TRACS Industry Meeting

March 10 – 11, 2004

Introduction

Ross Business Development, Inc. is pleased to share the following notes taken at the last TRACS Industry Meeting. Thanks to Janel Ganim of RealPage, Inc. who has become a great friend and collaborator. Janel and I traded notes to come up with as comprehensive a set of meeting notes as we could.

Please note that a number of positive changes to the TRACS process were announced in this meeting. Also, the 4350.3 is under review so now is the time to send comments and questions.

Ross Business Development is in the business of providing services to the affordable property management industry. As so, we can help your teams in their continuing education efforts. Also, if you need assistance setting up access to TRACS, REMS, TASS, etc through HUD's Secure Systems, please feel free to contact us.

I hope these meeting notes help you in your continuing efforts to achieve Optimum Compliance!

Day 1

Opening Remarks – Lanier Hylton

Denny Saulman

Denny Saulman, who is a TRACS systems analyst at Advanced Technology Systems (ATS), is leaving soon. Denny's contributions have been instrumental in helping us improve the quality of the TRACS System. Everyone he affects including HUD staff, software developers, trainers, consultants and owner/agents will miss him greatly.

Secure Systems TRACS Access for Traditional Contract Administrators

After many requests, Traditional Contract Administrators (CAs) now have access to online queries. Traditional CA's can go through the TRACS or REAC web pages to Apply for a User Name and Password http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/trx/trxsum.cfm if they do not already have one. If you have an ID already, you will notice that you have a new setup option that will enable traditional CA's to obtain access to the applicable contracts. If you do not know how to request a user ID and password or if you do not know how to obtain access to property information, Paulhaus & Associates has created a document that will help. You can access this document from the Documents link on the TRACS web page. http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/trx/trxdocs.cfm. It is called "Guide to HUD's Online Systems".

Traditional CA's can call the WASS help desk 888-245-4860 to get assistance with password and property setup. Please contact the Multifamily Help Desk to ask questions about TRACS, DAP, REMS or MDDR databases. 800-767-7588 or tracs@hud.gov or tracs_hotline@hud.gov or fax: 202-401-7984.

Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)

The goal of the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is to define systems support by their business function. This definition is presented at a "40,000 foot level" and provides information about how HUD supports the Rental Housing Assistance Module. The purpose is to provide job functions and descriptions and to define a statement of work for IT to perform analysis of the current systems.

Multi-family Housing and Public & Indian Housing (PIH) functions are included in the analysis.

Key functions are separated in to three categories.

1. Items that PIH and Housing have in common (i.e. funding).
2. Functions that are different at PIH (i.e. how financing is approved).
3. Housing functions with no relationship to PIH.

OMB has reviewed this module and said that PIH should also be included. Housing is committed to a business processing reengineering since most processes should be done online. The chief architect for the BPR is Dick Burke's (CIO).

HUD is aggressively trying to get this started and will establish an integrated project team with members of Housing and PIH, led by team member from the Information office.

Lanier estimates it will take two years to do the analysis and make a recommendation.

PIH and HUD have to involve their partners in this process. The *procurement* action is targeted to take place by 1st quarter 2005.

Voucher Payments

Individuals working in the multi-family industry usually are very vocal about the status and responsiveness of HUD representatives working to ensure timely payment of vouchers. Usually, there is extensive discussion relating to this topic at industry meetings.

Stillman Knight has noticed a decrease in inquiries and queried Lanier on the perceived improvement. Currently, Lanier's team bases the level of concern on the number of phone calls received at the HUD offices. Since they are getting very few calls or emails regarding HAP payments, they think HUD must be doing a good job of ensuring that the payments are made.

Mr. Knight has requested more definitive information regarding the status of voucher payments. As a result, HUD will begin a new project that will require HUD staff to start tracking vouchers that have not been paid and look for the reason payment has been delayed (renewal processing, etc)

After the analysis is done, HUD will determine if there is a need to "tweak" processes to ensure timely payment to CA's and owner/agents. The goal is to have the analysis done in 4 to 6 weeks.

Funding

The department has not gotten an approved operating plan yet for this (how much money OMB is going to provide). HUD has asked for an advance allotment for 3rd quarter 2004 to make sure money is available to fund contracts.

So far, HUD has provided the requests to OMB in a timely manner and there has been no problem getting the funding. Mr. Knight is committed to making sure there is no problem with funding for the remainder of the year.

