Delivering Services to Citizens: The HUD Story

Presentation by Candi Harrison
for E-Gov 2000

July 10, 2000

Background

- First HUD web site posted April 1995
- First job of Web Manager: define the purpose of the web site
- Talked to people to find out what they thought HUD should do with the web
  - George Latimer: focus on citizens
  - Mom: organize from the audience's point of view
  - Henry Cisneros: it's not about HUD — it's about homes and communities

Background: Statement of Purpose

HUD's Homes and Communities Page is a clearinghouse of information and services about homes and communities for citizens and for our current and potential business partners. It's designed to empower citizens and business partners by giving them what they want, when they want it, in ways that make sense to them, so they can solve their own problems and achieve their objectives.

Background (cont'd)

- HUD's first web site had about 5 pages
- Many, many growing pains along the way!
- It's a process

HUD
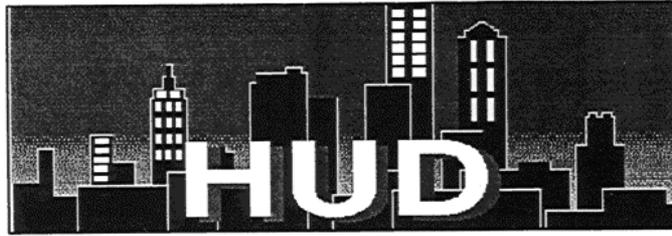
An Introduction to

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD Officials

Programs at HUD

What Program Areas are Doing

HUD Asset Sales

The HUD Gopher

HUD Offices

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Homes and Communities Page

Homes | Featured Items | Community Center | You The Citizen

What's New!

Now Showing: Role of Fathers in Public Housing

Library | Market Place | About HUD | Town Hall

ENTER **FRAMES** MODE

Community Center: Information about and for communities including community plans; ideas that work; funding opportunities, guidance, and technical assistance for non-profits and community organizers; volunteer possibilities; and links to community building web sites

Homes: Information about buying and renting homes; housing options for people with low incomes; fair housing laws; housing counseling; FHA premium refunds and third party tracers; and links to other housing related web sites

Market Place: Information and opportunities for HUD's business partners and potential partners; asset sales; forms; HUD's NOFA Schedule; and links to other business web sites

Library: HUD's research site HUD User; downloadable documents; 800 numbers; and a catalog of housing and community related web sites

Town Hall: A place to meet and "chat" about public policy issues.

HUD: Transformation plans; staff directory; information from HUD's five major program areas Community Planning and Development, Housing (FHA), Public and Indian Housing, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, and Ginnie Mae; other major offices; HUD's Inspector General; and links to HUD's Local Offices

You, The Citizen: Tips on how you can use the information on HUD's home page to become an empowered citizen

We welcome your comments and suggestions!
Send them to Candi Harrison
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Search   Guestbook

Please read this disclaimer

Visitor's Center
272852
Since 7/1/96

site guide · local offices · guestbook
about hud · library · complaints

Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20410

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES
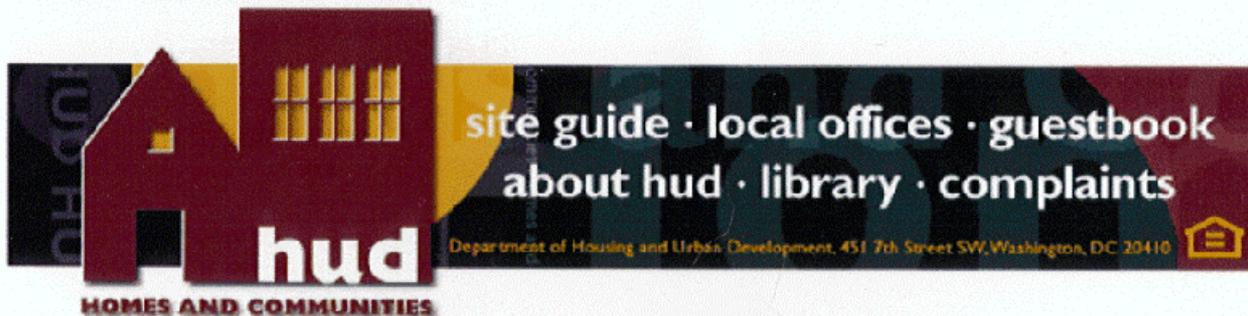
hud highlights

state of the cities
report

Community
Empowerment
Conference

notice of funding
availability/notice
inviting applications

ez round II application
notice

more highlights...

