

IDIS LIVE

...for the Integrated Disbursement and Information System

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Community Planning and Development

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE HEARS TESTIMONY ON HUD'S GRANTS MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

On Thursday, April 29, 1999, Assistant Secretary Cardell Cooper testified on the Office of Community Planning and Development's (CPD) Grants Management System before the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation. Stanley Czerwinski, General Accounting Office, David Robinson, Lake County, Illinois, and Susan Elkins, State of Louisiana, also testified during the hearing. The hearing focused on HUD's management challenges.

Assistant Secretary Cooper began his testimony with an overview of CPD's Grants Management Process for its four formula grant programs: CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA. He acknowledged "that HUD is in the business of more than awarding grants. CPD realized that it had to devise a strategy and plan for assisting communities realize the goals and objectives identified in their Consolidated Plans and hold them accountable for the proper expenditure of public funds." This led to the creation of GMP, the goal of which is to "ensure grantee performance is being assessed throughout the year by supplementing on-site monitoring of grantees with remote monitoring of key documents and information."

The Assistant Secretary admitted problems with the implementation of the Grants Management System (GMS) and IDIS, stating "CPD is committed to and in the process of addressing these problems." He noted that "the most critical problem with GMS was related to the dual and conflicting roles of CPD field staff." This problem was eliminated under HUD Management Reform 2020. The Public Trust and

Community Builder functions have been separated and respective responsibilities clearly delineated. The Assistant Secretary also announced that CPD, in a continuing effort to improve GMS, is in the process of revising the GMP Policy Notebook, is developing a companion self-training and reference guide for staff and grantees on the Grants Management Process, and will increase the number of on-site monitoring visits in FY 99 threefold over those conducted in FY 98 to approximately 300.

Turning to IDIS, Assistant Secretary Cooper noted that IDIS has disbursed \$7.145 billion to date, at a rate of approximately \$4.5 billion a year. Currently, there are approximately 130,000 projects and 382,000 activities;.....continued on page 2

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with 8,000 grantee users and 5,000 HUD employee users in the system. The Assistant Secretary announced that problems associated with its implementation phase have been identified and are being addressed through the **IDIS Stabilization Plan**. Examples of the items that are addressed in the plan include: log-on messages, a pre-production practice area; a faster system; a cash to accrual accounting system; and a revolving loan fund program.

The Assistant Secretary also acknowledged “the importance of outreach to (CPD’s) partners in the communities that we serve. It is through such interaction that we can identify our successes and problem areas. CPD senior officials and staff have conducted 50 meetings with various public interest groups and user groups since February 1996.” Assistant Secretary Cooper ended his testimony by reiterating that CPD is “committed to taking management steps to improve the functionality of both IDIS and GMS.”

Stanley Czerwinski, Associate Director of Resources, Community and Economic Development Division, General Accounting Office, testified on the findings of its recent audit of HUD management controls. He detailed “a number of recommendations designed to improve GMS, including emphasizing the importance of on-site monitoring of grantees and assessing resources necessary to support such monitoring.”

GAO’s testimony was followed by that of David Robinson, a Senior Planner with the Lake County Planning and Development Department, representing the National Community Development Association and the National Association for County Community and Economic Development. Mr. Robinson testified that “IDIS replaces less efficient tools for managing information about grantees. It also gathers more information and information of a higher quality than was previously available on grantees’ activities.” He also stated that HUD has tried to improve communication with its grantees and has made a point of including grantees in the review of the substantial rewrite of the IDIS user’s manual. In addition to communication, Mr. Robinson cited other concerns about the system that grantees want addressed.

The final testimony of the day came from Susan Elkins, Director of the Division of Community Development for the State of Louisiana, on behalf of the Council of State Community Development Agencies. Ms. Elkins began her testimony by noting, “States want to see HUD have the ability to produce accurate and timely reports, and want to be recognized by HUD as partners in the delivery of programs that are so important to our citizens.” She concluded her testimony by saying that the States want to partner with HUD to achieve the worthy goal of having a system which will allow accurate and timely reporting of the impact of CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA on the lives of million of low- to moderate-income people in this country.

The full text of the hearing can be found at: http://www.senate.gov/~banking/99_04hr/042999/witness.htm.■

HOME CHANGES IN PSEUDO

Changes to the HOME completion path were released into the Pseudo region on April 28, 1999. These changes implement recommendations by IDIS users for reorganizing and renumbering the screens, eliminating redundant data entry, and providing warning messages to prevent the entering of inappropriate information. HOME’s completion paths for Rental, Homeownership Assistance, and Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance have been enhanced. The primary changes are listed below.

