

IDIS LIVE

...for the Integrated Disbursement and Information System

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Community Planning and Development

EDI PILOT PROGRAM HEADS TOWARD PHASE I

The EDI pilot with the State of Louisiana is underway! HUD representatives visited the State Office of Community Development in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to begin this exciting new phase of IDIS. The August 6th meeting was coordinated by **Sandy Smith** of the State's CDBG Program and was eagerly anticipated by the staff there. In attendance were State CDBG Director, **Susan Elkins**, Assistant Director, **Herman Dubon**, and members of their staff. Present, also, were members of the State's Office of Information Services (OIS), and the Assistant Director of Finance and Support, **Dottie Collins**.

Lincoln Burruss, **Wanda Brown**, and **Maurice Gibbs**, from HUD headquarters, gave an overview of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). HUD is attempting to ease the burden of transferring grantee data from their own information systems to IDIS. EDI is expected to be implemented in the following three phases: Phase I - update and amend existing projects and activities; Phase II - project and activity set-up; and Phase III - activity funding and drawdowns. The State of Louisiana is piloting this effort for us. The remaining states' conversion to IDIS will begin after Phase I of EDI has been completed.

Grantees will be able to input large quantities of project and activity data in one large "flat file" generated from their database. This extracted information will then travel through a VAN (Value Added Network) where it will be transferred into

IDIS using.....(continued on page 2)

IDIS WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) welcomes the appointment of Joel S. Dean as Director of the Systems Development and Evaluation Division. His duties include the oversight of IDIS.

Joel worked for a number of years in the office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) before coming to CPD on June 29th. He does not come to IDIS alone. Also joining the CPD staff is Sam Walker from the CFO. Sam has taken over coordinating the states' conversion to IDIS. We are certain their experience will be an asset as IDIS continues to be enhanced.

We wish both Joel and Sam the best of luck in their new assignments. ■

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pre-determined “standards.” The “standards” are the formulas that allow two computer systems to interface. Grantees will then be able to see all their data and work in IDIS as necessary. They will be able to set up activities, fund the activities, process drawdowns, and create and generate reports.

Wanda answered many questions for OIS staff relating to how “standards” are determined for formatting information; the hardware and software required for EDI; the programming involved in extracting the data; obtaining a VAN; and, what happens to the information from their system that State law mandates but that IDIS does not require.

The State of Louisiana came into this meeting prepared with questions and ready to work. They had outlined their concerns and studied the EDI process. Although it was clear that there are some apprehensions about the conversion to this form of data submission, they are ready to take on the challenge. The EDI team is scheduled to re-visit them to complete the data mapping (process that identifies corresponding values between systems) and provide assistance as the State determines how to interface their activity numbering system with IDIS’s.

HUD has proposed a target date of mid-October for Phase I of EDI implementation. ■

HOME LOAN GUARANTEES FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP

The HOME regulation at CFR 92.205(b)(2) permits a participating jurisdiction to invest HOME funds to guarantee a loan or a pool of loans. The HOME Program has always permitted the use of program funds to guarantee a specific loan as a cost of financing in order to secure additional private financing. Funds may be drawn down for this purpose after the specific HOME project is set up in IDIS.

In the HOME final rule, the Department also permitted a participating jurisdiction to establish a loan guarantee account with HOME funds by considering all the loans which would be covered by this guarantee as a “project.” HOME funds may be drawn for a loan guarantee pool as each loan is made. The amount of the loan guarantee account must be based on a reasonable estimate of the default rate on the guaranteed loans. However, under no circumstances may the amount exceed 20 percent of the total outstanding principal amount guaranteed (except, the account may include a reasonable minimum balance). The minimum loan guarantee amount (not to exceed 20 percent) is created by 100 percent draws on the earliest loans to be made under the pool arrangement.

Example: A city would like to secure a lender commitment for \$1,000,000 of private financing. The lender is willing to provide up to \$20,000 for each rehabilitation loan for a maximum of 50 loans. The lender will require a minimum balance of 20 percent of the outstanding balance be maintained in the project account. In order to establish the minimum balance in this loan guarantee account, the city would need to draw down \$20,000 of HOME funds as each of the first 10 loans were made, thereby creating the guarantee account of \$200,000. The minimum loan guarantee amount of up to 20% is created by 100% draws on the earliest loans to be made under the pool arrangement. However, the amount of HOME loan guarantee funds attributable to each property at completion is the amount of the total HOME funds drawn for the loan guarantee divided by the total number of properties assisted through the guarantee account. (In this case, \$200,000 / 50 units = \$4,000 in HOME funds per unit.) Because in this case the minimum account balance required by the lender is equal to the maximum HOME funds permitted under a loan guarantee project, no additional draws of HOME funds could be made on this project.

In a situation where the minimum balance required by the lender is less than 20 percent, additional amounts of HOME funds could be added to the account when the amount deposited became less than the minimum balance required.

Example: a lender offers to make a commitment of \$1,000,000 to cover a maximum of 50 loans at

\$20,000 each and will require a minimum balance in the loan guarantee account of \$78,000 or 10 percent of the outstanding balance (whichever is greater). The initial \$78,000 minimum account balance would be established by drawing \$20,000 of HOME funds for each of the first three home loans, and \$18,000 for the fourth loan. This would meet the lender's minimum requirement until the fortieth loan was made—because at this point the total outstanding principal balance would be \$800,000 and the \$78,000 maintained in the project account would now be less than 10 percent of the outstanding balance. At this point, additional HOME funds could be drawn to meet the 10 percent requirement.

A HOME loan guarantee project may also include HOME funds for other purposes; such as, rehabilitation costs and/or downpayment assistance.

Example: a loan guarantee project of 50 homes could also include HOME funds for rehabilitation of the 50 homes and/or downpayment assistance for all 50 potential purchasers. This project would be treated as one activity in IDIS which would include information and funding for all three types of HOME assistance planned.

