

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between The

U. S. DEPARTMENT HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

AND

THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into between the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) effective as of the last date of signature set forth below.

I. Purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU is entered into pursuant to The Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535-1536) for the purpose of establishing a partnership between the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) group of the Wage and Investment Division.

This partnership promotes a national tax assistance program using the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. The purpose of this partnership is to:

- o assist low-income, disabled, elderly, and limited English proficient persons in meeting their tax obligations by providing educational outreach,**
- o assist low-income, disabled, elderly, and limited English proficient persons and families in free tax preparation and free electronic filing of federal tax returns,**
- o provide and disseminate information on earned income tax credits, child care tax credits and individual development accounts to low and moderate income families eligible to receive these benefits, and**
- o provide and disseminate information on how tax credits can be used to build assets.**

The HUD and IRS partnership will link low-income individuals and families to free tax preparation, electronic filing, and asset building assistance.

II. Description of the Departments

A. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing, free from discrimination. To fulfill this mission, HUD embraces high standards of ethics, management, and accountability and forges partnerships that leverage resources and improve HUD's ability to be effective at the community level.

B. Internal Revenue Service

The mission of the IRS is to provide America's taxpayers with top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all. It is also the IRS's mission to assist low- to moderate-income taxpayers in satisfying their tax responsibilities through building and maintaining partnerships with key stakeholders, seeking to create and share value by educating, communicating with, and assisting customers. The IRS specializes in developing national partnerships with government agencies to promote educational outreach and free tax assistance, much of which targets the low-income, elderly, disabled, and limited-English-proficient persons.

This partnership will help ensure that HUD's clients, many of whom are low-income, benefit from the tax incentives offered through the IRS. The IRS strives to educate all wage-earning taxpayers about tax preparation, with a primary emphasis on the four under-served segments (low-income, elderly, disabled, and persons with limited English proficiency).

HUD and IRS are entering into this MOU to leverage their individual and combined resources and undertake the actions necessary to meet common goals. This MOU establishes the critical framework essential to meeting the challenges of today's low- to moderate-income populace. The partnership will emphasize greater coordination leveraging of existing services and encourage community collaboration and outreach to assist low-income families. HUD and IRS, therefore, will continue to strengthen the quality of life for low-income families and contribute to the quality of life of shared constituents.

III. Duties and Responsibilities of HUD

A. Overall

- o HUD will inform all of its applicable offices of the purpose and intent of this MOU.
- o HUD will encourage directors and administrators of its programs to identify opportunities for and establish collaborative endeavors in meeting the

stated purpose of this MOU

- HUD will provide a relationship manager (liaison) and a second point-of-contact for IRS staff to coordinate activities under this MOU.
- As appropriate, HUD will invite IRS representatives to attend and to make presentations at HUD-sponsored training events and conferences conducted at the national or regional level.
- HUD will supply to the IRS a list of program participants from its major program areas. This list will include, at a minimum, public housing authorities, housing counseling agencies, fair housing assistance programs, neighborhood network sites, and continuum of care grantees.
- HUD will notify its program grantees of this MOU and will encourage them to develop linkages with the IRS.
- As appropriate, HUD will include language in its notices of funding availability advising applicants of this MOU between the IRS and HUD.
- HUD will include IRS links on its federal partners webpage
- HUD staff will be available to meet with IRS representatives on a quarterly basis to share new information and ensure that the two agencies are working together.
- HUD will provide to the IRS reports and studies to assist IRS in targeting IRS programs.

B. Office of Public and Indian Housing

- HUD will give the IRS a list of all public housing authorities that have received supportive service grants over the past five years, including HOPE VI, the Resident Opportunities Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) program, and the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.
- Letters will be sent to all Hope VI and Indian Housing Block Grant recipients asking them to meet with SPEC tax specialists and develop strategies to contact all eligible residents for the purposes of increasing the number of families who access the Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC)
- All existing Family Investment Center (FIC) sites will be contacted and asked to meet with SPEC tax specialists to explore space usage and outreach to FIC clients.
- FSS coordinators will be asked to invite SPEC tax specialists to the Program Coordinating Committees, which are established by FSS programs and consist of supportive services providers. The tax specialists

determine how to reach FSS participants regarding both the EITC and possible matching of FSS escrow accounts with Individual Development Account (IDA) funds.

- ROSS grantees will be asked to meet with SPEC tax specialists to determine how the two programs can coordinate to reach EITC-eligible families.

C. Office of Housing

The Office of Multifamily Housing Programs will invite IRS representatives to participate in workshops and seminars conducted by the Neighborhood Networks initiative.

