

**Best Practices for Action Plan Set-Up and Amendments**  
**Webinar Transcript**  
**Tuesday, April 4, 2017**  
**1:00 – 2:30 PM**

Jon: Alright. Welcome to the webinar. My name is Jon Kunz and I am with the Cloudburst Group one of Hud's technical assistance providers. Today we will be walking you through setting up your 2017 annual action plan amendments in IDIS. We will be able to spend a portion of today's session actually working in IDIS so you can see the process within the eCon Planning Suite. I am joined today by Chris Andrews a colleague from Cloudburst and Beth Hendrix from the Office of Block Grant Assistance at HUD.

Chris, Beth – would you like to introduce yourselves?

Chris: Sure. Thank you, Jon. Hi everyone. Good morning, good afternoon this is Chris Andrews. I have been working with Beth and with HUD for the past five or six years on the eCon Planning Suite and trainings and resource development. I am very happy to be here with you all today.

Beth: Hi. And I'm Beth Hendrix. I'm from HUD headquarters and I work with your field offices on helping them with the eCon Planning Suite.

Jon: Alright. Thank you, Chris and Beth. So before we start I do want to point out a few things about the webinar. First, there are a lot of you listening, which is really great, but this also means we have a few – we have to mute the phones to eliminate some of the background noise. The webinar is scheduled to run 90 minutes. It is a long time to sit and listen so we are doing a few things to help you learn and have a chance to voice your perspectives. So first, we are using polls where we will ask for your feedback about what you are currently doing in the eCon Planning Suite. Second, we will pause at times to see if we can answer your questions. We want you to submit questions through the question feature of the webinar dialogue box. We will do our best to respond to as many questions as we can. But if we don't, remember that you can submit questions to the AAQ or ask a question. We have a team that is working to turn those around for you.

Now the last thing I want to ask of you before we go into session objectives and our first poll is that you dedicate this period of time to focusing on the webinar. This is so much easier if you close your email and put away your phone.

Before we get started we would like to understand where you are in your consolidated plan. We have a question up here. Basically, I am going to put a poll up and it is going to ask you to fill in the appropriate year. You should all see a poll up on your screen and please just click on the appropriate years that is your consolidated planning cycle. Your results are coming in we will give you just a little longer. Okay. Let's share the results. So if we look at it there is a small number just 8% that you started your year way back in 2013 so you are in your final year of your action plan. Another 9% that started in 2014 in your fourth year of your action plan and then as we really see the bulk entered theirs, first action plan consolidated plan last year 2015 a number, 20% in 2016 and 7% who has one due next year in 2017 – I guess it already is 2017. Alright, let's talk a little bit about the goals for the session. We basically have three goals for this session. The first is to make sure that you are prepared to correctly set up your 2017 action plan. There are a number of steps

that you must do to create the 2017 action plan to make sure that it is correctly associated with your consolidated plan and will not require you to set up your action plan again. Second as the program year end 2016 will be ending in a few minutes for many of you. We wanted to make sure you are prepared to correctly enter all amendments for your 2016 action plan into IDIS. Third, we want to highlight a number of best practices and recommendations to streamline your action plan and amendment process in the eCon Planning Suite to both inform your CAPER and to set you up correctly for the program year. And finally, we want to make sure that you have ample time to ask your questions about setting up your 2017 action plan and completing any amendments prior to the end of the 2016 program year.

As such, we have a couple of breaks for questions we will try to answer as many of your questions as we can.

Before getting started I do want to highlight a few of the consolidated plan and eCon Planning Suite resources HUD currently has available. These resources which include desk guides, tool kits, quick guides, webinar recordings and transcripts and troubleshooting guides are all available on the HUD Exchange. We will show you where these are saved at the end of the session.

Two items that I would like to highlight are coming up soon. First, we are planning a webinar devoted to projects later this spring and we will be announcing the date for that webinar in the next week or two. And second, HUD has started developing a training curriculum in all elements of the eCon Planning Suite.

Alright, let's now turn to setting up your 2017 action plan. To correctly set up your action plan there are a series of steps that you should follow in a sequential order to avoid any errors or issues in your action plan. Before even starting the action plan in IDIS you should determine if you need to complete any amendments to your consolidated plan. This may be to reflect a new priority or strategic initiative or maybe due to receiving a new funding source from HUD. This amendment must be completed to ensure that your 2017 action plan can be associated with the amended consolidated plan.