Setting up Loan Guarantees for Homeownership in IDIS

- I. Follow normal processing for Activity Set-Up, beginning with the common path (IDIS Menu "A"):
 - A. On the **C04MA01** screen (Setup Activity) enter a description of the HOME project which indicates whether it will include only loan guarantees or will include loan guarantees, property costs and/or downpayment assistance.
 1. For example, use the description field to show: "Loan Guarantee in the amount of \$200,000 for 50 loans, Property Costs of \$100,000 for 50 homes, and Downpayment Assistance of \$100,000 for 50 homes."
 2. If an address for the property which will be subject to a loan guarantee is not available at the time of set-up, use an appropriate location identifier; such as, the address of the lender or developer. The address field should be updated as soon as the first property address is known.
 - B. Follow IDIS User Manual instructions for the **C04MA03 and C04MA04** screens.
 - C. On the **C04MA08** screen (money screen), be sure that the amount entered in Total Estimated Amount includes estimates for the full amount of the loan guarantees, property costs, and/or downpayment assistance which is expected to be used in the project. Using the example in A.1. above, the total estimated amount is \$400,000. By selecting "HOME" on this screen, you will be taken to the HOME Activity Processing path.
- II. HOME Activity Processing path:
 - A. On the **C04MH01** screen, select Homeownership/Rental Assistance.
 - B. On the **C04MH02** screen, enter the Total HOME Funds Requested for the activity (loan guarantee, property costs, and/or downpayment assistance). Be sure to answer "Y" to the question "Loan Guarantee?"
 - C. Follow IDIS User Manual instructions for the **C04MH03** screen. If a specific property address is not yet known, use an appropriate temporary address (see I.A.2. above).
- III. Proceed to Activity Funding (IDIS Menu "T"):
 - A. From the **C04MO03** screen, select the appropriate activity to be funded.
 - B. From the **C04MO04** screen, select the grant funds you want to associate with the activity.
 - C. On the **C04MO05** screen, enter the appropriate funding amounts to be associated with the activity. These amounts can be adjusted up or down

as the project progresses based on actual funding needs.

IV. Proceed to drawdown of funds (IDIS Menu “D”):

- A. Create the initial drawdown for the loan guarantee account by accessing the **C04MD10** screen. Enter the amount of HOME funds to be drawn down for those loans which are ready to be made (not to exceed the total HOME funds required to fund the loan guarantee account).
 - 1. In the example above, if only the first two loans out of the first 10 are ready to be originated under the loan guarantee, a drawdown could only be made for \$40,000 (\$20,000 x2) at this time. HOME funds may not be drawn down in a lump sum but are to be drawn based on the origination of the earliest loans to create the loan guarantee minimum balance.
 - 2. As new loans are ready to be originated, additional draws may be made to fund the loan guarantee, until it is funded in full (not to exceed 20% of the outstanding principal amount guaranteed).
- B. Drawdowns for HOME funds to be used for property costs or downpayment assistance on individual units in the loan guarantee project can be created at any time the funds are needed. They can be included in the same draw request created for loan guarantee funds or can be drawn separately. (There is no special drawdown code for loan guarantee funds.)
- C. Once the drawdown has been created, all appropriate line items must be approved in IDIS using the **C04MD12** screen.

Filing Completion Reports for Homeownership Projects Involving Loan Guarantees

- I. From the IDIS Menu “B” (Revise Activity), you can reach the HOME Path to enter completion information by proceeding through the C04MA09, C04MA10, C04MA03, C04MA04, and C04MA08 screens. When you reach the initial HOME screen, **C04MH01**, under Completion, select Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance.
 - A. Follow IDIS User Manual instructions for the **C04MH15** screen.
 - B. On the **C04MH08** screen, enter the amount of HOME funds used for loan guarantees under “Other”. If HOME funds were used for property costs or downpayment assistance, indicate these amounts under “Direct Loan, Grant, or Deferred Payment”, as appropriate.
 - C. Follow IDIS User Manual instructions for the **C04MH09** and **C04MH12** screens. NOTE: References in the IDIS User Manual to “rental unit” for the C04MD12 screen are incorrect and should be “homeownership unit”. (Correction of these incorrect references has been requested.)
 - D. One **C04MH16** screen is completed for each unit.
 - E. On the **C04MH16** screen, make separate entries for the amount for loan guarantees, the amount for property costs, and the amount for downpayment assistance provided to the unit.
 - 1. For the amount representing the loan guarantee, use Fund Type “1” and Assistance Method “5” (Other Assistance).
 - 2. For the amount for property costs, use Fund Type “1” and the applicable Assistance Method.

3. For downpayment assistance amounts, use Fund Type "2" and the applicable Assistance Method.
- F. It is important to report only the portion of HOME loan guarantee funds, property costs, or downpayment assistance attributable to the individual unit on this screen, because at this stage the information entered in IDIS is linked to individual units.
1. For example, if the completion information you are entering is for one of the first 10 out of the 50 units funded from the loan guarantee account, you would not show \$20,000 in HOME funds attributable to the loan guarantee for this unit (even though this may be one unit which accounted for the first draw made). Rather, you would show \$4,000 ($\$200,000 / 50 = \$4,000$) since only a smaller portion of the total loan guarantee is actually attributable to this unit.
 2. HOME completion information for individual units should be added as soon as each unit is completed. (PJs should not wait until all units in the project are complete to begin entering this information.) The amount of loan guarantee per unit will need to be an estimated amount until the entire project is complete and the actual amount of loan guarantee per unit is known. The estimate is based on the total amount of the loan guarantee divided by the total number of units to be assisted (as shown in the C04MA01 Set-Up Screen).

- G. Follow IDIS User Manual instructions for the C04MH14 screen. ■

Submitted by Joan Morgan, Office of Affordable Housing Programs, HUD

A NOTE OF THANKS



The Office of Affordable Housing wants to extend its appreciation to PJs and their staff who were involved in the recent review of HOME Commitment data in IDIS.