HUD News

**HUD On Your Side:
Consumer Information**

Communities

Homes

Business Opportunities

Groups

Kids Next Door

Let's Talk

Quick Overview

- HUD's web site organized in two basic ways:
    - 16 topics — general categories like "own a home" and "rental help"
    - 28 audience groups — pages designed for specific customer groups
- Don't have to know HUD organization to use the web site

homes and communities
US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

topics

hud news
own a home
rental help
homeless
your community
business
contracts
consumer info
complaints
about hud
reading room
handbooks/forms
kids
let's talk
local info
fed one-stops

search

GO

community news

The Community of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is comprised of four group homes housing thirty developmentally disabled men from the metropolitan Kansas City area who require 24-hour care. It provides quality care and ensuring the residents lead a life of dignity and respect. CGS staff, parents, and volunteers all contribute their time and resources in helping maintain the homes and improve the lifestyle of the residents. Visit our best practices database.

hud highlights

Daily message
National Calendar of Events
HUD's Community Technology Centers
HUD-Treasury to Curb Predatory Lending
State of the Cities
Funds available/SuperNOFA
Best Practices - Symposium Registration - New
Web Clinics for HUD Partners - New Cities!

homes for sale

Find a home

pick your group

First Time Homebuyers
Senior Citizens
Veterans
Women
People With Disabilities
Farmworkers
Native Americans
Students/Researchers
Lenders
Real Estate Brokers
Appraisers
Empowerment Zones
PHAs/Tribes
NonProfits
Grantees
Community/Interfaith Groups
Elected Officials
Multifamily Industry
Homeless Assistance Providers
Fair Housing/Civil Rights
Black Colleges/Universities
Small Businesses
International Partners
Health Care Facilities Providers
Auditors/Investigators
Investors
State/Local Government
Third Party Tracers

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Privacy Statement   Last modified: June 21, 2000

Quick Overview (cont'd)

- Featured best practice: drawn from our database of best practices
- Highlights: current hot topics
- Homes for sale: most popular page on the site!
- Audience groups: one-stop shopping
- Reading Room: if you can't find it anyplace else, check the library!
- Bookshelf 15: web documents
- Federal One Stops: cross-agency web sites targeted on specific consumer groups
- HUD's web site over a million pages, if printed

What are We Doing Well? Consistent Look and Feel

- Looks like "one HUD"
- "McDonalds approach"

What are We Doing Well? Webcasts

Live presentations and archived videos online

- 150 hours of webcasts — grant training sessions, PSAs, press conferences, and others

- 500 webcast users subscribe to mailing list

- 11,000 visitors viewed one or more webcasts in the past year

- All webcasts on grant applications available in English and Spanish

- Received a Hammer Award for our innovative use of webcasting

What are We Doing Well? Chats

Chat online in one of our 15 forums.

- Some chats used as online meetings — password protected and moderated
- Some chats just open
- Hope to develop these more:
  - town hall meetings about policy issues
  - Q&A with HUD officials
  - etc.

