

## **HUD's WEB POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The internet home page is HUD's "face to the world." The primary audience is people outside of HUD: ***citizens at all economic levels*** and HUD's ***current and potential business partners*** (state and local officials, housing industry, PHAs and IHAs, professional organizations, community organizers, corporations and foundations, academics, and the media).

HUDWeb is HUD's internal communication network. Its audience is HUD employees only. HUDweb is intended to be a management tool - a way to foster communications on important policy and procedural matters, a clearinghouse of information that HUD employees need to do their jobs, and - eventually - a center for many of the computer applications that HUD employees use in their jobs.

### **WEB MANAGEMENT**

1. HUD's web presence is managed by one "Webmaster" for HUD's internet presence and one "Webmaster" for HUDWeb, designated by the Deputy Secretary. The Department's webmasters are responsible for the content of the web sites and for serving as advocates for HUD's web presence. They work closely, as partners, with the Office of Information Technology (IT), which is responsible for the technical aspects of HUD's web sites.
2. Each Assistant Secretary is responsible for developing and maintaining relevant program information on HUD's web sites and for designating a single point of contact to serve as the developer/coordinator for the information from that organization and to work with the two Departmental Webmasters.
3. Each State/Area Coordinator is responsible for the development and maintenance of local office materials and for designating a local office "Webmaster" to work with the two Departmental Webmasters.
4. Local Office and Headquarters Program Office designees are responsible for:
  - Ensuring that materials have been properly coordinated and approved, prior to submitting them for posting.
  - Ensuring the posted documents remain current and that obsolete documents are removed.
  - Ensuring that their materials/sections of the home page comply with all policies and procedures contained and referenced in this document.

### **POLICIES FOR ALL HUD WEB SITES (both internet and HUDweb)**

1. HUD's web presence should communicate - both by the information it contains and by its presentation - that we are "one HUD." HUD will have only one internet site, located at [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov), and one HUDweb site; and all local office and program office sections will emanate from that site.
  - Each Field Office may have only one "page" which represents the entire office (i.e., Field Offices may not establish and promote separate web sites for individual programs or initiatives).

- Program offices in Headquarters may create pages for individual programs or initiatives, which will be incorporated in the Department's page.
2. All materials on the HUD home page and HUDweb must reside on HUD's own servers. In rare cases, the Chief Information Officer may approve an exception to this policy if it is in the best interest of the Department. Exceptions must be granted prior to entering into any contractual relationships for web server services.
  3. Program and field offices are responsible for providing files for the internet home page and/or HUDweb already in web-ready format. IT staff are available to provide technical assistance and to do design and layout work.
  4. All files on the HUD home page must be owned and controlled by the Department. Individual HUD staff may not create home pages depicted as "HUD" pages on personal accounts with private internet service providers nor will the Department link to any "HUD" pages owned by individual HUD staff.
  5. Links to other web sites may be created as long as the link adds value and is not duplicative of other information on the page. Links must be reviewed carefully and regularly to ensure that they continue to add value, that they do not exist solely to promote specific products or services, and that they are in good taste. *Links must be clearly identified with the standard icon developed by IT which links to the standard Departmental disclaimer.*
  6. Information about HUD program policies and procedures must be approved by the manager (or his/her designee) having delegated authority to determine those policies/procedures, before that information is posted.
  7. Comments, guest book entries, and other webmaster mail received through the web may be archived only for content purposes - not to create mailing lists or to identify specific people with specific comments.
  8. E-mail generated by the internet home page or HUDweb should be answered promptly and informally, using e-mail whenever possible. Although it is not necessary to establish formal control systems to monitor web-generated mail, employees should be held accountable via performance standards for responding in a timely manner.
  9. Information presented on either the internet home page or HUDweb must be presented in a manner that reflects sensitivity to persons with disabilities. IT can provide technical guidance in this area.
  10. Any interactive applications developed using the webs must consider all applicable requirements of the Privacy Act.
  11. Guest books, surveys, forms, and any other materials that request information from the public must comply with the intent of the Paperwork Reduction Act.
  12. On each web page, a contact point who can provide additional information about that section should be identified.
  13. Photos taken at official HUD events or official photos of HUD officials may be published on the home page/HUDweb without concern. Photos taken at events other than official HUD events require the written permission of the individuals in the photos, before publication. Photos

taken from other sources (newspapers, books, non-governmental organizations, etc.) require written permission of the organization, before publication.

14. Information contained on Field Office pages, including links to other web sites, should be limited to local information, such as information about local communities, initiatives, and partnerships. Information that is Departmentwide or nationwide in nature will be provided through HUD's main home page.

15. Web materials must be developed in compliance with the technical policies, standards, and procedures developed by IT.

16. The HUD internet home page and HUDweb are management tools; therefore, they should be used only for official, mission-related HUD business.

### **ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR HUD'S INTERNET PRESENCE**

1. Public information presented on the internet must be made available to anyone who does not have access to the web, upon request. A printed version of the web document is suitable.

2. Information posted on HUD's internet home page must be maintained in a manner consistent with the Freedom of Information Act and the Federal Records Act.

3. Where it will promote HUD's program and customer objectives to link to the home pages and/or e-mail addresses of a category of private for-profit HUD partners (e.g. HUD approved lenders, HUD approved realtors, etc.), it is permissible to do so, with the following provisions:

a) A complete list of the vendors in that category must be posted (both those with and those without home pages/e-mail);

b) All vendors in that category must be notified that HUD will be creating links to the web sites/e-mail addresses of those that have them, before any links are posted; and

c) Links are clearly marked with the "exit" icon, leading to HUD's disclaimer.

4. Endorsements, acknowledgments, or references to specific products or services may not appear on any HUD internet web site, including sites that are established for HUD by private contractors.

### **PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING NEW PAGES**

1. The HUD Webmasters and IT are available to provide guidance and technical assistance in the development of web pages.

2. New pages must be submitted to the HUD Webmaster for review of content and to IT in Headquarters for review of technical aspects. Once the new page is approved, IT will post it.

- Future updates may be done locally and require no further approvals (see attached memorandum from Steve Yohai, dated July 25, 1996); however, the local or program office webmaster should notify the Departmental webmaster of any significant updates or changes that are loaded, so they can be linked to other sections of the home page or HUDweb.

3. All pages must follow Departmental standards established by IT for typeface, headings, and other format variables that must be followed.
4. For each page approved, one person should be assigned accountability for updating the home page on a regular basis.
5. All program or local pages must include links back to the HUD/HUDweb home page.

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR HUD'S WEB SITES**

1. To be effective, HUD's web sites must be presented from the point of view of our audience, using their vernacular (plain English). The tone of all HUD web pages should be conversational and concise.
2. Information should be organized in topics that are meaningful to the audience.
3. In general, information should be presented in digest form, no more than 1-2 brief paragraphs. Supporting documents or downloadable files can be offered as links if further elaboration is necessary.
4. Graphics (pictures and drawings) often tell the story better than words; however, graphics should be used judiciously since they make the data loading process slower for the user.
5. The date of last update should be noted at the bottom of each web page.
6. Each document posted on the web must have a plain English, easily understood document title.
7. Information for the internet home page should be developed with the *potential* audience in mind - not just today's audience. In time, we hope Americans at all economic levels and all of our partners will have access to and use the internet.