

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY STATEMENT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

*I. Background*

- a) Communities across the Nation are experiencing climate change impacts, such as changes in average temperatures, more extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. While the severity and pace of future climate change impacts are difficult to predict, it is clear that already occurring and potential future changes will have important impacts on the ability of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to fulfill its mission. Climate change adaptation is a critical complement to mitigation; both are required to address the causes and consequences of climate change.
- b) Adaptation planning will allow HUD and its state and local partners to minimize negative impacts of climate change that are already occurring.
- c) The impacts of climate change are expected to be significant for both rural communities and metropolitan regions. As a federal cabinet agency focused on the built environment, on strengthening both metropolitan areas and rural communities, and expanding opportunity for all Americans, HUD recognizes the need for action. Through adaptation planning, HUD will identify how climate change is likely to affect its ability to achieve its mission, operate its facilities, and meet its policy and program objectives. In turn, HUD will develop, implement, and evaluate actions to moderate climate change risks.
- d) By integrating climate change adaptation strategies into its programs and operations, HUD better ensures that public resources are invested wisely and that HUD programs, services, and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions.
- e) HUD will continue to work with its state and local partners to find innovative solutions to climate change that involve the built environment. Through climate adaptation planning, HUD will contribute to the Federal Government's leadership role in sustainability and will pursue the vision of a resilient, healthy, and prosperous Nation in the face of a changing climate.
- f) This Policy Statement implements the March 4, 2011, *Implementing Instructions* of the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) for the purpose of implementing Section 8(i) of Executive Order 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance* (Executive Order). Section 16 of the Executive Order charges agencies to actively participate in the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (Task Force) and mandates that the CEQ Chair, in consultation with the Task Force, develop recommendations for the President on how the policies and practices of federal agencies can be made compatible with and reinforce a national climate change adaptation strategy.

## *II. Policy Directive*

- a) Climate change adaptation planning relates to both HUD's mission statement and to HUD's strategic plan. HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality, affordable homes for all; HUD has committed itself to preparing its operations for climate change. HUD's strategic plan emphasizes its role in building sustainable communities and in promoting energy-efficient buildings and location-efficient communities, as well as its role in facilitating disaster preparedness. The strategic plan also emphasizes the opportunity to use housing to improve quality of life, including improvement in health outcomes. In fulfilling its mission, HUD has in place a number of programs, resources, and strategies that support the climate change adaptation process. The goal of this policy is to ensure that HUD continues to execute its mission and operations securely, effectively, and efficiently as the climate continues to change.
- b) This policy establishes a departmentwide directive, to the extent feasible within existing budgetary, operational, and regulatory constraints, to integrate climate change adaptation planning and actions into HUD programs, policies, and operations.
- c) HUD shall undertake climate change adaptation planning and, as appropriate and feasible, implement the results of that planning using the best-available science and information. This will include a method for considering potential climate change impacts when undertaking long-term planning and making decisions affecting its resources, programs, policies, and operations.
- d) HUD shall develop and publish a departmentwide climate adaptation plan by June 2012 and update it regularly. The plan shall incorporate the findings and directives of this policy statement. The plan will identify how climate change may impact HUD's ability to achieve its mission, programs, policies, and operations. The plan will, in consultation with the program and support offices, identify and prioritize actions, as well as establish a mechanism to evaluate progress and continue to improve HUD's capacity to effectively adapt to current and future changes in the climate.
- e) The Department shall, in a manner consistent and compatible with HUD's mission:
  - i. analyze how climate change may impact HUD's ability to achieve its mission, policy, program, and operation objectives by reviewing existing programs, operations, policies, and authorities to: (1) in consultation with program and support offices, identify potential impacts of climate change on HUD programs; (2) prioritize and implement response actions; and (3) continuously assess and improve capacity to adapt to current and future changes in the climate;
  - ii. identify to the Chief Financial Officer through HUD's annual budget process the budgetary impacts, if any, of the actions identified under this policy;

- iii. collaborate with the Office of General Counsel to identify areas where legal analysis is needed to carry out HUD actions identified under this policy; and
- iv. coordinate actions with the Agency Climate Change Adaptation Steering Group/Work Group established in Section III below.
- f) HUD shall fully implement the climate-change adaptation *Implementing Instructions* issued by the CEQ under Executive Order 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*, and other applicable authorities.
- g) HUD will apply the guiding principles and planning framework for climate change adaptation found in the *Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force: Recommended Actions in Support of a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* published October 5, 2010.
- h) HUD will coordinate with other agencies and interagency efforts, including the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, on climate change adaptation issues that cut across agency jurisdictions, including areas where national adaptation plans are being or have been developed, and will identify a process for sharing climate change adaptation planning information throughout the agency and the public.

### III . Agency Coordination and Implementation

- a) The Senior Sustainability Officer is responsible for ensuring implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy does not alter or affect any existing duty or authority of individual program offices.
- b) Through this policy directive, the Secretary establishes the Agency Climate Change Adaptation Steering Committee/Work Group to oversee and coordinate departmentwide climate change adaptation planning and implementation. The Steering Committee/Work Group is chaired by the Deputy Secretary or his/her designee and will include representation from each program office, as appropriate.
- c) The Agency Climate Change Adaptation Steering Committee/Work Group will implement HUD-specific activities through the following strategies:
  - i. Improve climate adaptation planning and data collection
  - ii. Invest in and promote sustainability
  - iii. Include climate change adaptation in funding decisions as appropriate
- d) HUD has already begun directing resources to climate change adaptation strategies including the following:
  - i. The Office of Sustainable Housing Communities introduced the Sustainable Communities Regional Grant Program to support metropolitan and multi-

jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments; one of the goals of this program is to encourage jurisdictions to meet the challenges of energy use and climate change. Fiscal Year 2010 grant funding specifically supported regional plans that may include: (1) proactively considering risks from disaster and climate change and (2) conducting comprehensive climate change impact assessments. HUD encouraged jurisdictions to use the findings from these climate change assessments as a basis for identifying adaptation actions for inclusion in appropriate plans and strategies.

- ii. The Office of Community Planning and Development has undertaken the Consolidated Planning Enhancement Initiative. This initiative will improve climate change adaptation planning at the state and local government levels. It will encourage the incorporation of adaptation issues into community needs assessments and funding priorities. It will also encourage the use of tools such as geospatial mapping to provide quality data for future research, analysis, and policy development.
  - iii. The Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) is collaborating with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to better assess the climate risks and vulnerabilities of the communities HUD serves. PD&R will work to customize NOAA's "Roadmap for Adapting to Coastal Risk" to guide HUD's efforts in adapting to climate change. The Roadmap is a process for assessing a community's vulnerabilities to hazards and for incorporating relevant data on hazards and climate into ongoing local planning and decision-making.
- e) This policy directive is effective immediately and will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.