Housing will also be discussing new ways to communicate information regarding funding to owner/agents.

The ATS Contract

HUD is in the process of procuring a new ATS contract. They are pushing this process as aggressively as possible. The new contract will have impact on all development initiatives including but not limited to:

- Race & Ethnicity
- Anticipated Child
- Percentage Compliance Reporting on a Portfolio Basis
- Access to a Database providing Information about Current Assistance (to be used during the application process)
- Voucher Form Updates

Once everything is approved, HUD will provide a schedule for implementing

HUD is committed to updating the voucher. Eileen Walker is working on recommendations on how to implement the voucher, including a schedule for rollout. This will fall under the new contract.

We received the following information in a subsequent memo sent after the meeting:

The HUD's standard forms are as follows:

• HUD-52670 - Housing Owner's Certification and Application for Housing Assistance Payments
• HUD-52670A-1 - Tenant Assistance Payments Due
• HUD-52670A-2 - Special Claims Schedule
• HUD-52671-A - Special Claims for Unpaid Rent/Damages
• HUD-52671-B - Special Claims for Vacancies During Rent-up
• HUD-52671-C - Special Claims for Regular Vacancies
• HUD-52671-D - Special Claims for Debt Service

DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of voucher and special claim forms will be delayed until further notice. The Office of Multifamily Housing Programs will publish a new timeline for providing industry specifications for changes to the Monthly Activity Transaction (MAT) guide and HUD forms; availability of TRACS test region for software vendors; and a TRACS implementation schedule for processing the new Monthly Activity Transactions (MAT) and submitting the new/revised HUD forms.

Willie Spearman's group is working on a tracking log for enhancements and will probably make a presentation at the next TRACS industry meeting.

Steve Martin is working with the Performance Based Contract Administrators (PBCAs) to identify important REMS data and allow them to download that data. His group has documented major data targets that need to be monitored, edited, extracted and downloaded.

This is targeted to be done in the next 90-120 days.

HUD will be moving from the current Netscape standard to Internet Explorer in April 2004. Some industry partners may be impacted if they using an older version of Netscape.

HUD is also moving to 128-bit security. The 128-bit security requirement will be mandatory by August 2004.

Compliance Enforcement

At this point in the meeting, there were several questions from the group.

Frank Shofner asked how the enforcement of compliance percentages is coming along.

Lanier indicated that there would be a discussion regarding the compliance percentage, but he did provide additional information regarding HUD's approach. First of all, there are three parties responsible for Tenant Optimum Compliance requirements.

- HUD – For HUD administered contracts
- PBCAs for Section 8 contracts administered by PBCAs
- Traditional CA's which receive payment through HUDcaps

Some traditional CAs are also PBCAs. Out of 404 Traditional CAs, 13 administer roughly 50% of the traditional CA portfolio.

Based on how owner/agents are paid, HUD can currently suspend payment for HUD administered and PBCA administered contracts. HUDcaps will require compliance from traditional CA's as well.

The field offices need to be included in this process since they are communicating with the CA's. HUD has created a report for field offices that will provide compliance percentages for the entire field office and for each contract. All the field offices will have access to obtain the information. Field offices can obtain information for all contracts included in their portfolio.

HUD is mailing letters to Traditional CAs about Tenant Optimum Compliance.

Cheryl Paulhas asked how HUD was going to track vouchers that are not going to be paid. She has concerns based on her own investigation of certification that have not been paid.

Lanier responded that they are looking at interruptions of voucher payments. He said they do not see many voucher errors that have never been cleared up. For those vouchers that were paid after an interruption of normal process, HUD needs to investigate to discover what happened. They are trying to determine what the cause is and what to do to prevent future delays.

Owner/agents should be talking to their CA or PBCA if they are experiencing voucher interruption.

Alan Sharkey expressed concern that the CA and PBCA databases don't match the TRACS database. He suggested that HUD implement a process to notify CA's if payment is pending suspension.

Lanier stated that there is currently no way to do that. CAs and PBCAs need to monitor the TRACS database and contact TRACS staff about any issues.

Alan expressed concern because it is common for information to be sent to the TRACS database but the information does not get in to the TRACS system.

HUD can only make decisions based on the information in the TRACS database. If a voucher is not being paid. Owner/Agents (OA) need to call and see why payments are not made. HUD does not want to stop payment, but they lack the manpower to inquire about every discrepancy.

Alan also asked when payment suspension would start.