Next, create the 2017 action plan. We will walk you through instructions on how to either copy or add a new action plan and what you need to make sure it is correctly set up for this action plan. Next, update projects. If copying a project, you will need to remove the copied projects and create new 2017 projects. If adding a new action plan you will need to create new projects for 2017. We will show you how to do this in more detail later in the session.

Next, review the goal out communicators or GOIs. It is a best practice for all of your goal out indicators to align from your strategic plan goals to your action plan goals to your projects. We recommend you do this manually by printing out those screens respectively and cross referencing them. Ensuring these are all aligned will ensure that your projects and activity outcomes will automatically pull into the CAPER. And finally, submit your CAPER to HUD in IDIS.

Let's talk about timing. A lot of questions have come in already about the timing of your action plan submission given that allocations have not yet been made. So remember, you cannot submit your consolidated plan or 2017 action plan until allocations have been made. This is outlined in CPD Notice 16-18 which is linked here and we will make sure all of you receive this link as well. This will likely result in you submitting your action plan after your normal submission date. With

that in mind, remember all 2017 action plans must be submitted by August 16, 2017. This is a requirement and this deadline cannot be changed. Once you submit your plan and it is reviewed and approved and the congressional release has happened grant agreements will be executed. What you can do at this time is to begin to repair your draft and finish your 2016 amendments you may have.

Alright, now knowing that the consolidated plan amendments must be completed prior to starting your 2017 action plan I'd like to stop for poll questions to see how many of you are planning to complete an amendment to your consolidated plan as part of your PY2017 planning process. So let me put the poll up. So again, if you could look on your screen and answer the question. Are you planning to complete an amendment to your consolidated plan as part of your 2017 action plan? Yes, no or not sure. Votes are coming in. Alright, let's look at the results. So, it looks like about exactly a quarter of you are planning to complete an amendment to the consolidated plan as part of your action plan process. 45% say no and 30% say not sure yet. Interesting. Okay.

Chris: That is great to see, Jon. I think for all of you and again, this is Chris Andrews from Cloudburst. My colleagues Jon Kunz and Beth Hendrix from HUD on today's webinar for those of you joining in the past few minutes. For those of you who are planning an amendment to your consolidated plan or for those of you who may not be sure that you will be doing an amendment, within the system it is very important that you begin the amendment to your consolidated plan even before starting your 2017 action plan. And where that becomes very critical is thinking about the slide that Jon just presented on timing is recognizing that we are working within the confines of CPD notice 16-18 that is guiding the submission and the timeline for your 2017 action plan and those action plans can't be submitted until after the allocations have been made. So, with that in mind it is very, very important that you are beginning to prepare that consolidated plan amendment now in the eCon Planning Suite. You are not necessarily submitting it but you are preparing it so it will be ready to be submitted. And then you will be able to begin your 2017 action plan right away.

For those of you who are in the not sure category in terms of completing a con plan amendment. Just as a reminder for everyone your amendments to consolidated plan and amendments to your action plan those are defined in your citizen participation plan of what is constituting a substantial or a non-substantial amendment to your consolidated plan or action plan. Examples of amendments may be changing funding sources. You may be receiving a new funding source from HUD. You may be adding or removing or revising your strategic plan goals. You may be adjusting your priority needs. There may have been a change if you started your con plan cycle in 2013 or 2014 you may have new priority needs that were not clear, not apparent in your community at the point of developing your con plan. Or you may have new target areas. You may have created a neighborhood revitalization strategic area or you may have a local target area, or you may be connected to another funding source from a different agency or from a state program that is targeting funding that you are wanting to leverage with your HUD dollars, and all of that may require an amendment to your consolidated plan.

Now just one caveat and I think this is important as we are looking in the eCon Planning Suite structure is to remind everyone that your year one action plan is actually embedded in your consolidated plan. And so if you started your plan in 2016 and if you are going to be making an amendment just to your 2016 action plan from the system that will actually look like an amendment to the consolidated plan from a system perspective. It will just be an amendment to the action plan portion of it but you would be creating a copy and a new consolidated plan.

For amendments, and I think Beth and Jon and I will repeat this a few times in today's session. It is very, very important that your amendments are marked in IDIS as review completed. That is true for both substantial and non-substantial amendments. We really want to make sure those amendments are marked review completed because that is then the version that will be used to inform your CAPER.