Your efforts will help assure that FY end reports on HOME program status are an accurate reflection of progress under the program.

LA COUNTY SETS SEPTEMBER TARGET TO GO "LIVE"

There is cause for celebration in the IDIS community as Los Angeles County makes final preparations to go "live" in IDIS. This will mean that 962 entitlement grantees will be on-line in the system!

The County's Community Development Commission was the setting for meetings facilitated by IDIS trainers, **Lincoln Burruss** and **Dave Schultz**. The meetings, coordinated by **Hal Cooper** of the Finance Department, began with a video presentation of IDIS. Dave's overview of the system was well received by the Finance and the HOME program personnel in attendance. It generated a lot of response. Lincoln and Dave fielded many questions about the benefits of reduced paperwork, the shifting of work responsibilities from one area to another, and the tracking of the finances and accomplishments of activities and grants that IDIS will provide.

While Dave, assisted by **Vera Pérez** of the IDIS team, conducted hands-on training with the morning participants, Lincoln facilitated the afternoon session. This audience was made up of mostly CDBG staff. There was a lot of discussion on the concepts of "revolving" loans and "float" loans and their effect on activities.

The second day was filled with discussions on many topics. They included an in-depth review of Program Income and its effect on the drawdown process; year-end reporting requirements (along with a demonstration of the procedures for generating and formatting those reports); and, the responsibilities of the County's Local Administrator and the significance of the authority he wields. The afternoon concluded with more hands-on practice of various IDIS functions. Lincoln was also able to spend time with one of the systems representatives to work on LA County's data mapping.

The LA County grantees were all enthusiastic, and eager to learn. They were well prepared, knowledgeable, and came to the session with well thought-out questions.

LA County hopes to complete the conversion process after its data is loaded and reviewed. This review will ensure that their data has been received and transferred completely and accurately into IDIS. We look forward to their coming aboard.

(There are 11 new grantees that were added for FY 1998 that have yet to go "live" in IDIS.)■

STATE UPDATE

Two more States have joined those already
LIVE in IDIS!

Idaho
West Virginia

Which join:

Alaska
Delaware
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Minnesota
Mississippi, and
The District of Columbia

Welcome to the IDIS Community!

A FAREWELL FROM PHIL HELBLING

The IDIS project has been an exciting and challenging one for me. I joined IDIS as a trainer at

the beginning of 1996. Since that time, I have been able to assist and meet numerous grantees and visit many of the Field Offices. It has been a pleasure to work with so many hard-working people.

During the past two and a half years, I have seen IDIS grow substantially; both in functionality and in the number of users. Who would have thought that we would be able to bring the system to where it is today?

From my early days as an IDIS instructor, to writing and publishing the IDIS bulletin and moderating User Group forums, the challenge has been keeping up with the pace of change. And, IDIS will continue to change and grow.

I have watched the *IDISLive* bulletin grow from a five or six page edition to a 15 to 20 page publication. Your questions, answers, articles, tips and suggestions have made *IDISLive* into a valuable resource that has been fun to produce.

I have often been asked what I consider to be my greatest accomplishment with IDIS? I have to say that it was helping New York City to go "live." It has been a long journey from my first meeting with City managers, to 3 months later bringing all the City departments on board. After many trips, numerous training sessions, a special IDIS training guide (just for the City), and a lot of train rides to get the job done, we finally did it.

My latest challenge is still with HUD. I have joined the Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) Office at HUD on an assignment to help decide on a Department-wide grants management system. As you know, HUD has over 50 different grant programs. These include formula grants (like CDBG and HOME), and competitive grants (like drug elimination programs).

While the four programs of the Consolidated Plan have become automated with IDIS, many of these 50+ other grant programs at HUD are not automated. One of the things that we are looking at is a common system for all of these programs. Even though all of them are different (just like formula programs on IDIS are all distinct), they each go through a common process or life-cycle; from application to award to close-out.

IDIS still remains unique across the federal government. No other system allows non-government employees to log-on and directly manage and draw down their funds. My experience with IDIS shows that with patience, you can implement a rather complex grants system for multiple layers of users with varying roles while maintaining a high level of data and financial security.

Wouldn't it be nice if someday, all the federal grants your jurisdiction receives could be handled by one system, regardless of program or agency? That day is surely coming. The power and flexibility that new technology brings us is truly exciting.

Thanks to all of you for your support and encouragement. It is your hard work which has made IDIS a success. I have no doubt that I will see some of you again in the future!■

IDIS PROFILE: RUBIN JONES

Those of you who have called into the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) with inquiries concerning CMIS or the HOPE 3 program have, no doubt, spoken with Rubin Jones. Rubin was asked to join

the TAU after spending some time learning and working in the HOME program. He then brought his knowledge to the TAU, where he has been working for the past year.

Rubin's expertise in CMIS enables him to handle the discrepancies grantees receive when submitted information is incomplete or incorrect. Many times, he initiates the contact in correcting items. After reviewing a file, he locates the problem, corrects it, then notifies the grantee to let them know what was done to fix it. This allows the case to be processed correctly and in a timely manner. Rubin advises, "Double check the forms and make sure the information is correct before mailing or faxing it."

Rubin offers the same advice for those grantees working in the HOPE 3 program. Many times a case will be held up due to the submission of incomplete documentation. "Be sure to include the transfer form that accompanies the project set up and completion forms," reminds Rubin.

If a grantee calls in and Rubin is not available, he requests that the grantee ask for him, and leave a message with their telephone number so that he can call them back. Be sure to explain the problem as clearly as possible, and include the accounting codes and the project number. This enables Rubin to pull up the case, locate the problem, correct it, then call the grantee to tell them it is done.