Common to Each Path:

- If the HOME funds reported by the Participating Jurisdiction (PJ) in Completion Path screens MH08 (Rental Path), MH19 (Homeownership Assistance path), or MH10 (Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance path) do not equal HOME funds disbursed in IDIS, a warning message will pop up alerting the user of the need to rectify this discrepancy.
- IDIS has edits to ensure consistency of codes between the vacancy code and the other codes for the HOME characteristic data. If the unit occupancy is coded as 9 (vacant), now there must

be a 9 (vacant) for household's size, head of household, and rent assistance. As has been the case, if the unit occupancy is coded as 9 (vacant), the system requires a user to input 9 for % median, and allows tenant contribution, subsidy amount, and race/ethnicity to remain blank. When unit occupancy is changed from vacant to occupied, all of the above listed fields are highlighted for the PJ to enter new information.

- Total HOME Funds on completion screens (MH09, MH11 and MH18) no longer include a fund type 3, Program Income (PI), for the PJ to report. Instead, the PI information is taken from IDIS and reported automatically on these screens.
- To enter any of the three completion paths, the tenure type established under setup must be appropriate. For Rental, the tenure type must be 1. For Homeownership Assistance, the type must be 2 or 3. For Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance, the type must be 2 or 3.
- Completion screens for Homeownership Assistance MH05, Rental MH07 and Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance MH15 include fields for FHA_INSURED, ACCESSIBLE_504, and NUM_504_UNITS.

Rental Path

- To allow for a more logical flow of data entry, the screens will appear in the following order: Rental Completion MH07, HOME Funds by Type MH08, HOME Funds by Public Private Source MH09, Location Address MH12 and HOME Characteristic MH13.

Homeownership Assistance Path

Use this path when entering completion information for a single activity which has only one homeownership unit.

- To allow for a more logical flow of data entry, the screens will appear in the following order: Homeownership Assistance MH05, HOME Funds for Property Costs MH17, HOME Completion Downpayment Assistance MH19, HOME Funds Total Activity Cost MH18, and HOME Characteristic Data MH14.

Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance Path

Use this path when entering completion information for a single activity with two or more homeownership units and that is on land held in one ownership prior to project completion, such as a subdivision or condominium.

- In Multi-Unit Homeownership cost screen MH16, the user may choose from among fund types 1, 2, and 4 - 9, but 3 (Program Income) is no longer available.
- Screens MH08 and MH09 have been amended and renamed, MH10 and MH11 respectively, to distinguish them from MH08 and MH09 in the Homeownership Assistance path. The screen order is rearranged to allow for a more logical flow of data entry. Screens appear in the following order: Multi-Unit Homeownership completion MH15, Location/Address MH12, Multi-Unit Homeownership Cost MH16, HOME Characteristics MH14, Summary HOME funds by Fund Type MH10, and HOME funds by Public Private Source MH11.
- Summary data on Multi-Unit Homeownership cost, MH10 and MH14, no longer need to be entered by PJs. This is now computed by IDIS.
- In the Multi-Unit Homeownership Assistance Completion screen MH12, the user may delete a location/address; however, the related fields entered for Multi-Unit Homeownership cost MH16 and characteristics MH14 will also be deleted. Prior to this deletion, the system will display a message stating "cost data and characteristic data will be deleted along with the location, press F13 to confirm deletion or press enter."

All users are encouraged to review these changes in Pseudo and provide feedback prior to their introduction into the IDIS Production region. Comments should be sent to David Leopold at david_d_leopold@hud.gov or John Nagoski at john_a_nagoski@hud.gov.■

Submitted by David Leopold, Office of Affordable Housing Programs, HUD

SUMMARY: RELEASE NOTES

VERSION 4.5

The following IDIS fixes were released to the **Production** system environment and were available for use on Monday, April 19, 1999 at the start of business. The fixes affecting users are summarized for your quick reference.

1. Modified Field Titles On The Admin Funds Subgranting Screens.

Two Subgrant Menu options have been renamed to more accurately reflect the purpose of the subgranting function. The "Create Admin Funds" and "Maintain Admin Funds" options are now titled "Create Subfunds" and "Maintain Subfunds." This change has also been applied to all of the screens accessed from the Subgrant Menu.

2. Fixed The Problem Where The Pull-up Screen Overlaid The Drawdown Screen.

The Grantee List pop-up screen (C04MF08) no longer overlays the Activity Listing screen (C04MD02).

3. Corrected Receipt Cancel Processing In Program Income.

A problem with canceling program income receipts on the Update/Cancel Program Income screen (C04MI02) has been fixed with a database correction.