Beth: And, Chris, this is Beth Hendrix from HUD. I just want to reiterate the review completed status is real important before you start your next action plan or even your CAPER for the amendment. The reason why is, the review completed status in your plan tells IDIS to download information from that plan into future action plans and CAPERS. It is really important that you are in that status to allow that information to then flow to future planning documents.

Chris: That is a great point, Beth. Again, to summarize here the main point under consolidated plan amendment before we move into talking about your 2017 action plans and/or amendments to action plans is to make sure that consolidated plan amendment is started before beginning your 2017 action plan.

At the point of setting up your annual action plan you have two options in working off of your 2016 action plan and your corresponding consolidated plan. Your first is to create a copy of the 2016 action plan and copy that forward to 2017. When you create that copy that will copy every piece of text, verbatim from 2016 into 2017. So with that in mind you will still need to go into that action plan and edit and revise content. One place that you will definitely need to revise content and we will talk about this in more depth in a little bit is in your projects because it is carrying forward your 2016 projects but keeping them as your 2016 projects in what is being copied. But you do have all of that content to work off of and you are just making edits and revisions within the system.

Your second option is to create a brand new, 2017 action plan. It will still be linked to your consolidated plan, but it will be a completely blank template and you will be entering brand new content. And all of the fields will need to be completed to finish your 2017 action plan. It looks like we have already gotten a couple of questions coming in asking about is it better to copy the action plan or is it better to create a new action plan and a big part of it is preference, if you feel more comfortable editing and revising content or if you would rather just start from a blank template. The general rule I think copying an action plan is best if your program is not changing significantly from 2016 to 2017 if you are still focusing on the same goals. If you are still focusing on the same priorities if you're corresponding policies and procedures and monitoring anti-poverty strategy are all relatively the same or have not been updated significantly then it may be easier to work off of that copied action plan and just update the information as needed. Now for creating a brand new action plan, so creating a blank action plan. This may be best if there are significant changes. If there – if you made an amendment to your consolidated plan and you are including new goals or if you have pivoted your approach within the program and you want to describe a new approach or a new method of distribution or allocation within your action plan then it may be easier to start with a blank version.

Again, it is completely up to you and what you feel most comfortable with. So with that being said and you all may have already done this – Jon will turn to another poll question.

The poll question is: Are you planning to copy or add a blank action plan for 2017? Will you create a copy and work off of that copy or will you be adding a new blank action plan and adding all of that content into the system? We'll give everyone just a few more seconds to respond. Let's go ahead and close that poll and share the results. Beth and Jon, it looks like the vast majority of folks on the line are planning to copy a previous action plan, about 63% of you, 20% of you are still planning to create a new blank action plan and about 15% aren't sure. So let's spend a little bit of time walking through the steps in IDIS on how to go through and copy on that previous action plan.

We can lose these results. Come back to my screen and just bare with me here for one second while I go ahead and – I am just logging into IDIS. Just give me one second here. Hopefully, you are now seeing my IDIS screen. Beth and Jon, are you able to see my IDIS screen?

Beth: I see it.

Jon: Yes.

Chris: Okay. So we will just pause here and walk through the steps for copying an action plan. In copying an action plan the important things that you need to know are the source plan year and source plan version for the action plan that you are wanting to copy. As a brief aside for all of you who started your con plan in 2016 to 2020 cycle into 2017 will be your year two. Your source plan year and version will come from your consolidated plan because that is where your one action plan is included. For everyone else copying going into years three through five that source plan year and version would come from your previous action plan. And this is one of those things you'd want to make sure that you get it right and I – it is easy to end up with a couple of copies or couple of versions of your action plan. If you make an amendment, if you start and then realize that you made a mistake and needed to start over again and it is always a good practice to double check and make sure that you are creating a copy of that correct plan because I think for Beth, for Jon, for me we see this a lot. This is one of those things that you can't go back and change.

Once you create that copy if you associate it with the wrong consolidated plan or if it is copied off of the wrong action plan you will have to do that over again. You can't change that once it has been done. So with that being said it is always a good idea to go in and make sure that you are selecting the correct action plan to work off of. So I came here into the annual action plan screen and I am just here in the UAT version of IDIS so we are able to play around here and it won't have any impact on the grantee. Select 2016 and click search. And I am now seeing that we have one action plan for 2016. So these are the two fields here that I want to make note of. The year and the version. Now click on copy on the annual action plan. Enter that source year that was 2016, enter the version, my new program year. That will be 2017. And I am just going to get the version of today's date is not an amendment. We are creating a new action plan. Go ahead and click copy. You will see it comes back I am still searching 2016 so I am going to change it now to 2017. This is something that I think is really valuable these search criteria especially as we are adding more and more action plans into our system it is to remember that you can search by year. You end up searching by all years. You are going to see quite a few action plans. You may be already moving onto a second page.

