

FY 2008 E-Government Act Report

U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development

Section 1-Implementation of Electronic Government Initiatives

A. Describe the initiative, the methodology for identification of the initiative, and how the initiative is transforming agency operations.

As the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) carries out its mission of increasing homeownership, supporting community development and increasing access to affordable housing free from discrimination, information is collected from our various business partners and supporting IT systems. To determine the value of our various programs, whether or not these programs are delivering benefits as expected, or if additional benefits would be possible with new regulations or policies, this information needs to be unified and analyzed. Because this information is collected from a variety of sources, systems, and programs, information analysis could be difficult. Fortunately, HUD implemented the Geocode Service Center (GSC), which is our enterprise solution for validating and correcting addresses, detecting and correcting or removing corrupt or inaccurate records, and geographically enabling data.

In general, geospatial technologies help us to understand where we are spatially on the earth, as well as the location and interrelationships of natural and man-made resources. Consequently, the GSC allows the HUD to standardize its information so that it can be mapped, combined, overlaid, analyzed, and displayed as spatially referenced information both graphically and numerically. HUD then uses this information to make policy and management decisions for verifying, expanding, and improving our programs. Additionally, we can share this information with other businesses, organizations and agencies to better enable a government-wide, multi-agency, multi-programmatic perspective for broader planning, surveying, security, and mapping applications.

To be included in this report, Information technology initiatives were evaluated against the purpose of the E-Government Act, which is to find innovative ways to improve performance, increase collaboration, and improve the delivery of Government information and services. The GSC is representative of technological innovations that meet the challenges of the E-Government Act by:

- Modernizing HUD's business processes, while at the same time allowing HUD to ensure that it is meeting mission goals and objectives,
- Allowing HUD to create accurate and quality data that can be shared with other government entities and the public,
- Allowing HUD policy makers to make better informed decisions,
- Increasing HUD's transparency and accountability, and
- Using geospatial industry best practices to reduce costs and increase productivity.

B. Explain how your agency maintains an ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information technology for the initiative.

HUD actively participates on federal-wide geospatial organizations, including:

- Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) - An interagency committee that promotes the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis
- The Geospatial Line of Business (LoB) – An interagency committee that aims to further refine the opportunities for optimizing and consolidating Federal geospatial-related investments to reduce the cost of government and, at the same time, improve services to citizens. Cross-agency coordination of geospatial activities can identify, consolidate, and reduce or eliminate redundant geospatial data and services.

HUD's expertise, and primary contribution to these organizations, lies in its spatial-enabling capabilities provided through GSC and its use of statistical and spatial analysis of available local, state, and federal data to support its programs and the Housing Geospatial Theme.

C. Identify external partners who collaborate on the initiative.

Geographic information is integral to nearly all of HUD's programs. HUD's state-of-the-art Geocode Service Center (GSC) supports 17 HUD data systems and numerous ad hoc requests, processes 100+ million addresses annually and features the highest standards of address validation with quick turnaround times tailored to customer needs--in both a secure and confidential environment. The GSC has promoted collaboration on the following efforts:

- With these capabilities readily available, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) recently entered into an agreement with HUD to use our geocoding services. NCHS' agreement with HUD was in response to requests from public health agencies for standardized data that could be created quickly and efficiently and provided locational accuracy to support geospatial science and analysis. NCHS' address data was submitted to HUD and using GSC was geo-enabled with latitude/longitude coordinates and other requested legal, statistical, and administrative geographies and additional census, postal, and other attributes. This effort not only served DHHS/NCHS mission needs but also served as a model for interagency collaboration and a potential cross-agency geo-enabled service.
- As the lead for implementing Executive Order 13173, Interagency Task Force for the Economic Development of the Central San Joaquin Valley, HUD lead the development of a regional GIS capacity in cooperation with university, government, and private partners as a means to support cross-agency research and policy development. The Task Force also used the Geospatial One-Stop Initiative in the President's Management Agenda as a vehicle to demonstrate the benefits of cross-

agency and one-stop access to information on programs, grants, and activities in the region.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) collaborated with the U.S. Department of Interior, Geological Survey (USGS) and Mexican partners to create a binational Internet-based Geographic Information System (GIS) applications for four sister cities along the US/Mexico Border.
- HUD also has integrated its State of the Cities Database (data collected across several agencies, including the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Department of Justice) with the FedStats MapStats City application (www.fedstats.gov/qf) to make this data more accessible to the public.

D. Identify improved performance by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and strategic goals

Shortly after disaster struck, HUD was tasked by Congress to develop a long-term housing assistance strategy for communities ravaged by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. In order to complete this task, HUD needed a clear picture of where damage occurred, the extent that damaged buildings could be repaired, and the ability to determine whether neighborhoods could rebounding quickly or slowly. With the geospatial capabilities provided by GSC, HUD developed an innovative methodology to link federal, state, and local data by land parcels. Additionally, HUD was able to display this information via maps that are available at http://www.huduser.org/maps/#hurricane_katrina.

