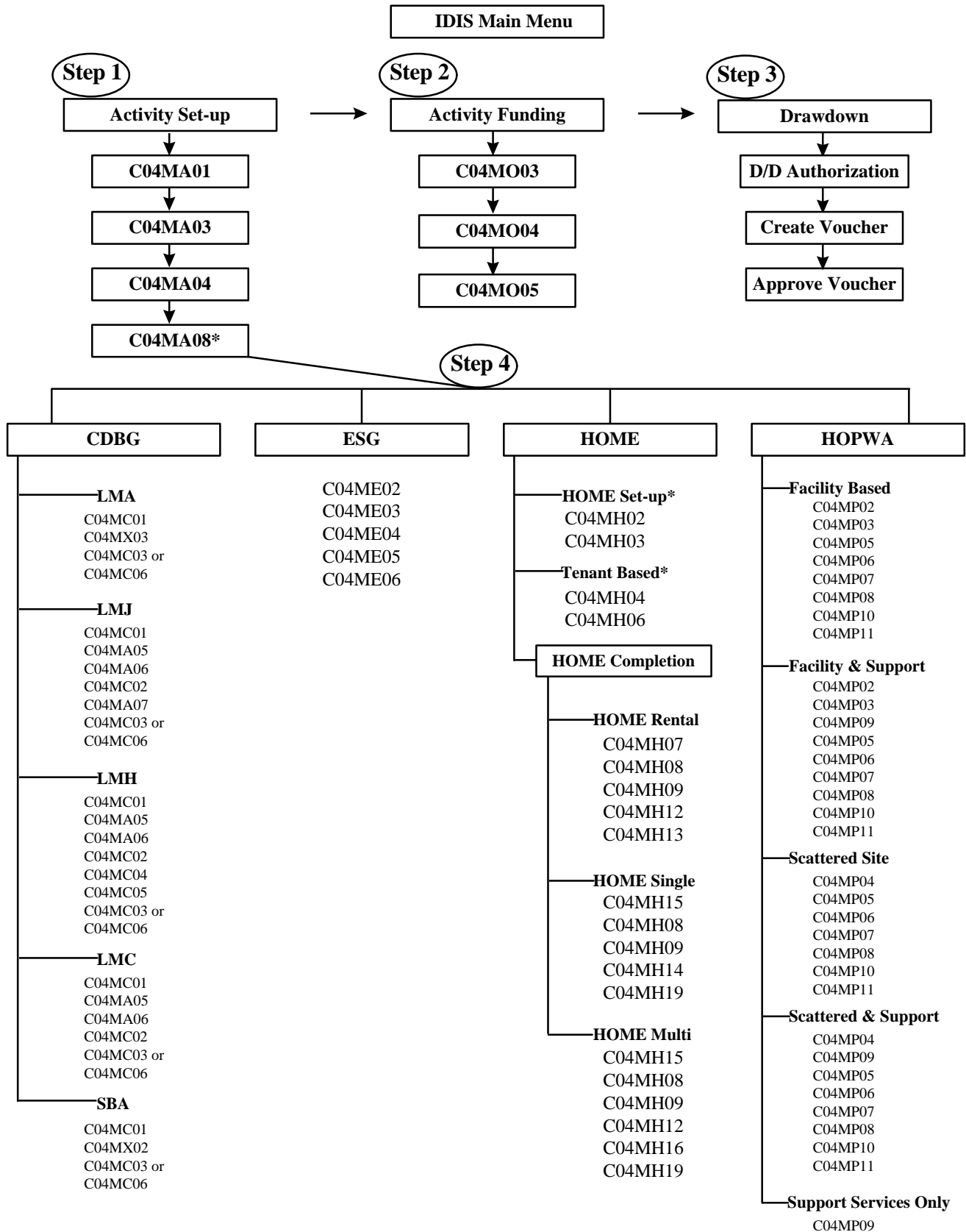
The HOME set-up screens (C04MH02 and H03) **must** be completed **before** Activity Funding is set up.

Many of the CDBG completion screens are conditional. For instance, you will get only the C04MA06 screen if you answer “Y” to the Nature/Location question. The same is true for the Displacement and Replacement screens (C04MC03 and C04MC06).

The HOME Tenant Based Rental option has no HOME completion sub-path.

Enjoy the attached chart. Feel free to post it by your computer or with your other IDIS material. You will also find it helpful if you need to train others. As always, we welcome your feedback.

# IDIS Processing At a Glance



\*For HOME, complete the HOME set-up screens before doing Activity Funding.

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# ***IDIS LIVE GUEST COLUMN***

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*This month's IDIS Live Guest Column was submitted by the team of Joe Mustico and Wilma Wheten, of the City of Rochester's Department of Community Development. Joe serves on the IDIS Users Group Advisory Committee while Wilma is back at the office doing all the work.*

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## **EASIER SAID THAN DONE: PERSPECTIVES ON IDIS IMPLEMENTATION**

We wanted to take this opportunity to describe briefly the City of Rochester's Integrated Disbursement and Information System implementation process and experiences.