4. Corrected Problems On The ESG Grantee Summary Report.

Two errors on the ESG Grantee Summary Report (C04PR20) have been fixed. The report now includes projects from plan years 1996 and 1997, and the calculations for committed and disbursed amounts have been corrected.

5. Corrected Problems In Program Income Processing.

a) Receipts for already-drawn program income can no longer be canceled. For example, say two PI receipts were entered for activity 365—one for \$1,000 and another for \$200—and that \$1,200 of that PI has already been drawn. It is no longer possible to cancel either of the two receipts.

b) Program income receipt amounts can now be entered in dollars AND cents.

6. Fixed A Problem Where Grantees Entered Projects For 1994 But No Associated Plans.

IDIS automatically "creates" a 1994 Consolidated Plan for those that may not have been created during conversion to the system.

7. Corrected UOG Entry Problem.

A Field Office is now limited to specifying Unit Of Government codes for the grantees within its jurisdiction.

8. Fixed The Drawdown Voucher Summary Report Which May Have Been Missing Some Vouchers.

The Drawdown Voucher Summary Report (C04PR07) has been modified to include information about all pertinent vouchers.

The revamped Summary of Consolidated Plan Projects report, PR06 (commonly called the CAPER report), was scheduled for this Production release. However, it will remain in Pseudo Production until such time as the Field Offices and Desk Officers have had time to review it and provide their comments on its effectiveness. ■

PSEUDO RELEASE NOTES

VERSION 4.5P1: SUMMARY

More system enhancements and corrections were released in IDIS **Pseudo-Production** on April 28, 1999, and are available for user testing. We encourage you to do so. Please call the TAU at 1-800-273-2573 with your comments and recommendations.

NEW FEATURES

Copy/Move Activity Data. Using the Revise Activity option, you can now copy the setup data from an existing activity to a new activity. Then, instead of having to rekey all the setup data for the new activity, you only have to modify the data you've copied. This new feature also lets you copy or move activity setup data from one project to another.

CDBG Financial Summary Report. This report consists of five sections:

Summary of CDBG Resources

Identifies the funds available to the grantee

Summary of CDBG Expenditures

Identifies funds the grantee has expended

Low/Mod Benefit

Identifies the amount expended to benefit low/moderate income persons

Public Service Cap Calculation

Identifies the calculations used to determine the compliance with the cap (limit) on funds

Planning and Program Administration Cap Calculation

Identifies the calculations used to determine the compliance with the cap on funds.

New HOME State Report. This report (C04PR29) is designed to assist States in determining the accuracy of their existing HOME funds data prior to converting to IDIS. The report provides basic financial information for each activity (HOME "project"), along with identifying codes from the HOME CM/I system and IDIS.

ESG Racial/Ethnic Characteristics Screen. A screen for collecting racial/ethnic data about the average number of beneficiaries served yearly has been added to the ESG path. The new screen (C04ME07) is displayed after ESG Beneficiaries screen C04ME02 and before ESG Beneficiaries screen C04ME03.

HOPWA Racial/Ethnic Characteristics Screen. A screen for collecting racial/ethnic data about the total number of beneficiaries receiving housing assistance has been added to the HOPWA path. The new screen (C04MP12) is displayed after the HOPWA Housing Assistance screen (C04MP05) and before the HOPWA Assistance screen (C04MP06).

ENHANCEMENTS

Enhanced HOME Completion Paths. User recommendations for improving the three HOME activity completion paths (Rental, Single-Unit Homeownership, and Multi-Unit Homeownership) have been implemented. *See David Leopold's article on page 2 for details.*

Larger Input Field for Accomplishment UNITS. On Activity Setup screen C04MA04, the proposed and actual UNITS input fields have been increased from four digits to nine digits.

CDBG Unliquidated Obligations Input Field Accepts Dollars AND Cents. Previously, only whole dollar amounts could be entered in the Unliquidated Obligations field on CDBG Activity screen C04MC01.

CAPERS Report Renamed and Rewritten. The name of the CAPERS report (C04PR06) has been changed to Summary of Consolidated Plan Projects. The revised report contains these columns:

Funding Sources

The program(s)—CDBG, ESG, HOME, HOPWA—providing (or planning to provide) funding for the project. There is one line for each program that has contributed funds.

Project Estimate

The estimated cost of carrying out all of the activities in the project; the source of these estimates is the grantee's Consolidated Plan

Funds Committed

The total dollars committed (through the Activity Funding function) for all activities in the project.