This is just one example of how HUD's implementation of the GSC as an enterprise geospatial solution is transforming the way HUD processes information. Across the Department, program information can now be analyzed geographically to determine if certain areas are being underserved, if targeted areas are achieving the expected benefits, if certain areas should be targeted, etc. In other words, we can now tell "where" our program dollars are being used. The added benefit to this project is that much of this data and analysis can now be made available for sharing and viewing. Below are some examples of the information created with GSC:

- HUD Data Sets - Provides interested researchers with access to the original electronic data sets, as well as microdata from research initiatives on topics such as housing discrimination, the HUD-insured multifamily housing stock, and the public housing population (<http://www.huduser.org/datasets/pdrdatas.html>)
- HUD Map Gallery – Provides an assortment of maps created by HUD for various purposes (<http://www.huduser.org/maps/>)
- HUD Boundary Files Download Site - The files available from this site are for community planners interested in working with census tract and block group data that splits by jurisdiction boundaries. (<http://www.huduser.org/geo/summarylevel.asp>)

- Targeting Federal Aid to neighborhoods distressed by the subprime mortgage crisis <http://www.fgdc.gov/library/spatially-speaking/spatially-speaking-jun08.pdf>

E. Quantify the cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementing the initiative.

The GSC directly interfaces with 17 IT systems that support HUD programs and is capturing, processing, cleaning, and standardizing about 100+ million addresses annually. Without our GSC solution, HUD would be required to acquire geocoding serviced. The GSC costs are currently about 0.3 cents per record, while acquisition costs would be approximately 0.9 cents per record or triple the GSC cost. Additionally, the GSC has transformed the way HUD systems handles grants, housing voucher, and loan information by associating it with geographic data, such as addresses, states, counties, ZIP codes, congressional districts, etc. Additionally, technology upgrades have reduced the time required to process, share, and transfer data by 75%. The average project that originally required four hours, now only takes one hour.

F. Explain how this initiative ensures the availability of government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities

HUD serves millions of low- and moderate-income households, and remains diligent in our efforts to ensure that our information and services are available to everyone. While HUD program information is available on its website, and many of its business transactions are available via the Internet, HUD ensures that information and assistance is available through various mediums, including free publications, kiosks, over the phone or face-to-face assistance. HUD funds housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide the public advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, credit issues and reverse mortgages. Additionally, HUD has local offices around the country and they are a good source of information. Each state has a least one office, and some states have more than one.

G. Explain how the project applies effective capital planning and investment control procedures

HUD's Information Technology Investment Management (ITIM) is a systematic process for managing the risks and returns associated with IT initiatives. ITIM ensures that all IT projects, including GSC, undergo a continuous, integrated management process focused on achieving desired business outcomes and provides a context for the continuous selection, control, and evaluation of IT initiatives. HUD applies the Select, Control, and Evaluate processes of the ITIM model to plan, manage, fund, control and evaluate its portfolio of IT investments.

HUD implemented the comprehensive ITIM process to ensure that its portfolio of IT projects adequately address HUD's business strategies and are managed to achieve expected benefits in accordance with accurate and complete cost, schedule, technical, and performance baselines. HUD uses the ITIM process not only to manage its IT portfolio, but also as a complement to the budget process, a method for supporting PMA goals, and as a tool for constructing the Department's EA.

Section 2- Agency Information Management Activities

- A. HUD's Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan is available at:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cio/documents/itstratplan3.pdf>

HUD's Enterprise Architecture (EA) Transition Plan is available at:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cio/ea/newea/resources/eatpv2.pdf>

- 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 includes:

[Common Questions](#)

[Online Library](#)

[FHA Resource Center](#)

[HUD User](#)

[Regulations Barriers Clearinghouse](#)

[Neighborhood Networks at Work](#)

[HUD Mailing Lists](#)

- C. HUD's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) primary website (<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/foia/index.cfm>) provides easy access to our:

- FOIA Handbook
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/hudclips/handbooks/ogch/13271/index.cfm>)
- Frequently Requested Record
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/foia/frequentrequestedmaterials.cfm>)
- And other useful FOIA-related information

- D. HUD does not fund research and development (R&D) activities.

- 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. E efforts that are resulting in effective communications include:

- [Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse](#)

Launched as a portal website in 2002, the Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse (RBC) was created in response to the Housing Affordability Barrier Removal Act of 2000. RBC is built around a user-friendly, searchable database of state and local regulatory reform strategies, best practices, and related resources -- all aimed at bringing housing costs within reach for hard working American families.

So far, the RBC has collected over 5,400 viable strategies and practices from all 50 states and more than 400 jurisdictions around the country. These are grouped in the database according to the ten categories prescribed by Congress in the enabling legislation:

- * Streamlining the Administrative Process
- * Building and Housing Codes
- * Fees and Dedications
- * Redevelopment and Infill
- * Fair Housing & Neighborhood Deconcentration Regulations
- * Tax Policies
- * Rent Control
- * Planning and Growth Restrictions
- * Environmental & Historic Preservation
- * Zoning, Land Development, Construction, & Subdivision Regulations

To make the online database search as easy to use as possible, we boil each record down to a brief, two- or three-line description: "Here's the problem that was identified, here's how this particular [city / state / town] solved it." In some communities, housing regulations can account for as much as a third of the cost of a new home, and can make renovation and rehabilitation wholly cost-prohibitive. We're in the business of helping people discover how changing the regulatory landscape can get affordable housing on the ground, thus helping communities be more socially and economically viable.