It is likely that each grantee's experience is somewhat unique and a function of the size and complexity of their annual program. The City of Rochester's 1997–98 Community Development Program has a budget of \$18,158,800, which funds 68 housing, economic development, and public service projects. During the 1996–97 program year, more than \$25,680,000—including formula grants and Section 108 loans—was spent on community development activities.

The responsibility for preparing the annual Consolidated Community Development Plan and the Grantee Performance Reports is centralized in the Department of Community Development's Office of the Commissioner, while the implementation of projects is decentralized. More than 90 people working in six City departments are involved in providing high-quality community development services to City residents and businesses.

When we decided to go Live in IDIS, we thought that it was important to develop an implementation plan. The plan contained four broad elements, including awareness, training, processing procedures and protocols, and the provision of timely information to program managers. Our goal was to implement the

system with no significant delays in processing program documents.

Believe it or not, most department heads in the City of Rochester were unaware of IDIS. We needed to communicate effectively to department heads and their key staff a description of IDIS, because we needed for them to understand the issues related to **and** the many potential benefits of its successful implementation. We accomplished this through briefings and periodic status reports that were prepared throughout the implementation process.

With the assistance of **Margaret Dziwulski** and **Peggy Meinel** of the HUD Buffalo office, we conducted a training session for all program managers. The training team provided an overview of the system and its data-input requirements, and discussed the implementation issues in detail.

After discussion with the program managers and input from the department heads, we decided to centralize IDIS processing and data entry in the Department of Community Development's Office of the Commissioner. Our goal was to develop an efficient and effective system for the collection and input of data. We also determined that activities should be set up in a way that would facilitate tracking and recordkeeping. For example, the activities related to a particular single-family rehabilitation project are set up according to address.

The City of Rochester has been Live in IDIS since December 1996 and is beginning to realize a variety of benefits. For the first time in the program's history, we are developing a centralized database of information on the City's activities. We enter information throughout the year, so IDIS provides the financial and programmatic status of each activity in a "real time" environment. In addition, because of the way in which we set up individual activities, we can link each expenditure with a specific accomplishment. We have also been able to reduce significantly the time spent on preparing Grantee Performance Reports. With the savings in time, we prepared a citizen-friendly pamphlet that provides

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testimonials from residents who have benefited from our program.

As we reflected back on our implementation process for the preparation of this article, the headline “Easier Said Than Done” quickly came to mind. Although we had our share of difficulties during the implementation process, we can say that they were

minor when compared with the long-term benefits of going Live in IDIS.

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*If IDIS has inspired you, too, contact Jennifer Stanley by phone (202-708-0614, ext. 4411) or cc:Mail (Jennifer\_C.\_Stanley@hud.gov) to discuss your idea for an IDIS Live Guest Column.*



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# FUTURE GROUP MEETINGS: SAVE THE DATES!

## USERS GROUP—FT. MYERS

The next IDIS Users Group meeting will be held in **Fort Myers, Florida** (Lee County). The meeting, on Friday, **November 21, 1997**, will be held at

Columbus Regional Medical Center—  
Southwest Florida (auditorium)  
2727 Winkler Ave.  
Ft. Myers, Florida 33901  
941-939-1147

Possible lodging sites include the Marriott Courtyard (941-275-8600) and the Residence Inn (941-936-4144).

If you plan to attend this meeting, contact **Wayne Paulsen** (HUD/Florida) at 904-232-3588 or **Sharon-Lee Thomas** at 202-708-0614, ext. 2985.

## USERS GROUP—COLUMBUS

The first Users Group meeting of 1998 will be held on **January 27 in Columbus, Ohio**, at the following location:

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission  
285 East Main Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Contact **Susan Tsen** at 614-233-4139 or **Sharon-Lee Thomas** at 202-708-0614, ext. 2985 if you wish to attend.

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Tentative dates and sites for upcoming Users Group meetings:

**December 15, 1997**, in San Antonio, Texas  
**February**—Los Angeles, California

## IDIS TRAINING

Here are the dates and locations for future IDIS Training sessions.

**November 17-20, 1997**, Seattle, Washington

**December**—No Training

For information about training offered by HUD, call 202-289-8100.

Tentative training dates and sites for 1998:

**January**—Kansas City, Missouri

**February**—San Diego, California

**March**—Chicago, Illinois

**April**—New Orleans, Louisiana

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Your IDIS Users Group contacts are **Lincoln Burruss**, **Phil Helbling**, and **Roger Merideth** at CPD. You may contact them via the following:

Telephone: 202-708-0790, ext. 4570 (Lincoln)  
202-708-0614, ext. 4410 (Phil)  
202-708-0614, ext. 4691 (Roger)

Internet: Lincoln\_Burruss@hud.gov  
Philip\_B.\_Helbling@hud.gov  
Roger\_E.\_Merideth@hud.gov

Mail: HUD/CPD  
Office of Executive Services  
451 Seventh St., S.W., Room 7226  
Washington, D.C. 20410

**For technical information**, contact your field office or the CPD Technical Assistance Unit (at 1-800-273-2573). **For SprintLink ID and password information**, contact your local HUD field office. **To have your IDIS password reset**, call HUD Security at 202-708-3300. ■