Funds Drawdown Through Report Year

The total dollars drawn down for project activities from the project start date through the report year (the user specifies the report year on the Reports Selection screen).

Balance

The difference between the total dollars committed and total dollars drawn (dollars committed minus dollars drawn) for project activities through the report year.

Funds Drawdown in Report Year

The total dollars drawn down for project activities during the report year.

Data Elements Added to Downloaded Files.

Five new fields have been added to all downloaded files:

INSERT-USER-ID—the ID of the user who added the record

INSERT-DT—the date the record was added

INSERT-TM—the time the record was added

UPDT-USER-ID—the ID of the user who last updated the record

UPDT-TMSTMP—the date and time the record was last updated

Two HOME download files also contain new data elements:

The HOME Activity file (M_ACT) now includes SETUP-DATE and COMPLETION-DATE

The HOME TBRA Activity file (M_TBRA_ACT) now includes SETUP-DATE

Complete layouts for all files are provided in Appendix C of the *IDIS User Manual*.

HOME Program Office Download, Phase 3.

Download enhancements and corrections requested by the HOME program office at

Headquarters have been implemented. Included is a downloaded draw that is split into a draw and a draw history.

Report Selection from Multiple Screens. Reports can now be selected from any of the three pages of the Report Selection screen and submitted at the same time. Choose as many reports as you like by selecting the report with an “x” and entering an “i” in the Priority field to indicate when you want the report to run. Press <ENTER> on each page to confirm the selection(s). Press <F9> once to submit the selected reports.

Improved Program Income Screen Edits. The edits for a valid FISCAL YEAR on the Create and Update/Cancel Program Income Receipt screens (C04MI01 and C04MI03) have been improved, as have the edits for a valid Receipt Number on Query Program Income Fund screen C04MI02.

Updated Summary of Accomplishments Report. The criteria used to select drawdown data to be included in the Summary of Accomplishments report (C04PR23) have been revised. Those criteria are now the same used to select draw data for the Summary of Activities report (C04PR03).

Ongoing System Performance Improvements. Four “behind-the-scenes” changes to improve system performance have been implemented.

CORRECTIONS

A date is printed in DATE OF LAST DRAWDOWN on the Grantee Summary Activity report (C04PR08) only if a draw has been made for the activity.

The Security Report (C04PR30) can now be downloaded.

An additional column, Voucher Status Code, has been added to the Program Income Detail report (C04PR09) to indicate the status of each program income receipt. The PI receipt status

codes are ADD (added), MOD (modified), and CAN (canceled).

Pressing <F7> on the Reports Status screen (C04MU16) no longer causes an abend.

Several corrections have been made to the editing and display of data on the HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Setup screen (C04MH06). Conditions that previously caused database errors have also been corrected.

Access to Consolidated Plan/Project functions (Main Menu Option J) is now restricted to entitlement communities and State grantees.

Activity Setup processing has been restricted when the sum of a grantee's activity estimates exceeds the sum of available grants. A message will be displayed on Activity Setup screen C04MA08 when this condition is detected.

The list of valid grant SOURCE TYPES has been expanded to include all types of ESG grants.

<F1> processing on Activity setup/revise/view screens now works as intended when the key is used more than once in the same session.

On the Grantee Inquire/Update/Add screen (C04MU06), input to the STATE field now gets saved in the database. Also, this screen now displays the correct date and time.

On Maintain Plan screen C04MK08, input to the GRANTEE CONTACT TELEPHONE field now gets saved correctly in the database when the <F7> key is pressed.

Previously, invalid dates in the INITIAL FUNDING DATE on common path screen C04MA03 and FUNDS TO BE RECEIVED DATE on CDBG setup screen C04MC01, could result in an abend or database error. Now, an error message is shown requesting the user to verify the accuracy of the date displayed.

An error in the calculation of TOTAL DRAWN AMT on Drawdown screen C04MD51 has been corrected.

On User Information/Profile screen C04MU01, function keys now operate as intended, ACTIVATION DATE is recalculated only when the ACTIVE/INACTIVE USER field is changed, and the display of fields protected from input has been standardized. In addition, errors in the update of three security audit trail fields (these are not displayed on any screen) have been fixed.

An error message ("Cannot Cancel; Funds Have Been Drawn") that was incorrectly displayed on View Activity screen C04MA54 has been removed.

An error that prevented users from being able to complete processing of certain activities on the HOME Homeowner/Rental Assistance screen (C04MH02) has been fixed.

An error on Activity Setup screen C04MA04 that prevented the activity status code from being displayed has been corrected.