Voucher suspension for CAs and PBCAs starts in April 2004.

A request was made to delay the implementation of voucher suspension based on non-compliance and Lanier said he would think about it.

David Kessler asked what percentage of contracts was being affected by the voucher suspension. That information is not readily available.

There was a question asking why owner/agents are being penalized when there are errors caused by the TRACS system.

Lanier indicated that if there were a valid reason why the data was not accurate, the OA would be paid.

Fred Hutchins stated that HUD field offices need to be apprised of the problems in the TRACS system.

Lanier indicated that they need to put together a focus group for the PBCA and CAOM. He also indicated that they will never expect 100% accuracy but some kind of guidance should be provided. Possibly in the PBCA guidebook. He stressed again that HUD tries to make sure that the owner gets paid and that payment is up to the discretion of the PBCA for those contracts administered by PBCAs.

Lanier also mentioned that he would like to see a focus group consisting of all the PBCAs and CA's. The goal is to have a focus group meeting at the next TRACS industry meeting. Sam Ausmus mentioned that NAHMA is also trying to organize a focus group for the CAs at their Fall Meeting in October.

The goal of the focus group would be to take existing policies and procedures, identify areas of concern and create an updated policy and procedure guide. This will help eliminate some of the inconsistencies in practices from state to state.

A suggestion was made to re-energize the focus groups, but not to start from scratch. The inconsistencies need to be documented before a meeting takes places. Examples of inconsistencies are the 85% compliance, handling dual tenancy issues, when CA's should terminate late annual certifications and other changes in the handbook.

Software vendors, consultants, service bureaus, trainers and other industry professionals who have ownership in these processes should be included in the meeting

There are concerns, specifically impacted by software, that need to be addressed as well. For example, some site software is sending future certifications as part of a baseline. The certifications make it through the CA software, and then fatal at TRACS. Corrections are also making it out of site and CA software, and then failing at TRACS. The industry needs to immediately come up with answers and get the vendors on board. The vendors need to be consistent. For example, F0171 (HQ Move Out) will only accept a date for that HQ Move Out or prior. This needs to be fixed. It is hard to get a consistent date in the site software.

Colleen Bloom brought up the fact that some sites have not been submitting to TRACS at all. She asked if HUD could require that they procure the services of a service bureau until their information can be reconciled.

Lanier indicated that withholding payment was the best way to ensure that this action was taken by the OA.

Voucher and Tenant Query Screens – Bob Barrick

The property compliance information is provided through the Voucher Query. Changes will take place at the end of April.

This is how the Compliance Percentage Calculation works:

TRACS Active Tenant Count relative to the "Current Voucher Submission" Date
Divided by
"Regular Units Billed" Count on incoming voucher, regardless of Voucher Date.

What is the TRACS Active Tenant Count? Relative to any given contract, it is a count of households based on the latest of all household certification actions (in terms of certification effective date), starting 13 months prior to the "Current Voucher Submission" date.

Compliance Determination During Voucher Payment Process—Example

Voucher Period	April, 2004
Contract Number:	ZZ12-3456-789
TRACS Processing Date:	3/5/2004
TRACS Active Tenant Count as of 3/5/2004	93
Voucher Date:	4/1/2004
Regular Units Billed Count:	100
Compliance Percentage	: 93%
Compliance Percentage calculated at time of voucher submission is stored in TRACS.	

Move-Outs and Assistance Terminations occurring on or before "Current Voucher Submission" Date are excluded from the count. The TRACS Active Tenant Count is updated on a nightly basis.

Currently, the compliance percentage calculated at the time of the voucher submission is stored in TRACS.

Changes in the TRACS Database:

During HUD prepayment review, the "Most Recent Compliance Percentage" is available to reviewer—from most recent voucher. Upon acceptance/rejection, "Most Recent Compliance Percentage" is also stored in TRACS, associated with the subject voucher.

Other Enhancements Underway:

- Auto-release feature for suspended vouchers (by the end of April)
- Expanded compliance reporting, updated daily (asked for suggestions on data to include in this report)

At the end of April, the Certification Query and Voucher Query headers will include the active tenant count information / units calculation used to provide the compliance percentage at the time of the query. This means the information is updated daily instead of at the time the voucher was processed.