RBC offers a toll-free Help Desk (1-800-245-2691, option 4), publishes a bimonthly e-newsletter called *Breakthroughs*, and an eList known as the *Strategy of the Month Club*. The e-newsletter and eList help keep affordable housing on our subscribers' front burners, and allow us to share some of the best and most promising strategies uncovered by our research.

- [Community Connections](#)

Community Connections is an Information Center serving State and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, public interest groups, and others interested in housing, community and economic development. The Center serves as a clearinghouse providing users with program regulations; model programs, case studies, publications on a variety of housing, community and economic development topics; funding information; training and conference announcements; and referrals to technical assistance providers.

- [FHA Resource Center](#)

Committed to the highest quality customer service, HUD launched the FHA Resource Center that provides information needed by the home buying public and acts as the first line of response for the majority of industry and public

inquiries. The FHA Resource Center allows members of the industry and the general public to easily and directly communicate in the method they prefer (telephone, electronic mail, chat, fax, etc) with Federal Housing Administration (FHA), while improving the consistency and accuracy of the information FHA provides.

The FHA Resource Center uses the latest technology to match up client questions with the correct answers. This technology includes an automated client management system to gather client information and an internet-based knowledge base tool that will become a searchable guide available for use by the industry and public to find answers to the most often asked questions.

In addition, the FHA Resource Center provides general processing and policy information to any industry representative. The FHA Resource Center will also assist industry individuals and groups that support FHA home mortgage insurance programs, such as real estate agents, housing counseling agencies, non-profit organizations, local government agencies, etc. FHA will make the knowledge base available online to answer general and technical questions about underwriting, appraisal, and processing issues. This information will be fully searchable and will include specific reference information. The knowledge base will be accessible from the main HUD web site and will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- [Unlocking Doors](#)
Recognizing the integral role of the faith community in increasing affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for their citizens, HUD's Unlocking Doors Initiative is bringing together leaders from public and private sectors to share their housing success stories. This initiative is also conducting outreach, reviewing HUD policies and programs to eliminate unintended barriers and provides technical assistance to faith-based and community organizations involved with creating housing opportunities. Through the *Unlocking Doors Initiative*, HUD is seeking to research, identify and document innovative and successful partnerships between cities and their faith-based and community organizations.
- [National Fair Housing Training Academy \(NFHTA\)](#)
The NFHTA is a training program created and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in partnership with the D.C. Office for Human Rights and Howard University. The Academy's primary purpose is to provide fair housing equal opportunity training to civil rights professionals responsible for enforcing fair housing laws throughout the country. The initial program is a 5-week certification program designed to provide fair housing enforcement staff with knowledge and skills to conduct efficient and timely investigations throughout the country. The Academy's goal is to be recognized as the most widely accepted means of professional certification in the civil rights fair housing field.
- Fair Housing Legal Clinics
[Howard University Law School](#) joins the [John Marshall Law School](#) as a Fair Housing Legal Clinic. Howard University Law School has received a substantial

grant from HUD to design, organize and operate a fair housing legal-clinical program and to develop fair housing legal curricula that will train and educate law students and lawyers about fair housing rights and obligations. Howard Law's new Fair Housing Clinical Program will be a model that can be replicated at any law school in the country, and will offer innovative and cutting-edge academic programming, including expanded course work in housing and civil rights and a clinical program open to second and third year law students that will train future fair housing lawyers and allow them to work on real life cases while still in school. Students will be involved in every aspect of the Program, including its training and education programs. The new Fair Housing Law Clinical Program will join the other Howard Law clinical and academic programs as invaluable components in the School's mission to train social justice advocates who will address the complex social and legal issues that confront the world today and in years to come.

- [Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST](#)

HUD has launched an education program to help homebuilders and architects more easily design and construct housing that complies with the accessibility requirements of the Fair Housing Act. Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST, provides architects and builders with information about the Fair Housing Act's accessibility requirements, and covers disability rights laws, common design and construction violations and solutions, strategies for constructing compliant kitchens, bathrooms and common-use areas, and the Department's efforts to enforce the Act. FIRST has dual significance. FIRST describes the services offered by the program: fair housing instruction, resources, support, and technical guidance. FIRST also conveys the importance of planning for compliance with the accessibility requirements first - before engineering, design, and construction. Technical guidance is offered through a Design and Construction Resource Center that enables builders and architects to receive individualized guidance from design experts who use the same terminology. The Center can be reached through the FIRST Web site, or via the Center's toll-free number, 1 (888) 341-7781, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (ET).

- 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. For FY 08, HUD submitted flexible Schedule 21 based on NARA guidance (please refer to <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2008/2008-04.html>), which covers the Department's twenty-seven financial electronic systems. HUD Records Schedule can be found in HUD Handbook 2225.6 or on HUDCLIPS at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/hudclips/handbooks/admh/2225.6/index.cfm>.