Conditions causing the error messages "Data in Error" and "SQL 803" to be displayed on the Area Benefit Data screen (C04MX03) have been corrected.

An error that resulted in Field Offices being unable to add records for new subrecipients via Utilities Menu option 1 (Grantee ID/Exceptions) has been fixed.

On the Subgrant Allocation screen (C04MG01), an error in the value displayed for Subrecipient Type has been corrected.

EDI processing of CDBG "LMJ" batch transactions has been corrected.■

“MIXED USE” APPROACH FOR STATES IN IDIS

Full State participation in IDIS continues to be a priority for HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo and Assistant Secretary of Community Planning and Development Cardell Cooper. They have announced that States should continue making preparations to switch over to IDIS by December 1999. (*Please see IDIS Live #26.*)

State feelings on the subject vary. Many State administrators of the HOME program want to use IDIS, while many administering the State CDBG program do not. In an effort to accommodate HOME grantees, CPD would like to move States into IDIS under a “mixed use” approach. Because the conversion process requires all of a grantee’s programs and grants to be converted at the same time, the only way interested HOME program managers can use IDIS is to bring CDBG into IDIS. The approach for CDBG is to have States use IDIS as if it were the Voice Response System. That is:

- the States utilizing the HOME program would use IDIS as it is designed to be used (setting up projects and activities and drawing funds at the activity level, then reporting accomplishments at the activity level).
- the States utilizing the CDBG program would use IDIS the same way they currently use the Voice Response System - like an ATM. They would set up one project and one activity. Funds would be drawn from IDIS and accomplishments would be reported via the Performance Evaluation Report (PER).

CPD stresses that this is an **interim** arrangement applicable while they and the State CDBG managers resolve issues about getting the State CDBG programs to use IDIS to draw funds and report accomplishments at the activity level.

While CPD is also concerned about State ESG and State HOPWA use of IDIS, we are focusing on HOME program participation because CPD can then eliminate the HOME Cash Management and Information System and the cost of supporting it.

Note: States already “live” **do not** have the option of using the one project method to draw money. This is for new States going “live” and it is not permanent. For more information on this, please contact Bob Meehan at 202/708-0790 ext.4412 or Sam Walker at 202/708-0790 ext.3883.■

EDI PHASE II: UPDATE

HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) and the Office of Information Technology (IT) continue their steady progress on implementing Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) capabilities for IDIS. When complete, Phase II of EDI will allow the user to create IDIS projects and activities via EDI. The user will then receive an 864 error message via EDI containing the HUD generated project and activity IDs. (Note: “error” message does not necessarily connote a problem. In this instance, the returned record is a flag to the user to update the local database with the project or activity ID.) By adding the ability to receive the HUD IDs, the user will no longer be burdened with having to look them up in IDIS so they can update their local database.

EDI Phase II development began on 4/26/99 and is scheduled to be completed in mid-June.

While the EDI Phase II software is being refined, Mitas Group Inc., a software vendor who developed an EDI interface with IDIS, is preparing to go to work on EDI Phase I with their pilot, Westchester County, New York. To date, the IT staff have received a test data file from Westchester County and are in the process of performing quality assurance checks. Once it has been approved for accuracy, live data will be transferred followed by a live data check.

We will keep you informed of developments in EDI as they occur. In the meantime, an overview of EDI has been developed to give users more insight into the EDI process. The overview includes a slide show presentation and is available on the Web at http://www.hud.gov/cpd/idis/edi_home.html.■

Y2K UPDATE

CPD's Business Process Continuity Contingency Plan (BPCCP) for the Year 2000

In an aggressive attempt to make sure that the Y2K impact on business operations is kept at a minimum, CPD has recently updated and expanded its BPCCP to go beyond a potential Y2K date failure in IDIS and LOCCS. The BPCCP is CPD's Y2K backup strategy. It incorporates a combination of advance planning and manual processing procedures to ensure that grants will still be disbursed in the unlikely event of a system date failure on January 1, 2000. Highlights of the BPCCP are:

- the formula allocations will be done by mid-December if Congress appropriates timely;
- grantees will be encouraged to plan in advance and draw enough money to cover their needs through the first two weeks of January 2000;
- backup manual processing procedures are in place if there is a date failure AND if the failure is not restored by mid-January.

Field Offices will be briefed in June on the details of the BPCCP and, in October 1999, grantees will receive notices and instructions on advance planning.■

HUD has already begun budgeting for year 2000 IDIS operations and training. The Departmental Grants Management System (DGMS) will not have much effect on IDIS in FY 2000 because DGMS will not replace IDIS until December 31, 2001. As you are aware, the DGMS project will provide a Department-wide, automated grants system that will manage all of HUD's grant programs.