What are we doing well? Interactive Citizen Services

- Search for homes for sale — not just from HUD
- Find out if you're owed a refund of your FHA mortgage insurance premium
- Search for HUD-approved lenders, condos, and planned developments
- Use interactive maps, showing where HUD projects are located
- File a fair housing complaint — more than 400 in past 6 months

What are We Doing Well? Interactive Services (cont'd)

- File hotline complaints — more than 250 complaints in past year
- Find ideas that work in communities from nearly 3,000 "best practices"
- Browse through all HUD handbooks and publications
- Print out and use HUD forms
- Purchase HUD research reports online

What are We Doing Well? Educating Citizens

- Teach citizens how to do things (like buy a home) in terms they can understand

What are We Doing Well? Online Business Processes

- FHA Connection — nearly 200,000 transactions each day

- 28,800 physical inspection reports submitted to Real Estate Assessment Center

- 3,200 housing agencies used PIH Information Center (PIC) to submit and review inventory data, since it opened December 1999

What are We Doing Well? Marketing

It's not enough to build a good product...you have to tell people about it.

- Go to the audience: find opportunities to demo the web site
- Leave a calling card: distribute brochures and small tokens to promote the web site
- Listen to the audience: focus groups
- Educate the staff: teach staff how to use the web page so they can help customers

How Do We Know We're Successful?

- Awards:
  - 2 years on "Best Feds On the Web" — *Government Executive* Magazine
  - Intergovernmental Advisory Board and GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy, in its report on *Governments Using Technology to Serve the Citizen*, called HUD's web site, "wonderful…an excellent example of how to exploit the web to better serve citizens"

How Do We Know We're Successful? (cont'd)

- Increased traffic
  - Number of visitors doubled each year
  - 600,000 discreet visitors in April; 1.5 million visits
  - 75% of HUD's web site users identify themselves as "citizens"
- Feedback: Single mom story

How Else Do We Deliver Services to Citizens?

- HUD Answer Machines: Computers located in every HUD office, offering free access to HUD's web site

How Else Do We Deliver Services to Citizens? (cont'd)

- HUD Next Door Kiosks
  - Web-based "ATMs" provide basic information to the public
  - Located in public spaces across the country (malls, grocery stores, Walmarts, libraries)
  - Use "top layer" of HUD's web site, so content is consistent, current, interactive

How Else Do We Deliver Services to Citizens? (cont'd)

- Traveling kiosks
    - Mini versions of kiosk, used to demo both kiosk content and HUD's web site
    - Used at more than 220 state fairs, senior expos, homebuyer fairs, home and garden shows, and other public events in past 6 months

What's Next?
Turn up the Burner

Get "e-government" on the radar screen of all Department managers.

- Achievements resulted from grass roots efforts

- Need to integrate e-gov initiatives in Department management planning

- Distinguish between "e-commerce" (doing business with our partners) and "e-government" (providing services to citizens)

  - And get managers to focus as much attention on the latter as they do on the former

What's Next?
Turn up the Burner (cont'd)

- Figure out two things:
    - How to use the web to automate what we already do
    - What other services we could provide that were not possible, before the web
        - e.g., could we marry up with PHA web sites so that citizens could learn generic info from the HUD home page and then go seamlessly to local PHA web sites to apply online, see where they are on waiting lists, and find other PHAs that have shorter waiting lists?

What's Next?
Turn up the Burner (cont'd)

- Deputy Secretary's Task Force on Web Management

  - Made recommendations on staffing, training, and changing the culture

  - Recommended separate but compatible advocates for e-gov: Deputy Secretary/Department Web Manager to lead determination of "what" and CIO to lead determination of "how"

What's Next?
Turn up the Burner (cont'd)

- Look at obvious targets:

  - Forms (particularly public use forms) — how can we consolidate, reengineer, automate?

  - Current systems — what info do they contain that we might strain off and package, for citizens?

    - e.g., could we let citizens track their FHA loan applications the same way they can track a Fed Ex package, online?

What's Next?
Web Clinics

Helping our partners create web sites that deliver the services we fund

- Teach how to manage a web site, how to market, how to create ("write") a web site, how to get tech support for free

- Providing companion software that builds the web site for them

- 11 completed; 4 more scheduled over the summer

Summary

- E-gov is alive and well at HUD, largely due to basic good advice, heeded from the beginning:
    - Focus on citizens
    - Organize information from the audience's point of view
    - It's not about HUD — it's about homes and communities
- Challenge is to evolve from grass roots efforts to comprehensive management strategy