- The Office of Multifamily Housing Programs will provide an address list in electronic format of Neighborhood Networks centers that serve residents insured or assisted by FHA-insured housing.
- The Office of Multifamily Housing Programs will provide an address list in electronic format of all contract administrators of assisted projects that receive Section 8 or other HUD rental housing assistance payments.
- The Office of Single Family Housing Programs will provide the IRS with a listing of HUD-approved housing counseling agencies, to which the IRS will provide information, including publications, addressing taxpayer responsibilities and tax relief programs. HUD-approved housing counseling agencies may disseminate and distribute the information to low- and moderate-income clients, as appropriate.

D. Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD)

- HUD will supply the IRS with a list of contact persons for the Continuums of Care (COC) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) programs, which the IRS will use to distribute tax information.
- The IRS's SPEC group will provide to HUD literature, forms and instructions that explain the requirements for the EITC and other benefits for low-income persons. In addition, IRS personnel will make presentations at national conferences, seminars, and workshops sponsored by HUD's grantees.
- HUD will include a link to the IRS on its homeless assistance and HOPWA websites. The linkage would be connected to information pertaining to the EITC and other tax benefits for low-income persons. HUD will also include a copy of this MOU on its homeless assistance website.

- HUD will notify the IRS about any changes in designated Renewal Communities, Empowerment Zones, and Enterprise Communities.
- HUD will maintain an address locator for Renewal Communities, Empowerment Zones, and Enterprise Communities at <http://hud.esri.com/egis/cpd/rcezec/welcome.htm>.
- Information that HUD publishes regarding HOPWA, Renewal Communities, Empowerment Zones, and Enterprise Community tax incentives will include contact information and links to the IRS website.

E. Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO)

- FHEO will work with Fair Housing Assistance Program partners to conduct education and outreach to clients who will benefit from the programs identified in this MOU.

F. Center for Faith-Based Community Initiatives (CFBCI)

- The Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Office of Field Policy and Management will advise the faith-based and community liaisons in each of HUD's field offices to suggest to the IRS faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) that potentially could benefit from the programs identified in this MOU.

G. Office of Departmental Operations and Coordination (ODOC)

- The ODOC Southwest Border Region, Colonias, and Migrant/Farmworker Initiative (SWBR) will identify nonprofit organizations, foundations, local councils of government, as well as local, state, and regional entities that assist underserved rural communities in addressing and curtailing chronic financially related problems.
- Once identified, the SWBR will supply IRS representatives with a listing and contact information of established organizations and coordinate areas of opportunity with IRS representatives to introduce or expand information on free or low-cost tax preparation services, EITC, child tax credit (CTC), IDA programs, and other asset-building services.
- SWBR will develop recommendations for streamlining the delivery of existing financial services with nonprofit, local, state, and regional service providers and coordinate these activities with the IRS to assist colonia and migrant/farmworker populations build financial assets.

- SWBR and IRS representatives will meet once every fiscal quarter to maintain open lines of communication and discuss possible joint ventures that maximize federal resources.
- ODOC will work with the IRS to utilize HUD kiosks as vehicles to distribute information to underserved populations regarding free or low-cost tax preparation services, EITC, CTC, IDA programs, and other asset-building services.
- ODOC will list the appropriate IRS link on the web pages of the Office of Labor Relations and the SWBR, as well as HUD's Home and Community website.

H Office of Field Policy and Management (FPM)

- FPM will inform all regional and field office directors of program office commitments under this MOU.
- FPM's public affairs officers, web managers, and interagency homeless coordinators will work closely with regional and field office directors, field program offices, and appropriate Headquarters offices (Public Affairs, ODOC, and the Interagency Council for the Homeless) in reaching out to organizations and clients likely to benefit from programs identified in this MOU.

Office of Departmental Grants Management and Oversight (ODGMO)

- ODGMO, using information and materials provided by the IRS, will reach out to program offices and HUD applicants and grantees to inform them of services and benefits covered by this MOU.
- ODGMO will establish an IRS link on HUD's Grants website.

IV. Duties and Responsibilities of the IRS

- IRS will inform all applicable IRS offices, specifically SPEC area directors and territory managers, of the purpose and intent of this MOU.
- The IRS will provide HUD with a list of SPEC areas and territories and contact information.
- SPEC's headquarters will facilitate introductory and planning meetings between SPEC area directors and territory managers and their HUD

counterparts. The purpose of these meetings will be to identify and establish collaborative endeavors to meet the objectives of this MOU.