The DGMS team will begin pilot tests on the new system this November. These tests will go through the spring of 2000. Around July 1, 2000, the first HUD grantees will be brought onto the system. During the subsequent eighteen months, the remaining HUD users will be brought aboard. That process will bring the project to its planned target date of 12/31/01 for full absorption of IDIS into the DGMS system.■

MEMORIAL DAY IS MAY 31ST. IDIS AND THE TAU WILL BE UNAVAILABLE ON THAT DATE IN OBSERVANCE OF THE FEDERAL HOLIDAY.

DGMS: ABSORBING IDIS IN 2001

THE HOPWA PAGE

The HOPWA Page spotlights issues pertinent to the HOPWA program. For further information, please contact Harry Garte, Senior CPD Representative, HIV Housing Specialist with the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing in the HUD Florida State Office at (305) 536-5678 ext.2260 or by e-mail at Harry_A._Garte@hud.gov.

HOPWA HIGHLIGHTS

IDIS & HOPWA Training: Third National HOPWA Formula Grantees Meeting

Mark your calendars now!! In collaboration with AIDS Housing of Washington, the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing will be hosting the 1999 National Meeting of HOPWA Formula Grantees to be held on September 26-29, 1999 in Baltimore, MD. This is the largest single opportunity to meet and gain valuable information from HOPWA program coordinators, technical assistance providers, and government staff from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Veteran's Administration (VA), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing's goal is to have **all** the cities and states that receive HOPWA formula funds in attendance at this meeting.

A special session, designed in response to many HOPWA grantees' requests, will be offered on IDIS. The office will be working with TONYA, Inc., HUD's IDIS training contractor, to provide a special session devoted to the HOPWA program. The session will allow grantees to get hands on advice and experience with IDIS in reporting on HOPWA accomplishments. Office staff will be present to address such topics as reporting requirements, accomplishments data, and other IDIS issues. Participants will also have plenty of time to ask questions and receive answers to their IDIS/HOPWA issues. The data elements for IDIS, which are similar to those used in the paper Annual Progress Reports (APR) form, will be discussed. This will prove beneficial to those state grantees who have not yet converted to IDIS. For **anyone** needing help in

learning or updating themselves on IDIS, this session is for you!

The meeting will also serve to bring all HOPWA partners to the table to learn of successes and lessons learned over the past years of operating the program. To accomplish this, the meeting will focus on three present challenges:

- Using housing development activities to broaden grantee's AIDS housing resources;
- Creating HIV/AIDS housing strategies and plans within the community's consolidated plan, continuum of care, and related HIV/AIDS care activities;
- Managing the HOPWA program and using new technical assistance tools to augment community efforts to design, operate and evaluate programs.

For more information on the Third National HOPWA Formula Grantees Meeting, please call: The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, HUD at 202-708-1934 or Elizabeth Davis, AIDS Housing Washington at 206-448-5242. See you in Baltimore!!

Reminder: Accounting for Housing Units

Over the next few weeks HUD staff will be requesting grantees to update information entered into IDIS to accurately reflect their program performance. HOPWA grantees are requested to please update your Planned Number of Units and Actual Number of Units Accomplished on the C04MA04 screen.

The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing issued guidance on accounting for housing units in its **HOPWA Help: IDIS: Accounting for Housing Units** and in the February 1999 edition of *IDIS Live*. For further information on accounting for housing units supported under HOPWA and reported in IDIS or to obtain copies of *HOPWA Help*, please contact your local HUD Field Office or the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing at 202-708-1934.■

IDIS PROFILE: SHARON LEE-THOMAS

Sharon Lee-Thomas joined the hotline in August 1998. Prior to that she spent two and one-half years working with the HOME C/MI System; working on CHDO's and grantee discrepancies; and closing and canceling projects. This work laid the foundation for her assuming duties as a member of the Technical Assistance Unit. "I attended training classes on the system and read the User's Manual. However, the most important method of learning the system was to go in and practice," she states. She encourages all users of IDIS to do this. "The system is constantly being enhanced, so it is extremely important that users keep up with the changes."

Sharon spent more than a year working with a former technical expert on IDIS, Lincoln Burruss. It was working with Lincoln that inspired Sharon to want to learn more about the system and work more directly with it. Many of you have probably spoken with her as you planned your IDIS User Group meetings, made preparations to attend the IDIS Advisory Group sessions, or requested IDIS reference materials.