As CMIS and HOPE 3 phase out, Rubin spends a good deal of time learning more about IDIS. He has begun handling those inquiries so that he will be fully trained and knowledgeable on the system. He realizes that many grantees are hesitant about working in IDIS. However, he tells them not to be afraid of the change.

He also wants the callers to know that they can contact him as their questions change from CMIS to IDIS. "Our users should feel confident that there will be no break in the support they will receive," Rubin

says. "The system may change, but I will still be here to help them with their questions."■

OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH THE "HOTLINE"

The Technical Assistance Unit (TAU), better known as the "Hotline", is one of the many information resources available to IDIS users. It is staffed from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm EST on Monday through Thursday, and from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm EST on Friday. They can be reached at 1(800)273-2573.

When contacting the Hotline, it is best to be logged on the system at the time of the call. (The TAU does not have viewing privileges for all the screens in IDIS. Your descriptions and details of what is shown, aids the TAU in comprehending and resolving the problem.)

To ensure that the TAU representative understands the exact nature of your call, be sure to have the following information available:

- the project and/or activity number
- the screen name and/or number you are on
- the exact error message you received
- any detail that would explain or describe the problem

If, for any reason, you cannot get through to the Hotline by telephone, you may fax your inquiry (including the above information), along with your name and telephone number, to: 1(202)708-3222.■

**SEPTEMBER 7TH IS A FEDERAL HOLIDAY.
IDIS AND THE TAU WILL BE UNAVAILABLE
ON THAT DAY.**

LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR TECHNICAL BULLETIN

The information contained in the Local Administrator Technical Bulletin is supplied by our HUD Security Administrator, John Mayer. He can be reached at 202-708-0790, ext. 4866.

SUDDEN DEATH

Suppose your IDIS ID, which was working just fine until a week or so ago, suddenly doesn't work. What could have happened?

Most likely, SprintLink is no longer pointing where you want it to connect you, because you've upgraded your PC or Windows and you've had to re-install SprintLink. If you don't tell SprintLink something to the contrary, after you install or re-install it, SprintLink tries to take you into Pre-Production IDIS.

To change it to Production, go to the SprintNet Security screen (where you would ordinarily enter your Sprint ID and password). Do not enter them. Click on Setup. That opens the Communications Setup screen. Go to the bottom of that screen. Be sure the "IDIS region to login" says what you want it to; i.e., "Pre-Production" if you are still practicing or if you are viewing your data, or "Production" if you are "LIVE" and want to use real data and real dollars. Also, make sure your own local area code and local exchange are entered. Save the settings and close the Communications Setup screen. Now you've got SprintLink pointing as it should.

That ought to resuscitate your "dead" ID. Suddenness is the symptom for this problem. IDIS doesn't just suddenly drop your ID without reason. So, something else had to be causing the problem.

Now, suppose following the preceding steps do not resolve the problem? What else could it be?

If you receive the message: "you are not authorized" when you try accessing IDIS, it could be that your own Local Administrator has deactivated you. (Or,

hasn't activated you in the first place). Talk with him/her and find out.

It may also be that HUD HQ has blocked you as a grantee. (In that instance, nobody at your location would be able to get into IDIS). Talk with the local CPD Representative and find out whether this has occurred and why.■

“WHAT’S MY PASSWORD?”

IDIS remembers the last three passwords you've used. It won't let you use anything TOO similar to them when you change your password. So, I suggest you decide on a set of at least FOUR distinctly different passwords. Let's call them P1, P2, P3, and P4. When P1 expires, use P2; when P2 expires, use P3; etc. If they each begin with a different character you can even write down and post that character where it will remind you what the entire password is. (Even if a criminal spy found the first letter/number of your password, there are still at least five other letters/numbers he does not know.)

It works for me in keeping track of the four separate passwords I use for the four applications I go into (and that results in a set of about sixteen different passwords I commonly use).■

Below is a **Helpful Hint** another IDIS user employs to remember her password:

I have found using dates to be pretty convenient. That way, you don't have to worry about re-using passwords too soon. You can always mark the date on your calendar (which you, of course, keep under lock and key so no one else can see it).

Peggy Lucas, Louisville Field Office

CHANGES TO IDIS LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR AUTHORITY

(On March 24, 1998, I sent out a letter to all IDIS Local Administrators. It is as current now as it was in March. It is useful for every person who uses IDIS to be aware of what it says. Below is a synopsis of its contents.)

In October 1997, a major change was made to IDIS to make it more responsive to your needs, and more under your control. You, as IDIS Local Administrators, can make changes to the access rights of local IDIS users. You are able to execute your authorizing official's decisions about levels of access for the people under his/her control, rather than sending a "REVISE FUNCTIONS" form to HUD HQ. You are able to both subtract **and add** functions except ADMINISTRATION (LOCAL) for all your PRODUCTION IDIS users.

While this change empowers you to change the access rights of local users, there still remain a few things you will not be able to do:

1. Create other Local Administrators.
2. Create new IDIS IDs.
3. Change the names of users (for marriage, divorce, etc.)

Those actions still require you to send in the IDIS Access Request Form through your local CPD Representative to HUD HQ.

In order to demonstrate that you are carrying out the decisions of the authorizing official, use the IDIS Access Request form for your own records. Keep these forms on file to document who, what, when, where, and why particular functions have been given to particular people. Continue to use this form to request the creation of new IDs, to designate IDIS Local Administrators, to change the names of users, or to change or add the grantee whose data a user will be working with.

If there are several Local Administrators in your office, your authorizing official should decide to keep no more than two (as a rule), to help keep changes to profiles under control. Remember, what one Local Administrator does, another Local Administrator can

undo. Keep changes under control by coordinating what you do with your fellow Local Administrator.

Should you wish to permanently block a person from access to IDIS, please send an e-mail to: John_Mayer@HUD.GOV, or notify your local CPD Representative.

