
FW: HUD Exchange Content Management Update

From Schelling, John D <John.D.Schelling@hud.gov>

Date Mon 2/10/2025 8:03 AM

To SEA Seattle CPD <SEA_Seattle_CPD@hud.gov>

FYSA, below, regarding HUD Exchange Content

John

John D. Schelling, MPA

Director | Community Planning & Development | Seattle Regional Office

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From: CommunityCompass <CommunityCompass@hud.gov>

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 3:46 PM

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Subject: HUD Exchange Content Management Update

Good evening HUD TA Partners,

I am writing with an update regarding HUD Exchange (HUDx) content management, for your awareness and action as appropriate.

EFFORTS TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY OF HUD EXCHANGE WITH ADMINISTRATION POLICY OBJECTIVES

Over the last few weeks, the Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) assumed responsibility for assessing HUDx for consistency with Administration policy objectives. As of February 4, OTA has completed that assessment and took corresponding action to bring the site into functional compliance with all available guidance.

To achieve that functionally compliant status, OTA directed the HUDx site operator to flag all materials that implicated any explicit key term-of-art included in recent Executive Orders relating to DEIA, environmental justice, and gender ideology and then to proactively archive those materials in which the term was used in the context of the Executive Orders rather than its plain language use. The scan flagged 7000 unique items and resulted in 3,300 updates over the course of approximately one week. For context, HUD Exchange typically manages 75 updates per week. Further, flagged materials compose approximately three percent (3%) of all HUD Exchange content.

The approach resulted in many broken links or phantom search results, which we are working with the HUDx site operator to resolve on an ongoing basis. We fully recognize how this approach has impacted your ability to deploy technical assistance, and we appreciate your patience and partnership in swiftly and diligently executing it.

We now shift into a phase of carefully assessing the flagged materials to determine whether any additional action is necessary to meet our dual mandate: preserve functional compliance and promote the utility of HUDx for HUD stakeholder organizations. Toward this end, on Monday OTA will provide program offices with access to a log of all flagged content and instructions for assessing the content, recommending additional actions, and requesting content to be re-published upon approval of HUD political leadership. We invite you to engage our HUD Exchange team early and often, for guidance and assistance with implementing the assessment phase.

OTA anticipates receiving additional guidance from counsel soon, and we will immediately relay any change in our approach to ensuring HUD technical assistance and HUD Exchange meet Administration policy objectives.

PROCESS FOR PUBLISHING NEW MATERIAL AND/OR RE-PUBLISHING ARCHIVED MATERIAL

As previously noted in my January 24 email, PD&R issued an indefinite stop on publication or distribution of technical assistance via HUDx, including file uploads, page updates, and listserv messages, except for those changes necessary to ensure consistency with Administration policy objectives.

Today HUD leadership approved a process for resuming publication of technical assistance materials to HUD Exchange (HUDx) and for distributing messages to HUDx listservs.

Program offices shall provide the relevant content and a memorandum from a political leader listed below that specifies the approved content via email to HUDexchange@hud.gov. The OTA HUDx team will validate required approvals and relay the materials to the HUDx site operator for publication or distribution.

The political leaders are as follows:

- PDAS Dave Woll for CPD
- PDAS Ben Hobbs for PIH
- John Ligon for Housing/FHA
- Scott Knittle in OGC for FHEO

Program offices not represented by a leader on the list may send requests for technical assistance materials to be published to HUD Exchange or distributed to a HUDx listserv to Stephanie Stone. PD&R leadership will elevate those requests for HUD leadership approval.

In partnership,
Stephanie

From: Stone, Stephanie V <Stephanie.V.Stone@hud.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 8:56 AM
Subject: Update on DEI/EJ EO Implementation for HUD TA Programs
Importance: High

Dear HUD Program Office Partners,

As you may be aware, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a memo Wednesday providing [initial guidance regarding the DEIA-related Executive Orders](#). Late Wednesday, OTA was directed to take swift action to demonstrate compliance with the 5:00 PM deadline. OTA immediately assumed responsibility for reviewing active technical assistance (TA) web content and work plans to flag, assess, and halt any work inconsistent with the recent Executive Order and OPM implementation memo. This email provides context for the actions OTA has taken regarding TA delivery and HUD Exchange, as well as anticipated next steps. I have included on this email program office leadership, managers, and all GTMs who are involved in the three HUD TA programs, for awareness. We are sending a similar email to all TA Providers this evening as well, so that everyone is on the same page.

I want to acknowledge that TA values partnership grounded in clear communication. While I would have preferred to provide advance notice before directing changes, the urgency of the situation required immediate action. Moving forward, OTA is committed to updating this distribution group as we receive additional guidance and take appropriate action to ensure compliance.

Our motto and commitment is “no surprises.” To best position the TA program, please instruct your teams to follow our guidance and pause activities that could be considered inconsistent with the Executive Order and OPM memo until OTA can complete a review and provide a determination.