"While attending the IDIS Advisory Group meetings, I listened to the grantees discuss problems they were having with the system. I also listened to how they felt the problems could be solved. This interaction and brainstorming made me want to become a part of that process," says Sharon.

Sharon, like other members of the TAU, advises callers to provide as much information as possible about their problem. "It helps the TAU to diagnosis your problem when we know the exact error message received, the activity number, the voucher number and date, etc.," says Sharon. Having this information up front leads to a quicker resolution of the problem, getting the caller back on the system sooner. Mostly, Sharon enjoys working together with the grantees to solve problems. "It not only builds relationships with them but it also builds confidence that they will receive the support they need to handle a crisis."■

Eight hundred sixty-eight calls were answered by a live voice on original calls placed to the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) during the month of March. Only three calls went into the TAU voice mail box. Those calls were returned within 45 minutes. The numbers indicate that inquiries from grantees on the HOME C/MI System and HOPE 3 program combined for 51% of the calls, while requests for assistance with IDIS issues accounted for 49% of calls handled. Statistical results from courtesy call inquiries indicate that the TAU has maintained a 98% satisfaction rate.■

In the Know

*Are you "in the know"? Tell us what you think. HUD Field Office staff and entitlement grantees are invited to submit an **IDISLive "Guest Column"** or a **"From The Field"** article. Please contact Vera Pérez by phone at (202)708-0614 ext. 4786 or by email at Vera_A._Perez@hud.gov.*

TAU TOTALS FOR MARCH

IDIS Q&A

UNDERSTANDING COMMITTED AND DRAWN FUNDS

Q: I need a clarification of committed and drawn funds as displayed on the Grant Summary Listing (screen C04MD51). When I went in to check on the status of funds for an activity, the system indicated that the amount of funds drawn was more than the amount available to commit. Can there be more drawn than committed?

A: IDIS does both commitment and draw of funds using a First-In-First-Out (FIFO) method. This means that when funds are committed, they are committed from the oldest grant first, and when funds are drawn, they are drawn from the oldest grant first. It is also true that funds must be committed to an activity before they can be drawn.

One might expect that these two rules, namely FIFO and commit before draw, would ensure that a grant would never have funds drawn in excess of those that are committed. But as one knows, one can never say never.

There are three reasons or situations that come to mind which would cause more funds to be drawn from a grant than have been committed from the grant.

First, at time of conversion, all draws prior to IDIS are drawn from a specific grant year. However, IDIS applies the FIFO method when calculating grant commitment. This difference in method is most apparent when dealing with the HOME program. As an example, suppose a HOME project was setup for 1998 even though the 1997 grant had not been fully committed or drawn. When converted to IDIS, the drawn amount remains in 1998, but the commitment could be shifted from 1998 to 1997 because of FIFO commitment. The result is that the 1997 grant has more committed than drawn and the 1998 grant has more drawn than committed. After a period of time, since IDIS uses FIFO for both commitment and draw, this situation will self-correct.

Second, when manual payments are made through LOCCS, the draw can be made against any grant year. When the draw is sent to IDIS, the draw is grant-year specific, while IDIS does the commitment FIFO. Hence, if the Manual Payment is made from a year after the year with funds available to commit, the grant year of the Manual Payment will have more funds drawn than committed.

Third, occasionally adjustments must be made in IDIS. Some reasons for adjustments include correcting the fund type of a draw (especially within the HOME program), correcting an imbalance between LOCCS and IDIS, and moving a draw from one program to another. In each of these situations, it is possible that draws are moved to years after the year with funds available to commit.

There are probably other reasons why grants will have more funds drawn than committed. The above three are the most common. If you notice more funds drawn from a grant than have been committed, it's not yet time to panic. As long as the aggregate amount committed equals or exceeds the aggregate net amount drawn, FIFO will continue to work and the situation will self-correct. ■ *Tom Sullivan, HUD*

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF *IDISLIVE* WILL BE
PUBLISHED ON JUNE 1, 1999.**

**ANNOUNCING THE NEW IDIS
REFERENCE MANUAL.....JUST A
CLICK AWAY**

In response to your many requests, CPD has released the new IDIS Reference Manual! To view or print the Manual, simply point your web browser to: http://www.hud.gov/cpd/idis/ref_man.html.

According to author of the Manual, **Sherri Kitter**, giving birth to the Manual was a "true labor of love."

"It was great working with Grantees, Headquarters staff, and Field Office personnel who carefully reviewed each chapter and didn't mince words when it came to offering corrections and suggestions."