A copy of the **IDIS Access Request Form** is attached on the last page of this IDISLive issue. Please make copies of it to use when authorizing functions to IDIS users. ■

WORD 97 VIEWER

Ta-daa!! There is now a means for all WordPerfect users to view and print the IDIS Users Manual and Release Notes that are located on the Internet.

Word 97 Viewer enables users of other word-processing software to access these documents. You can find it on the Internet by:

1. Entering the URL address of <http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/index.htm> on your web browser.
2. Scrolling down and selecting Viewer for Word 97 on PCs using Windows 95/98 or Windows NT.

Follow all instructions for downloading the viewer.

IDIS Q&A

“FIPS” CODES

Q: We are trying to add a project to our plan year and IDIS is asking for our county FIPS code. The only help I could get from my user manual was that this was a five digit number. Can anyone tell me where I can find this code?

A: Your FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standard) code is the identification code assigned for a variety of geographic entities, including American Indian and Alaska Native areas, congressional districts, counties, county subdivisions, metropolitan areas, and states. The structure, format and meaning of FIPS codes are described in the FIPS Publication, 6-3, “Counties and County Equivalents of the States of the United States.” This 5 digit code is comprised of a two digit state code and a three digit the county code.

You can find a copy of the FIPS numbers on the web at: http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/rcris/fips_code.html

There was also a copy of the codes on the Neighborhood/Community Data CDs that were sent out with the Consolidated Planning Software.■

SIGNED ON ELSEWHERE IN IDIS

Q: This morning I tried to get into IDIS to download some reports. I could not get past the selection screen. I received the “working, working, working” flashing sign. When I used the <Ctrl> <Break> and then the <Alt> <Q>, I was brought back to the beginning of IDIS. So, I went through the password process again. I received a message that read: “You are already logged on at another terminal. Sign-on cannot be performed.” I am not “signed on at another terminal,” so what do I do now? *Judy Boyd, City of Cedar Rapids, IA*

A: This message occurs when the application (IDIS) is not shut down properly (i.e., Main Menu exit). There are times when you are unable to log out

correctly or completely. When this happens, you must wait for the system to log itself out properly. Give the system approximately 20-30 minutes to release your password and ID. You can then re-access the system.■ *Tracey, HUD-TAU*

RETURNING FUNDS USING IDIS

Q: How do I return funds to an activity once they are returned to HUD?

A: Funds are returned to HUD for many reasons. An activity may have fallen through and the funds need to be sent back because there will be no draws for a couple of weeks. (For the HOME Program, a grantee has 15 days to clear the funds out of their bank accounts.) There could be an over-pay for a closing, or funds were drawn that were not needed. These funds need to be returned.

Once the grantee returns the funds to HUD and requests they be placed back into the activity from which they were originally drawn, they will appear in activity #1 for HOME, #2 for CDBG, #3 for ESG, and #4 for HOPWA. They will show as negative amounts. These negative amounts will need to be moved and placed against the original activities. The following steps are used to accomplish this:

1. Go to Maintain Drawdowns
2. In the HUD Activity Number field, place:
 - #1 - for HOME funds returned
 - #2 - for CDBG funds returned
 - #3 - for ESG funds returned
 - #4 - for HOPWA funds returned
3. Select the voucher(s) to be revised by placing a “R” before it. (The voucher(s) will have negative Drawdown amounts.)

Continue the revision process on the Revise Drawdown screen. The only difference is that the amount is preceded by a negative sign.■

CORRECTING WRONG ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Q: I made the mistake of putting an activity under the wrong project and wrong year. How do I correct this? *Deneace Joshua, Gainesville, FL*

A: One way to correct this would be to create a new activity under the right project and program year. Then, perform the Maintain Drawdown function in the Drawdown Menu to transfer the funds to the correct activity. Once this is done, the incorrect activity can be canceled. ■ *Peggy Meinel, Buffalo Field Office*

EFFECT OF PROGRAM INCOME ON ADMIN

Q: I recently did an Admin draw and was figuring for the Auditor's Office how much of the draw would be wired; taking into consideration Program Income. After I entered the draw, I noticed that it does not use Program Income and it appears that the full amount of the draw request will be wired. In looking in the User Manual, it does appear that it draws from the set aside. Am I correct in assuming that this is correct? *Karen Sneary, Lima, OH*

A: You are correct. I just did a draw yesterday against HOME Admin funds. We have a large amount of HOME Program Income entered into IDIS. I called the TAU yesterday prior to doing the draw, and they confirmed that the draw would not be funded out of the PI amount. They were correct. (Thanks Regina of the TAU for your research!) ■ *Stacy Milo, City of Bethlehem, PA*

(Editor's note: PI is only used against an EN draw. HUD is planning enhancements to IDIS that will allow more flexible use of PI. However, until this flexibility is available, HOME PJs should not enter PI receipts into IDIS unless there is an EN draw where the PI can be used.)

IDIS ACCESS LIMITATIONS

Q: If a person's access is limited to the HOME program, and that person can also request and/or

approve drawdowns, does that limited access prevent the grantee from drawing down funds for other program areas?

A: Yes. Local Administrators can limit the access of grantees in IDIS by program type. If an IDIS user with the power to request drawdowns and/or approve them is limited to the HOME program, he/she can request drawdowns and/or approve them only in HOME. However, that person can view activity data for all the programs. ■

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF IDISLIVE WILL BE
PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 1, 1998.**

IDIS LIVE GUEST COLUMN

*If you would like to submit an IDIS Live Guest Column, contact **Vera Pérez** by phone (202-708-0614, ext. 4786) or cc Mail: (Vera_A._Perez@hud.gov).*

SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE

When I started to write this article, it began as another blast at IDIS; its screens, its reports, its cumbersome nature. However, all at HUD, locally and beyond, have heard me at local training and national conferences. I could imagine them all clearly saying, “Enough already!” I reflected on what good it did to continue to complain about the shortcomings of IDIS. I hear, and I understand that IDIS is “here to stay.”