The impact here is substantial. Currently, since voucher compliance percentages are calculated when vouchers are processed, vouchers that have been suspended will have to be released manually. HUD will have to be contacted, but it is uncertain who to contact or how to contact them. Bob asked Lanier to notify the industry on who to call in those cases. We are waiting for information from Lanier.

When the daily compliance percentage calculation is implemented, suspended vouchers will be automatically released when TRACS receives appropriate data to bring the contract compliance percentage above 85%.

The development team also plans to release a new report to allow CA's to download reports for an entire portfolio. They will notify us when this option is available.

If there are other suggestions, please let Bob Barrick know.

Debbie Hixson asked if there was any way to receive notification if a voucher compliance percentage slips below 85%. Perhaps HUD could send an error.

Lanier said he would consider this.

Industry Specifications for New Voucher Form – Eileen Walker

Eileen is behind schedule on getting back to the working groups. They are revisiting the issue of the forms altogether. If the forms are redesigned, they have to go back to OMB for approval. The forms are effective for the July 2004 voucher. ***Note, this has since been delayed. See information above.***

The definitions of unit counts need to be added to the MAT Guide. They are not cast in concrete yet. The working group will firm up the definitions in the next couple of weeks and announce the final results in April. They will deliver the TRACS change by the end of July.

Draft Definitions of Unit Counts:

> 6a – Total Units in contract: Maximum number of residential spaces for which assistance may be claimed under the contract. If multiple occupancy is permitted, then the type of residential space qualifying for assistance (e.g. “beds”) must be specified in the assistance contract. This requires a change to TRACS.
>
> 6b – Number of Units receiving subsidy under the contract: The number of residential spaces in 6a for which regular assistance is claimed for the entire month. (Units receiving assistance for a partial month will be counted as vacant or market)
>
> 6c – Number of Units abated under this contract: Residential spaces in 6a where a formal cessation of assistance is in effect for the voucher month, e.g. due to natural disaster or health and safety reasons
>
> 6d – Number of Units vacant under this contract: The number of residential spaces in 6a that are no longer occupied. (This also includes any unit without a full month of assistance)
>
> 6e – Number occupied by Market Rate Tenants: The number of residential spaces in 6a occupied by tenants responsible for paying market rent in the voucher month. If 6a includes a unit occupied by the property manager, account for it in this category.

Some sites are not terminating residents who are late to recertify and moving them to market. Instead, they are submitting a certification for $0 subsidy. These should not show as assisted units. They should show as market renters.

For item 6b, what day do you use to count the vacant units? The unit should be vacant as of the 1st of which month? Do you use the month that you are in when you run the voucher or the actual voucher month? Look at whether the tenant is on the voucher for the whole month.

MAT30 Format Changes:

- Add abated units
- Revise edit on total units
- MAT guide update target date is 3/2004
- TRACS release target date is 7/2004.

Several software vendors expressed concerns about shipping updates in time to implement the new forms as of the July voucher (June 2004) and then having to send another update to accommodate TRACS changes. It was suggested that the implementation of the forms be delayed until the TRACS changes have been made, resulting in one software update this year. Eileen said they might delay the forms until the September voucher. The industry would need to receive another memo from Stillman Knight with a revised timeline. This MAT change will be named 2.0.1C to distinguish it from the current version.

UPDATE: Lanier Hylton sent a memo to the industry on Tuesday, March 23, 2004 stating that HUD had delayed implementation of the new special claims and voucher forms indefinitely.

For group occupancies, those contracts may need to be amended to establish unit counts that include the number of beds.

Number Units in Billing:

- Regular Assistance Billed Units (9a) must be valued
- Regular Assistance Billed Units should equal Units Receiving Subsidy (9a=6b)
- Add an edit to test equality

HUD 526701A Part 1 (3/13/2003)

- Portrait format is acceptable. The form can print multiple lines per tenant.
- Should HUD require portrait format for uniformity?
- The Voucher Working Group will review the requirements to itemize retroactive adjustments by month.
- The Voucher Working Group will also review adding additional space for adjustment explanations.

HUD will allow flexibility on the unit address by accepting abbreviations. This will be considered when redesigning the form.

Some CAs stated that the form layout needs to be consistent. They also asked that the font not be too small since the voucher is faxed. Also, subsidy adjustments should be a summary and not detailed entry. Possibly another report could be added that provides the detail explaining voucher adjustments.

Additional changes to forms HUD 52670 and 52670A Part 1 and 2 are under consideration. Send comments on the Industry meeting discussion or additional issues regarding the voucher forms to HSNG_MF_FINANCIAL@HUD.GOV with Voucher Forms in the subject line.