Dave Robinson, a grantee from Lake County, Illinois, testified before the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, "...HUD has made a point of including grantees in the review of the substantial rewrite of the user's manual for IDIS. I have had a chance to provide comments on a few of the chapters, and...the new manual is turning out to be a significant improvement over the previous editions."

CPD thanks the Program Offices who provided us with lots of background and enough regs to write ten manuals: **Marcia Dodge, Joan Morgan, and David Leopold** from HOME; **Sue Miller, Bob Brever, Steve Johnson, and Clifton E. Barnhill** from CDBG; **David Vos and Rusty Bennett** from HOPWA; and, **Mike Roanhouse** from ESG.

Special kudos, too, to everyone on the Review Committee who shared their expertise: **Charles Blevins, Millie Dusha, Charles Halm, Bob Jennings, Jade Santoro, LaCree Carswell, Al Cooper, Mary Lou Egan, Ken Pick, Dave Robinson, and Vivian Baldwin.**

Thanks, too, to **Boris Cardinale** and **Ayda Etuk** from the Office of Information Technology who can describe the insides of IDIS without giving listeners indigestion.

"Grantees will find everything they want to know about IDIS in one place," continues the author. "This

Manual is more than just a guide to the on-line screens. It gives folks background on IDIS and the grants management process so they can better see how all IDIS functions are tightly integrated, not to mention easy to use." In addition, where needed, the Manual provides guidance from the CPD program offices on how a particular function should be completed."

Each chapter of the Manual begins with a Table of Contents and Overview. You will find "How-To" directions for completing each on-line screen broken into clear, easy-to-understand steps. Ms. Kitter stresses that "where possible, we've tried to use real grantee data on the screen examples. Showing users a blank screen often doesn't give them a feel for how the screen looks when filled in."

You can view or print each chapter of the Manual directly from the IDIS web page. There's no need to save each chapter to your local computer - unless you want to.

The author admits, though, that "This is a very comprehensive manual. If users print out the entire document single-sided, they will kill a lot of trees!" Users should read each chapter on-line, then determine if the information applies to them before printing it out. For users who have a duplexing feature on their printers, by all means use it. Otherwise, for those users who want to have a complete copy of the Manual in their office, they may want to make a two-sided photo-copy of the original.

Remember that this document is a work in progress. As we obtain more guidance from the Program Offices and as more changes are made in IDIS, the changes will be reflected in the Manual. Also, CPD welcomes your comments and suggestions on the Manual. Please e-mail them to Sherri Kitter at Sherri_F._Kitter@hud.gov. ■

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

PLANS FOR IDIS WEB SITE

This summer we will be working on improving and expanding the IDIS web site to make it more accessible and useful to users. Here's a quick summary of the current plans for improving the site.

The IDIS home page at <http://www.hud.gov/cpd/idis/idisweb.html> will guide you to all IDIS content on hud.gov. This page will highlight the latest additions to the page so you always know what's newest. We plan to add details for each link, so you know where you're going from the main page.

Second-level subjects will be broken down into individual pages. For instance, if you need information about IDIS training schedules, all links concerning training will have a central location you can bookmark and go there directly.

IDIS web will have a unified format that interacts with the new HUD web design scheme, but custom graphics will let you know that you are in IDIS web.

A secondary goal for IDIS web is having all documents for IDIS users in Adobe Acrobat PDF by the end of the summer. PDF stands for Portable Document Format, which allows the user to view and print documents from a web browser. The Acrobat reader is free and integrates easily with both Netscape and Internet Explorer. Users will be able to load a document with one mouse click.

Existing pages on IDIS web will be reviewed to ensure that all content is current, relevant and easy to navigate. These pages will be re-organized where necessary to fit in with the new structure of the site.

New features will be added, including a graphical map of the IDIS web site and instructions on how to navigate the new site.

Several new content areas will be added, including a section for user feedback.

We're always open to suggestions. Let us know if there are areas that need more detail. Please email Vera Pérez at Vera_A._Perez@hud.gov. ■

IDIS TRAINING SESSIONS

Plans are in the works for IDIS training sessions in the Washington, DC area. They are scheduled to take place in the upcoming months. For details on dates, locations and more, please contact Jon Kunz at TONYA, Inc. on 202/289-8100. ■

STATES AND ON-SITE TRAINING

As States make final preparations to go "live" in IDIS, be sure to set up on-site training with the training coordinators from TONYA, Inc. Contact Jon Kunz at 202/289-8100 for more information. ■

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Your IDIS contacts are Tracey Peterson and Vivian Baldwin at CPD. You may contact them via the following:

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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. **For IDIS training**, contact TONYA, Inc. at 202-289-8100.