So, instead, I thought I could generate a few good suggestions that, if implemented, might serve to make IDIS work better for us all. I contacted several of my western Washington colleagues, and asked for their input on changes they would like to see in IDIS. The following is a compilation of some western Washington users’ concerns and ideas. I thank **Casey O’Connor** of King County, **Chris Smith** in the City of Bellevue, **David Shirer** of Pierce County, **Ken Black** in the City of Olympia, and **Teresa Pineda** here in Seattle for all of their thoughtful recommendations.

Some Background

Seattle has been “live” in IDIS since October 9, 1997. We have completed a performance report in IDIS. We draw our funds through IDIS (although we currently are having trouble with the HOME draws). And, we manage a Float Loan program in IDIS. Seattle is learning to administer this system, and we are progressing. For the most part.

In 1998, Seattle was awarded \$14,936,000 for its CDBG program; \$3,610,000 for HOME; \$1,324,000 for HOPWA; and \$593,000 for ESG. To the CDBG amount, Seattle adds another \$11,000,000 of its local

dollars to provide a comprehensive community development and human services program. Our housing and economic development programs, community facility and public services are provided by a healthy non-profit community with which we contract for results. The Consolidated Plan describes Seattle’s strategies for all of these funds (and more, totaling upwards of \$200 million) in a results-oriented framework. The outcomes we are investing in include the federal goals of providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities. There are also two additional areas of investment for strengthening communities, families and individuals, and promoting health and independent living. Seattle’s CAPER encompasses reporting on five of the funding sources.

A Few of the IDIS Issues

The following issues are real concerns of ours. We have outlined them and follow them up with suggested remedies.

So Many Screens. Is there any way to redesign the cascading screen approach in IDIS? Couldn’t fewer screens, like just one, or perhaps, two per activity, suffice?

Suggestion: Devise one screen that has enough space to describe an activity and, later, its accomplishments. Create another screen for the financial aspects (including the draw information).

Need for Useful Grantee Reports. We find we are not able to rely on IDIS for useful financial or other reports. Is it possible for grantees to design their own reports in IDIS?

Suggestion: Give the grantees the ability to upload balanced, correct financial data from our financial systems into IDIS. Allow grantees to design and generate their own reports from IDIS. (We need to analyze and account for the grant expenditures in our own communities, also.)

Issue of Re-Keying Information. This one is really troublesome. We key data into the Community 2020 software (an impressive, sophisticated software

system, by the way) for the annual Action Plan. Then, we have to reenter similar or, in most cases, the same data into IDIS.

Suggestion: Develop the capability to upload the data in the Consolidated Plan's Action Plan table in Community 2020 into IDIS. Include some sort of automatic relationship to the Con Plan's numbering scheme.

(Editor's note: Although this capability is not currently available to grantees, they may send their C2020 files to: Anita_M._Obarakpor@hud.gov. She will ensure that they are loaded.)

Space for Activities and Accomplishment Data.

We found the spacing to describe activities and accomplishments was so inadequate that some staff did not leave spaces between words!

Suggestion: Increase the space or lines available to report on activities, and describe accomplishments and census tracts served.

Quarterly Reports. I hear there's a move afoot to have us complete accomplishment data on a quarterly basis. How does HUD plan to use that much data? What does this mean to the grantee's in terms of staff time and grant administration?

Suggestion: Please, no mandatory quarterly reports! Four Grantee Performance Reports a year are three too many. Enhance the system to include effective reporting and management of Program Income (that does not negate cumulative costs).

Download Data from IDIS. We have been kicked out of IDIS at crucial times (for example, in "GPR" preparation) because, presumably, the system was overloaded.

Suggestion: The ability to download IDIS data would permit us to work on it at our leisure (including after 5:00 p.m. here on the west coast). Then, reload it when completed. We would not have to remain on-line.

Miscellaneous. There are still some general issues that have not yet been resolved in the continuing design of IDIS: separation of Revolving Loan Fund program income from Float Loan program income; ability to operate a Float Loan Program without having to finagle the system; "help screens" for those screens or cells *must* be filled out in order to proceed; and a look at the information the system needs in the multi-unit close-out screens

The above issues are real. The suggested improvements are meant to be helpful. I would be most interested in knowing which, if any, of these are likely to be implemented over time. My colleagues and I will continue to work with each other to learn this system. We may well come up with further suggestions for improvement. We would be happy to work with HUD on them as we feel they could benefit us all.

Seattle and the communities in the Northwest will continue to manage IDIS. We will work with it to accommodate our particular complexities and program singularities. I remain disappointed, yet, optimistic. A system utilizing the full technology of the 1990s, could be of benefit to both HUD and its grantees; giving HUD the information it wants while allowing us to perform and report on the real work of these programs.■

Submitted by Claire F. Henning, CDBG Administrator, City of Seattle

(IDIS Director's note: Thank you very much for your article and the constructive suggestions.

—Joel Dean)

NORTHERN EXPOSURE TO IDIS

The State of Alaska was among the first group of states to be converted to the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS). Actual conversion took place on June 16, 1998. The conversion process began in February, by sending two state employees, one from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) which administers the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and one from the Department of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) which administers the CDBG and ESG programs, to regional IDIS training.

As the impending conversion loomed closer, we worked with the trainers from TONYA, Inc. and our Field Office to schedule IDIS site training in Alaska. It was conducted approximately three weeks prior to "live" conversion. As recommended by HUD, it is a good idea to coincide the local site training with "live" conversion shortly thereafter. The only significant problem encountered during the local site training dealt with regard to user ID codes and

passwords. Be sure to send HUD the security access code set-up forms at least thirty days prior to use, but not so far in advance that they are terminated by HUD due to non-use. Also, be sure that the access codes you receive contain six digits.