In partnership,

Stephanie

Stephanie Stone

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Technical Assistance
Office of Policy Development & Research
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Tel: (202) 402-7418

Summary of DEI/EJ Compliance Efforts Underway:

Work Plan/TA Activities:

- Effective at 5:04 pm on 1/22/25, OTA issued an unconditional immediate stop-work order to all TA providers and HUD GTMs for all work plan activities associated with **environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)**. (See attached email to **TA providers and HUD program office GTMs.**)
- OTA is reviewing all active work plans containing DEI and environmental justice terms to assess next steps. While we anticipate this process will take time, we wanted to

communicate the stop-work directive officially and quickly. We have conducted a search using key terms from the memo and EO, as well as related terms with a conceptual relationship to the EOs. For the work plans where DEI/EJ is the primary focus, GTRs are entering comments in DRGR today to make clear the next steps for providers with regard to closeout.

- Here is OTA's guidance on work plan management:
 - For all TA that is not DEI/EJ in nature, TA delivery and trainings may continue.
 - For work plans that are completely DEI/EJ in nature, we will place a comment in DRGR to remind the TA provider of the requirement to stop work, complete final billing, and close out the work plan as soon as possible. In DRGR, we cannot cancel work plans that have an approved budget and placing them "on-hold" inhibits the provider's ability to take action for final billing and closeout. Therefore, we are using this comment as the administrative record to demonstrate compliance with the directive and to make clear which work plans we have identified as requiring action.
 - If the work plan is mostly DEI related, all work must cease. HUD may later re-assign the compliant portions but for now, this work plan should be closed.
 - For work plans that are not expressly focused on DEI/EJ but have those concepts interwoven from the last administration, OTA requires programs and providers to stop all DEI work effective as of yesterday. However, other tasks may continue while we complete our review and seek guidance on whether they should be cancelled or amended. This flexibility should be exercised with great caution to minimize disruption while ensuring full compliance with the Executive Order and protecting the program.
 - If your program has concerns and wishes to halt other work until there is more clarity, we support that.

TA Requests and Assignments:

- No new TA assignments may be issued for activities related to environmental justice, DEI, or similar topics.
- Any assignments issued on these topics where a TA work plan has not yet been submitted must be cancelled immediately.
- If HUD receives a TA request related to DEI/EJ, you must disapprove it.
- If HUD receives a TA request with multiple topics, including DEI/EJ, you may approve the parts of the request that comply with federal policy. Please clarify that the entire request is not approved. Here is sample language that triage/request reviewers may use:
 - "HUD has received your request for TA and we are pleased to approve some of the requested support. Specifically, we will assign a TA provider for XYZ topics. Effective 1/20/25, per Presidential Executive Order, HUD is not approving TA for topics related to equity at this time."

Communications

- Effective Wednesday and retroactively applied to noon Monday, no new content is authorized to be posted on HUD Exchange. The current instructions to ICF regarding HUD Exchange are as follows (**until further notice**):
 - Hold all new file publications
 - Hold all page updates – except revisions to comply with Executive Orders
 - Hold all social media posts from accounts funded by HUD TA work plans, including HUD Exchange
 - Hold all uploads of training videos to HUD Exchange YouTube
 - Hold all listserv email distributions to HUD Exchange subscribers
 - Continue development to comply with Executive Orders
 - Continue operations and site sustainment to comply with Executive Orders

- Effective 1/22/25, OTA directed ICF, Inc., in its capacity as the current TA vendor operating the HUD Exchange website, to scan all content on HUD Exchange for materials that could be inconsistent with the Executive Order and OPM guidance. ICF is compiling the flagged content into a cloud-based archive, which will be made available to program offices for review in coordination with OTA. The content scan will take place in two phases.

Phase 1: Assess Content for Patent Coverage by the Executive Order (EO)

Period of performance: Target 10 days

ICF will scan all posted materials and webpage content for terms covered explicitly in the EO (see below). Materials identified as inconsistent with the EO will be archived. ICF will classify these materials by program area and by whether they can be revised and republished. OTA and program offices will review these materials and assign TA providers to revise any materials that can be republished. If revisions require HUD consultation, ICF will engage OTA and/or the program office. Timely feedback will be essential.

Phase 2: Assess content for latent coverage by the EO

Period of performance: Target 30 days

ICF will scan and flag (but not immediately archive) all posted materials and webpage content for terms, and variations thereof, relating to concepts in the EO. Listed below. ICF will provide HUD with links to flagged materials and webpage content for OTA and program office review. Materials determined by HUD review to be substantively inconsistent with the Executive Order will be archived.

<u>Terms with explicit relationship to the EOs</u>	<u>Terms with conceptual relationship to the EOs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI • DEIA • Diversity • Diverse • Equity • Equitable • Inclusion • Inclusive • Environmental Justice • Gender Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial • Marginalized • Underserved • Affirmatively • Affirmative • Systemic • Adversely • Accessible • Accessibility • Disparate