- The IRS will promote this partnership, where possible and appropriate, to its other partners.
- The IRS will maintain regular contact with HUD Headquarters, at least semi-annually, to assess progress in meeting partnership goals.
- The IRS will provide a relationship manager (liaison) and a second point-of-contact for HUD staff to coordinate activities under this MOU.
- The IRS-SPEC will serve as a conduit to HUD organizations.
- IRS will provide HUD with the SPEC Partner/Volunteer website link. This site provides direct access to resources to assist partners. The site contains important tax law updates, materials to support outreach efforts, publications, brochures, and other products.
- The IRS will send outreach and education information to the contacts provided by HUD.
- The IRS or its designee will conduct EITC information sessions at Neighborhood Network events, such as national conferences and regional technical assistance workshops.
- The IRS will participate with HUD in at least two satellite training sessions to be broadcast and webcast. One session will be devoted to training HUD and IRS staff regarding the purposes of this MOU and IRS services and benefits covered by this MOU. The other session will be devoted to informing HUD and IRS clients of the services and benefits available from the IRS and covered by this MOU.
- IRS will inform Tax Counseling for the Elderly program grantees of the contents of this MOU. In addition, IRS will facilitate introductions and strategy sessions between Tax Counseling for the Elderly program grantees and Neighborhood Network centers on Section 202 properties. The purpose of these sessions will be to facilitate collaboration between the two groups. A primary goal will be the development of strategies that address education, awareness, and tax assistance at Neighborhood Network centers.
- The IRS will work with SWBR outstationed staff to initiate and establish VITA strategies in colonias and migrant/farmworker communities.
- The IRS will work with SWBR outstationed staff to inform colonias and migrant/farm worker communities of EITC, CTC, and IDA programs and assistance.

- o The IRS will make training or informational materials available to HUD for distribution in HUD offices and at housing counseling, fair housing agency and Neighborhood Network sites. The materials will be supplied in a form and format that can be placed on or linked from a website or in hard copy for distribution at events and meetings.
- o IRS will provide information and publications to HUD-approved housing counseling agencies regarding taxpayer responsibilities and tax relief programs. This information may be disseminated and distributed to low- and moderate-income clients, as appropriate.
- o The IRS will participate in HUD webcasts that will educate the general public about the EITC, CTC, and other tax benefits to low- and moderate-income families eligible to receive these benefits.
- o The IRS will help ensure that communications with community organizations, partners, and taxpayers are appropriate by providing communications whenever feasible in (a) alternative formats for persons with disabilities, consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and (b) languages other than English for individuals with limited English proficiency, consistent with E.O. 13166.

V. Partner Agreements

- o The various parties identified in this MOU will meet as necessary in order to accomplish the purposes of this MOU.
- o The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service each will keep the other informed, either directly or through designees, of any new program, activity, or project that may be initiated or of any augmentation or revision of an existing program, activity, or project.
- o This MOU does not constitute a financial obligation or serve as a basis for any expenditure. To implement this MOU, each agency will utilize its own resources and expend its own funds pursuant to its own statutory authority. Any obligation of funds will be accomplished through other appropriate documents.
- o Releases to the press, public announcements, and communication with the Congress concerning joint programs conducted under this MOU may be made jointly or by either agency following coordination with the other agency.

VI. Effective Date

- This MOU is effective as described in the first paragraph of this memorandum and shall continue in force indefinitely. It may be terminated by either party upon 90-day written notice to the other agency.

Notices given under the MOU shall be in writing and may be transmitted by facsimile or electronic mail, provided the notice is also sent simultaneously by U.S. mail addressed as follows:

To HUD: Frank L. Davis, Director
Office of Departmental Operations and Coordination
Room 2124
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

With copies to. Lynn Morgan, Esq.
Room 8158
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Marianne Nazzaro, MSW
Room 7208
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

To IRS: Wage & Investment Division
Michael McBride
401 West Peachtree Street, Suite 1200, Stop 52-WI
Atlanta, GA 30308

VII. Effect

- Nothing in this MOU shall be interpreted as limiting, superseding, or otherwise affecting either agency's normal operations in carrying out its statutory or regulatory duties. This MOU does not limit or restrict either agency from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other entities.
- This MOU is an internal governmental agreement designed to improve the efficiency of government and does not confer any rights on any other party.

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To IRS: Wage & Investment Division
Michael McBride
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Except as otherwise expressly provided herein, this MOU constitutes the entire agreement between the IRS and HUD with respect to the matters set forth herein and supersedes any documents prepared before this MOU to the extent those documents may be inconsistent with this MOU. Nothing in this MOU precludes HUD and the IRS from agreeing to amendments to this MOU.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

By: 
Alphonso Jackson, Secretary

Date: DEC 6 2004

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

By: 
Mark W. Everson, Commissioner

Date: DEC 6 2004