There was also some discussion about implementation of the new Voucher Fatal error pertaining to mistakes in the unit count. Jeanette Claus suggested that implementation of this fatal error is delayed until there is a decision on how to handle properties that must base unit count on the number of beds. She also suggested that the Field Offices should be directed to provide CA's or OA's with HUD's estimation of the number of beds for these contracts.

Sam Ausmus asked if HUD was still planning the 201C release.

Eileen said that they are still planning for 201C.

Industry Webcast

Earned Income Tax Credit – Gregory Ford

Why is the IRS interested in HUD interagency partnerships?

- To ensure all eligible families receive tax benefits for which they are entitled
- Shared mission to assist working families
- Low income workers have a fear/mistrust of their government, specifically the IRS
- Use trusted organizations to distribute materials

PBCA Awards – Lanier Hylton

The performance-based contracts in Connecticut and Virginia were recently awarded to Jefferson County.

There are seven remaining geographic areas that do not have PBCAs:

1. Arkansas
2. Northern California
3. District of Columbia
4. Florida
5. Illinois
6. Nebraska
7. Utah

HUD is still working on the award process for the remaining states. The next steps in the process are:

- Forward recommendation
- Congressional notification
- Award letter to selected PBCA
- Debriefing of losing applicants
- Post winner on HACAO web page

The contracts are being awarded as each application is completed. Lanier did not know when the final seven contracts would be awarded since the Office of Housing does not control that process. The process goes through the FHA Commissioner and can take 4-8 weeks.

Special Claims – Lanier Hylton

A Special Claim allows owners to request reimbursement for

- Damages
- Debt Service
- Vacancy
- Rent up
- Unpaid Rent

OA's can only have one claim type per claim approval number.

The Special Claims User's Guide is still in the review process because of lack of concurrence from the General Council. Lanier hopes they will be able to clear up the comments in the next 8 weeks, and then submit for public comment.

There will be a new online system used to automate the approval process for special claims. ***The HUD Field Offices*** have a new web application (intranet only) that they are required to use in order to process, review and approve any special claims submitted after June 30, 2004. A new 14-digit approval number replaces old 9-digit number. TRACS will only accept 14-digit approval numbers created by the special claims application for claims submitted on or after July 1, 2004.

A 1999 Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit of special claims on a sample basis of properties showed a 40% error rate.

Optimum Compliance Phase II – Lanier Hylton

A PD&R Study of 17 benefits programs showed over/under payments totaling $35 billion in fiscal year 2002. The top five programs on the list were Earned Income Tax Credit, Housing, Unemployment Insurance, Food Stamps, and Supplemental Security Income.

In response to this study, HUD initiated the Rental Housing Integrity Initiative Program (RHIIP). Under this program, HUD has updated the 4350.3, trained HUD staff on occupancy, and focused on optimum tenant compliance.

Optimum tenant compliance builds on the requirements of the automation rule, which requires owners to submit accurate data through TRACS. Site data must be correct and transmitted electronically. This applies to owners and PBCA/CAs. Rent Supplement, RAP, PAC and PRAC contracts are included in these requirements.

HUD will check each month's voucher request and compare it with TRACS tenant data to determine the compliance percentage for that contract. The goal is 100% compliance.

Compliance percentages under 85% will generate a broadcast notification from TRACS e-mail. The site will be given an opportunity to provide data and correct discrepancies. These sites are also subject to suspension. HUD will probably suspend payment on the worst violators first.

In March 2004, HQ staff will provide a report to field offices identifying compliance percentages for all contracts. Voucher payment requests for April will be subject to suspension under Optimum Tenant Compliance.

Reports – Denny Saulman

Four new web reports for the intranet and internet were recently implemented in February 2004:

- Assistance Payment
- Late Re-certifications,
- Certifications with Discrepancies
- Contract/Project Based Voucher Summary.

These reports can be reviewed in the TRACS Systems provided through HUD's Secure System.

Mass Conversion – Lanier Hylton

There will be a change in payment method for non-PBCA contracts. HUD and PBCAs are paid through LOCCS. Non-PBCAs (ACCs) are managed through FMC and paid through HUDCAPS. Non-PBCA payment processing will be converted from HUDCAPS to LOCCS.

Non-PBCAs who are not transmitting to TRACS will no longer receive monthly subsidy payments.