Once we were able to access actual State data, it became clear that use of IDIS was more complex than originally anticipated. While the regional training sessions were thorough, they use only an isolated number of "projects" and "activities". Additionally, although the training discusses "subrecipient," "state recipient," and CHDO set-aside, administrative, and operating expense reservations, the ramifications and complexity of the State IDIS system structure cannot be fully appreciated until State personnel actually use the live data. In particular, linking a newly set-up activity (formerly known as a "project" to HOME personnel) to the correct funding source can be cumbersome, confusing, and highly prone to error. It can be accomplished, but only with extreme care and a thorough knowledge of the system and the many funding reservations which have been set up.

Upon going "live", it is necessary to review each activity to ensure that converted activity data is correct and/or appropriate. A portion of the available data fields for converted HOME activities did not contain data. Generally, these fields do not appear critical, but are more information oriented, i.e., description of activity, etc. In the case of converted "subrecipient" activities, certain activity data is converted identifying the name of the subrecipient, not the actual activity owner's name (for example, the homeowner's name in a rehabilitation activity). If you desire the owner's name instead of the subrecipient's, you must amend these fields for each activity. Additionally, we found that numerous activities were converted with improper funding amounts which differed from the actual commitment amount which was specified elsewhere in the activity data. The bottom line -- review all converted data to ensure its accuracy.

(Editor's note: A system "fix" in August corrected commitment data in the conversion program.)

State Program Administrators (IDIS "czars" as we were called at regional training) should also immediately check to see if they have been given this designation by HUD's security office. This distinction allows the Program Administrator to set

up other user's access ability to various IDIS screens and functions.

After completing the initial review and correction of converted data, AHFC requested various HOME reports using the reporting menu. When viewing the variety of "standard" reports available, it is not clear what information will be derived with the named reports. Once you specify the reports desired, you must request them to be "run," and then download them on to your PC. Be prepared to format the reports. Apparently, states can set up a template into which the reports can be downloaded. Once you have formatted the template, subsequent formatting can be minimized. It is not clear why HUD will not send "participating jurisdictions" monthly standard reports, as was the practice under CMIS. I have suggested this to our Field Office. I do note one enhancement to what used to be the standard CMIS HOME overview (#C47CAA) report. The new IDIS report does provide "CHDO Reservations" and "Other Reservations" in a manner that more clearly identifies "Total Commitments" made by the State. This should prove beneficial in future commitment analysis.

After final review and correction of the converted data, we began to set-up new activities. This process has generally gone well, except for the funding linkages that were mentioned earlier. The input process does seem to ask for redundant data, depending on the nature of a state's project and activity structure. This results in double input of the same data on different input screens; with an increase in input time.

It is interesting to reflect on the reasons which were stated by HUD in convincing states of the necessity to convert to IDIS. If my recollection is correct, the premise was based on the need to access State data at any given time for the purpose of reporting to Congress. Of course states now have this data capability as well. It also eliminated the Voice Response System method of "calling in" activities (formerly "projects") and drawing down funds. The main data benefit appears to be in the areas of the CCBG and ESG programs. However, from the viewpoint of the HOME program, activity and commitment data available on IDIS is about the same as compared to the CMIS data reported. Additional data is available in terms of a state's project plan.

However, this data was already available as part of the Housing and Community Development (HCD) Plan approval process. The benefit to the HOME program appears to be at the expense of state costs and efforts in maintaining and using the system.

The CDBG Program Administrator has indicated similar IDIS experiences. In addition, she indicated that although she was told at regional and local training sessions that she should (and could) set up her projects and activities on IDIS in a manner that she felt best suited her program, HUD Field Office staff have since indicated to her that the project and activity set-up structure did not allow HUD to retrieve desired data in a manner that was consistent with HCD Plan priorities. They have subsequently asked her to amend her set-up structure.

In summary, there are benefits to IDIS. Mainly, these include not having to use the Voice Response System, and having more immediate data retrieval and reporting ability. The down side is that these improvements are diminished by more complex set-up and drawdown processes which have become state responsibilities. IDIS does work, but it may not be a user-friendly system for states with large, complex subrecipient or other forms of "non-entitlement" reservations. I have suggested to our Field Office certain improvements which I believe would be beneficial. These suggestions include the formation of a post-conversion user committee made up of converted state staff and HUD IDIS managers and programmers. They could prove to be very useful in discussing and mitigating the problems that result during the conversion, as well as, live use of the system. With time, IDIS can and will be improved. In the interim, prepare to spend a great deal of time understanding and using the current system.■

*Submitted by Jeff Judd, HOME Program Manager,
Alaska Housing Finance Corporation*

The Create Drawdown process of the IDIS system has been enhanced to make the process easier. This change went into effect on July 24, 1998, with Release 3.4.9. The new method displays all grants associated with the activity. This allows the user to select the grant and enter the amount to be drawn.

Three screens are used to perform the Create Drawdown process. The first screen is used to enter the activity to receive the drawdown (up to 15 activities can be entered). The second screen displays all the grants that the Activity Funding function has associated with the activity. The user selects the desired grant(s) and enters the amount to be drawn from the grant for the activity. The third screen displays all the selected grants and their drawn amounts. After review by the user, the drawdown voucher can be generated.

Step-by-Step:

1. Use the first Create Drawdowns screen (C04MD10) to identify activity(ies) to receive drawdowns.
2. Enter the appropriate **HUD Activity Number**. (You can enter up to 15 activity numbers.)
3. When finisher, press<Enter>. The second Create Drawdowns screen (C04MD11) appears. (Use this screen to associate the grant with the proper activity, and to enter the actual drawdown dollar amount for the selected grant/activity combinations.)
4. Enter the **amount** to be drawn down from the associated grant/activity combination. Be sure to press <Enter> to save any entered data before you page up or down.
5. Press **F20** (grantees press **Shift F8**) to initiate the drawdown request.
6. Press **F20** again. Review the amounts entered for the selected combinations on the following C04MD10 screen. To revise an entered amount, press **F7** to return to screen C04MD11. Make the correction, press **F20** once. Review the change displayed on the C04MD10 screen.
7. After reviewing the data, press **F20** to accept the drawdown.

