FY 2007 E-Government Act Report
U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development

Section 1-Implementation of Electronic Government Initiatives

When disasters occur, like Hurricane Katrina, emergency response agencies and staff need flexible, innovative tools that can quickly address basic human needs such as housing, food, and medical services. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in support of FEMA, State and Local Housing Authorities, and other First Responders, launched the intergovernmental National Housing Locator Service (NHLS) website in January 2007. The NHLS is an accessible, searchable, web-based clearinghouse of over 200,000 rental housing vacancies available nationwide. SocialServ.Com, Apartment.Com, Bowman, Rent.Com, and other on-line, industry-leading housing inventory providers currently supply their information to NHLS on a continuous, near real-time basis. Over 3,200 Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies and First Responders can access this information.

The NHLS was built from the ground up using state-of-the-art Internet constructs, as well as the rental housing industry standard called Multifamily Information and Transactions Standards (MITS) that is enabling precise and efficient information exchange. Prior to this solution, government housing agencies and first responders collected, compiled, and verified vacancy information from multiple agency legacy systems one by one, from spreadsheets, or by searching multiple on-line sources. This process, which was mostly manual, would take weeks. With NHLS, there is now one streamlined business process supported by state-of-the-art technology that delivers quality data day or night. Information is collected from the various housing inventory providers across the country within the NHLS in response to a housing request. This information then sends the housing requester back to the original housing inventory provider who provides the details on the rental, point-of-contact and other value-added resources.

The move to the NHLS citizen-centric, one-stop portal is transforming the housing locator process and is realizing cost savings through the efficiencies achieved by reducing the housing locator process from weeks to seconds. Additionally, NHLS is compliant with accessibility standards to ensure accessibility to data for those who are disabled. NHLS has already been used in several disaster-response situations in 2007, including the spring tornados in Florida and the summer flooding in the upper Midwest. HUD's personnel, including the CIO and deputy CIO for Business Modernization, have traveled to many disaster-prone areas to demonstrate and discuss NHLS with local housing authorities. Lessons learned from real-world usage and the expressed desires of likely NHLS users are being quickly integrated into NHLS through the rapid, incremental development process.

The NHLS was developed by HUD with collaboration from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and a number of State Finance Authorities. HUD also

worked with the National Multi Housing Council and the National Apartment Association to implement established industry standards for data exchange. HUD remains in constant contact with various external stakeholders via regular meetings and planning activities, conducts system testing with Public Housing Authorities, and provides online training. HUD also participates in various conferences and seminars to highlight system capabilities and create dialogue with various business partners and customers. Furthermore, the first NHLS-based Web service deployed later this year will allow NHLS inventory data to be integrated seamlessly with other housing data in FEMA's secure Housing Portal. Through this innovative Web services approach, FEMA will be able to perform a single search across both commercial rental housing data and information being collected in real-time during a disaster response initiative.

In less than a year, the NHLS has come to represent a new model for quickly developing information applications that address HUD's strategic requirements and allows HUD to interoperate easily with other government organizations. A modern approach to application development also allows HUD to invest incrementally in the program, in response to real-world requirements that evolve quickly in step with the nation's disaster-response capabilities. This resource allocation approach ensures that HUD's program budgets are applied to pressing, current needs, rather than to outdated requirements that might have been established at the beginning of a multi-year contract.

Section 2- Agency Information Management Activities

A.	HUD's Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan is available at:
http://hudatwork.hud.gov/po/i/stratplan/itstratplan3.doc

B.	HUD's final determinations, priorities, and schedules are available at:
http://www.hud.gov/about/inventory.cfm.

Other tools used to improve the dissemination of and access to HUD's information by the public include:

Common Questions
Online Library
FHA Resource Center
HUD User
Regulations Barriers Clearinghouse
Neighborhood Networks at Work
HUD Mailing Lists

Additionally, in January 2006, HUD implemented Google as the search engine for both its internal HUD@work site and external www.hud.gov site. Responses to the implementation of Google have supports its success. Now, more than ever, information on HUD's Internet and intranet websites is easy to find and accessible within the click of a button.

C   HUD's FOIA Handbook, primary FOIA website, and frequent requests for records:
http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/foia/index.cfm

D.   Not Applicable

E.   HUD is successful in carrying out its mission through our relationships with various business partners, including nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, housing agencies, authorities, and tribes; community and faith-based organizations, various housing industry groups including lenders, brokers, appraisers, and multifamily developers and owners, health care facilities providers, small businesses; fair housing organizations; and investors. These partnerships have allowed the development of various communication vehicles and channels that increase our ability to deliver information to our customers. Several of these information dissemination vehicles / channels are identified above, in item B. Other efforts that are resulting in effective communications include:

- HUD's America's Affordable Communities Initiative
- Housing Counseling Agencies
- Participation in various Professional Organizations
- FHA Marketing and Outreach
- Fair Housing Partners
- Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
- Office of University Partnerships

F.   HUD program managers are responsible for preserving valuable HUD documents and data. Some documents and data are of value only for the short-term, others more long-term, and selected documents and data are of historical value and therefore should be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for public access. Three systems have submitted a record schedule to NARA in FY 2007. It is HUD's goal to have all mission critical systems submit a record schedule by 2009; there are 80 systems that still require records schedules, however, some of these systems may be consolidated, thereby reducing the total number. HUD's NARA-approved records schedules are identified in Handbook 2225.6, HUD Record Disposition Schedules.