CA administration fees will be included on the monthly voucher as a Miscellaneous Accounting entry.

A final settlement will be prepared as of the conversion date.

Over/under payments will be included on a subsequent monthly voucher as a miscellaneous increase or decrease.

The target date to complete the conversion is August 2005.

TASS – Elking Tarver

Overview of Capabilities

TASS is a web-based income verification application that is accessed through HUD secure server.
It matches tenant information to Social Security benefit information (SS/SSI).

TASS provides three reports for users: Benefit History Report, Income Discrepancy Report, and Error Report. An enhanced search capability has been implemented to provide information for all household members-not just members receiving benefits

Reports are created four months prior to recertification month. The TASS reports have been updated to reflect COLA increases effective January, February and March

Benefits Reports can be accessed by Head of Household SSN, Contract Number, or Project Number.

Error reports provide information about tenants whose identity could not be verified by SSA

Dual entitlement displays tenant records with multiple entitlement (multiple claim numbers)

The Medicare buy-in code was added.

A start and end date for SS/SSI benefits was added to the Income Discrepancy Report

Online screen-based help and the TASS User Guide have been added to assist with use of this information.

HUD is looking in to adding the ability to query about other sources of income which impact rent calculation including child support.

In the most recent appropriations bill, HUD and Health and Human Services got a bill passed to get access to the new hire database – obtaining access is a long-term goal. Watch for additional information. There are several steps that must be taken in order to obtain rights to access this information.

Income Matching – Lanier Hylton

On a related side note, the Office of Housing (OOH) was contacted by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). The OIG has been working with Public Housing to identify fraudulent cases to pursue. OIG is working with OOH to see if they can participate assist in the RHIIP initiative to aggressively pursue identified fraud.

Willie Spearman is the department representative for RHIIP. Information is distributed through the RHIIP newsletter, TRACS web page and e-mail to external partners.

DAY 2

Opening Remarks – Lanier Hylton

HUD needs to get back to the industry on the implementation of the new special claims and voucher forms. They will get a notice out to extend the timeframe for implementation.

OMB is allowed a minimum of 90 days to review changes in forms. We must decide by April if we are going to make changes to the voucher form before it is implemented.

Gustavo Sapiurka asked for 1-2 hours at the next industry meeting for the software vendors to meet. Lanier said that was okay as long as we publish an agenda.

The automation of special claims applies to whole industry. TRACS will only accept a 14-digit approval ID after July 1, 2004. HUD field offices should be using the 14-digit number. There is no way to convert a 9-digit number to 14-digits.

A question was raised about getting rid of retroactive rent increases. Lanier said it would be hard to commit to that. Bev Miller may address this in the revision of the 4350.1, which is being released in chapters. A comment was made that the problem was bad customer data, not an issue with the software.

Lanier will keep us updated on a development initiative for 2005 to download tenant data by contract.

HUD is delaying optimum tenant compliance implementation for Traditional CAs until they can get access to WASS.

Webcast and Meeting Presentations

There were 120 outside participants in the March 10th webcast. Some people who attended the meeting in Washington, DC did not like having the webcast during the TRACS meeting. Some felt like the time could have been used more productively. Lanier said they might have it after the TRACS meeting next time.

Slide presentations from the Industry Meeting will be posted by Monday, March 15 at the latest. The old slides will remain available as well. Presentation slides can be found at http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/trx/trxmeet.cfm

Link to TASS

The link for Social Security is still down because the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Social Security expired. Another MOU is in the process, but will probably take at least 45 days to complete.

A request was made to add MAT errors to Secure Systems in addition to the tenant errors. This would be very useful information in the tenant query.

Next TRACS Meeting

The next TRACS Industry Meeting is tentatively set for June 16-17.

4350.3 Occupancy Handbook – Bob Wilson/Jed Graef

Jed has been extracting business requirements from the 4350.3 to see what can be automated.

Another crew is going through the TRACS code and documenting business requirements. The two lists will be compared to synchronize the items.

Jed is looking for input from the industry to include in the business requirements. If the handbook does not provide correct information, if the handbook is unclear, or if there is missing information, please let Jed know so additional clarification can be provided.

The following issues were also discussed:

A proposal is being written for transmitting a move out for a market renter. If the last action is a termination and the next activity for the unit is a move-in, TRACS should throw away the old tenant. There needs to be an automated way to discard these tenants in these situations.