The drawdown process is complete when a voucher number is displayed at the bottom of the screen.■

ENHANCED DRAWDOWN PROCESS

FUTURE USER GROUP MEETINGS

REMEMBER THESE DATES!

IDIS HUD experts will be present at the upcoming events:

National Association for County Community and Economic Development's 23rd Annual Conference

September 12-16, 1998
Hyatt Regency Wichita
Sedgwick County, KS

For more information, please contact:

Shawna La Rue

Community and Economic Development Director
Phone: 202/429-5118
Fax: 202/857-1111

National Community Development Association's Region VI Annual Conference

October 6-9, 1998
Beaumont Hilton
Beaumont, TX

To receive more information, please contact:

John Beatty

City of Beaumont
Phone: 409/880-3786
Fax: 409/880-3129

Third National HIV/AIDS Housing Conference

September 17-18, 1998
Hyatt Regency
Atlanta, GA

To register for the meeting, please contact:

Jennifer Harris

AIDS Housing of Washington
Phone: 206/448-5242
Fax: 206/441-9485

Fall Meeting of the Ohio Conference of Community Development

October 28-29, 1998
Four Points Sheraton
Columbus, OH

More information is available from:

Susan Walsh

Deputy Director of Community Development
Hamilton County
Phone: 513/946-4882
Fax: 513/946-4919

Fall Meeting of the Florida Community Development Association

October 1-2, 1998
Peabody Hotel
Orlando, FL

For more information, contact:

Jennifer Thomas

Deputy Director of Community Development
City of Daytona Beach
Phone: 904/258-3175
Fax: 904/39-6626

UPCOMING TRAINING:

HUD'S LATEST TRAINING TOOL: IDIS CD-ROM

Are you just learning IDIS? Are you already "live" yet need additional practice? Are you an IDIS master, but still would like to review and hone your skills? If you've answered "Yes" to any of these scenarios, HUD's latest training tool is ideal for you!

Coming soon to you from your Field Office is a new CD-ROM that is geared toward CDBG users of IDIS but helpful to users of other programs (i.e., HOME, ESG, and HOPWA) in learning the system's functionality. This narrated, self-guided instruction provides an interactive means to learn about and utilize IDIS to your full advantage. With the step-by-step lessons, you are able to practice using IDIS as if you were actually accessing data on the mainframe! At your own skill level and pace, set up activities, draw down funds, add new projects, and download reports. Detailed information, audio directions, and a glossary will further enhance your IDIS knowledge base.

So, whether you're an IDIS beginner or a seasoned pro, look for HUD's CD-ROM soon.

IDIS GRANTEE TRAINING

Training dates and sites through September 1998 are listed below. Contact TONYA, Inc. (202-289-8100), for specific information about each meeting.

Training Dates		
	Entitlements	States
September—Washington, D.C.	8/31-9/1	2-3
October—Phoenix, AZ	6-7 and 8-9	

IDIS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR STATES

If you are associated with a State and have not yet scheduled your visit or received written confirmation of the dates, please call **Jon Kunz** of TONYA, Inc., at 202-289-8100.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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

Internet: Lincoln_Burruss@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 ID and password reset**, call HUD Security at 202-708-3300.

This form is to be completed by the recipient's (or grantee's) chief executive officer or designated representative. **Send notarized original to your local HUD CPD Field Office for review and forwarding to:**

**U.S. Dept of HUD, CPD
451 7th St, SW, Rm 7224
Washington, DC 20410
ATTN: IDIS Sys Admin FAX: 202-708-3363**

Privacy Act Statement: Public Law 97-255, Financial Integrity Act, 31 U.S.C. 3512, authorizes the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to collect all the information which will be used by HUD to protect disbursement data from fraudulent actions. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, 42 U.S.C. 3543 authorizes HUD to collect the SSN. The purpose of the data is to safeguard the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) from unauthorized access. The data are used to ensure that individuals who no longer require access to IDIS have their access capability promptly deleted. Provision of the SSN is mandatory. HUD uses it as a unique identifier for safeguarding IDIS from unauthorized access. This information will not be otherwise disclosed or released outside of HUD, except as permitted or required by law. Failure to provide the information requested on the form may delay the processing of your approval for access to IDIS.

* REVISE FUNCTIONS ___ OTHER REVISION ___ RENEWAL ___ NEW REQUEST ___
Authorized User's Name: (Last, First, MI) _____

Soc Sec Num (SSN): _____ Office Phone: (____) _____

Office Address: (Street, City, State, Zip)

Grantee Organization's Name: _____ **
I am with the CITY __ COUNTY __ STATE __

* **ALWAYS MARK ALL THE FUNCTIONS NEEDED.** Note: Every IDIS user can view activities and get reports.

Authorized Set Up Activity ___ Request Drawdown ___ Approve Drawdown ___
Functions/ Local IDIS Administrator ___
Program Areas: CDBG ___ ESG ___ HOME ___ HOPWA ___

Authorized User's Signature and Date: _____ Date _____

Field Office Approval (CPD Director or Designee): _____ Date _____

(NOTE: You can't authorize yourself, only your CEO or "grant holder" can.)
I authorize the person above to access IDIS, with the functions checked

Notary (Signature and Date):

Approved by: Name _____
(please type) Title _____

Office Phone:(____) _____

Office Address: (Street, City, State, Zip)

Approving Official's Signature and Date:

** State Approval of Subgrantee Request (Signature and Date, if applicable)

Warning: HUD will prosecute false claims and statements. Conviction may result in criminal and/or civil penalties. (18 U.S.C. 1001, 1010, 1012; 31 U.S.C. 3729, 3802)