We no longer have time frames for signatures. All adult members have to sign the lease and the 50059 – what if they're at college, in Iraq, etc.? If there are extenuating circumstances, how do you validate the move-in?

We need a flag to indicate a waiver of eligibility.

We need to define a CA's position for HQ terminations after 15 months.

We need clarification on tenants who are unable to sign. Does that only apply to the Head of Household? You should transmit the Head of Household signature date.

Does the voucher have to be signed? If so, which pages? The 4350 no longer requires that a paper copy has to be sent anywhere. Do the paper copies have to be stored? Can they be scanned? Lanier said there is no problem with using technology to store vouchers as long as you can retrieve them for audit purposes, but he wants to see one with a signature. Are electronic signatures okay? We need to establish a standard. Private industry already has best practices.

There are inconsistencies among forms across the states. Everyone customizes the forms.

What is the purpose of MAT15 records? There are lots of technical issues with these records. This is the largest growing area of problems that impact software. There are many different purposes for that area of functionality, one being tenant income verification purposes. If you do not have a project number, every move-in and transfer should be accompanied by a MAT15. TRACS does not want a MAT15 for vacant units.

We need clarification on special claims adjustment calculations for claims spanning multiple months.

For $1 rounding issues, accept the site value if the number is only off by $1. TRACS will ignore the $1 difference. HUD will be writing up detailed calculation algorhythms so everyone can update their software.

The FAQs cannot be used to set policy. They are only for clarification. In the case of verificiations being good for 120 days, HUD is fixing the policy.

Will vouchers payments be changed to pay for the current month as opposed to submitting them in advance? This will be discussed as part of the BPR. The rest of the world works that way, but it does not allow enough time for the CAs to review the vouchers.

Instead of using all 9's for a Social Security number, can a site request a unique tenant ID before a certification is sent to TRACS?

How do you handle mid-month interims for unit transfers? The old handbook said the change in rent is effective on the date of the transfer. The new 4350 does not address this. Changes in composition should be dealt with as a separate issue in an interim.

Are we looking at getting rid of partial certifications and making everything a full certification? This will be raised as an issue. You will need to submit two dates since partials do not recertify anyone. The MAT10 would have to be more complex.

This information will also be used for the BPR. Jed is writing up global issues such as the lack of unique unit identifiers, better definitions of project, and better concepts of a household. HUD also has an internal Handbook Working Group that is working on changes.

If you have additional comments, send them to jed_r._graef@hud.gov soon.

TRACS Multifamily Helpdesk – Caitlin Shea

How to contact the Multifamily Help Desk:

- 800-767-7588
- tracs@hud.gov
- tracs_hotline@hud.gov
- Fax: 202-401-7984

Multifamily Helpdesk Supported Applications:

- TRACS – Tenant Rental Assistance Certification System
- DAP – Development Application System
- REMS – Real Estate Management System
- MDDR – Multifamily Delinquency and Reporting System

TRACSMail Support Functions:

- TRACSMail account usage verification
- Over 1,700 e-mailed and faxed responses received
- Account Deactivation
- Account Reactivation
- New Account Creation
- Delegated Administrator Cleanup
- Delegated Admin/TRACSMail Security

The HQ Initiated Move-Out Request form is located at
http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/trx/trxdocs.cfm.

Some reasons for using this request:

- The initial move out failed in TRACS. My software will not allow me to create and submit another MAT40 for this tenant.
- Software has never allowed a MAT40 for a particular tenant.
- Due to a change in ownership/management, tenant no longer exists portfolio.

WASS Discussion – James Washington

If you are having problems with WASS, try to download Netscape 4.76. Only call the WASS help desk if your question pertains to setup issues.

The biggest problem encountered when working with WASS is that property Coordinators do not know that their job is to provide access to all HUD systems. Many are unfamiliar with how to perform setup functions.

There is a user's manual posted on the website. http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/trx/trxngde.cfm

The coordinator should help users with ID problems.

When assigning roles to a user, coordinator should not give them every right.

If a user cannot see a property, make sure the site is attached to the ID using the Property Assignment Maintenance option.

Coordinators should create an ID, assign roles, and attach a property, and make sure the property is active.

A coordinator takes 7-10 business days to set up when all paperwork has been done correctly and there are not old coordinator files associated with the entitiy. A user takes 48-72 hours.

You cannot swap IDs with coworkers. You must go online and register. Social Security numbers identifies users.