So I see we have two here. I see Version 4.4 this is the version that we just created. Go ahead and click on edit. And I now have my annual action plan for 2017 and I will just go ahead I will open up one of these screens and all of the content that was in my 2016 action plan has copied

over into the 2017 action plan. We will come back to this and we will talk a little bit about the project screen. One thing I would like to point out if you are in the AD-26 screen there is some important information. One, you can change the title from AAP copy. So I am going to again call this 4.4, 4.4 webinar. They see the program year and I see the consolidated plan to which this action plan is associated. That's very important. You want to make sure that your action plan is always associated with your most current consolidated plan. And again, this is something that if it is incorrectly associated this is not something that we can then go in after the fact and change. You need to make sure that your action plan is being associated with the correct consolidated plan at the point of creation or that you are copying an action plan that is correctly associated with the most current consolidated plan.

We will pause here and I know there were some of you who are wanting to create a new action plan and we will walk through those steps in a minute. Beth or Jon, anything that you all would like to add on copying the action plan?

Beth: This is Beth Hendrix from HUD headquarters and it's really important on this AD-26 screen that you make sure everything is set up correctly before you hit the save button. Once it's saved nothing can be changed. So it's really important not only when you are making a copy but also when you are creating a new plan that you are feeling good about the consolidated plan you have attached it to, the version and also any name title changes as well.

Chris: That is a great point, Beth and you see here already from copying it all of these fields are read-only. I copied a plan that was associated with the wrong consolidated plan. I can't change that now. I would have to create a new copy or create a new blank plan. And the same is true when you are adding a new plan and we can twist and turn and move to that right now. So if you are wanting to add a blank plan instead of copying a plan you can do that. You do that by clicking the add button under the annual action plan. I will go ahead and pick 2017. I will just all it 4.4 Version 2 is my title and 4.4 Version 2 as well in my version. Select all of the programs that are included. This is a very important question here – is the annual action plan associated with a consolidated plan the answer at this point for everyone on the line is yes. Everyone should have a consolidated plan in the system. You are wanting to select the consolidated plan with which you will be associating this action plan. Select yes. Click the associate button and now we'll go ahead and we will search for our consolidated plan. I see here we have one consolidated plan, 2015. Select the radio button. Click select. And now to the point that Beth was just making double check, triple check this screen. All of this information you cannot change once you click save. Make sure your program year is correct. Make sure your programs included are correct. Make sure that you have selected the correct consolidated plan. Sounds very easy, but every week we will see or receive a request from a grantee who entered the wrong program year or did not check all of the programs included. Double check all of this information before clicking save.

Once you do that, click save and we now have a brand new link 2017 action plan to which we can add all of our action plan content to. I'm going to return to the PowerPoint deck here. I will skip forward, we did include screenshots of all of this –for those of you for when we send the slides out just so you can see that process on the PowerPoint deck as well. But I do want to pause here on just a few exceptions and nuances for consortia grantees. Consolidated plans and action plans can only be created by the consortia lead and that includes copying the prior year action plan. All of that action that we did if you are a participating grantee in a consortium you cannot do that. That is the responsibility of the lead grantee. The lead can also – is also the only entity to submit the action

plan in IDIS. When the lead submits – the lead plan actually bundles all of the plans together and submits them as one package to HUD. There are great instructions. Jon mentioned the quick guides earlier that walk through this process for consortia grantees and we will make sure to send those out to everyone after today's session.

Beth: Chris, this is Beth. I just wanted to reinforce the use of those directions for consortia. It is often a confusing process because grantees often think I'm a CDBG entitlement so I have my own plan. But really in the world of consolidated planning a consortia is the lead for all planning processes. The consortia lead is the one who drives the eCon Planning Suite actions.

Chris: Great point. Thank you.

Jon: Yea, thanks, Chris and Beth. Alright, so now that we have talked through the process of setting up your 2017 action plan let's just highlight a few key reminders and we will point out each of these in more depth. The first, the start year should always be the HUD program year. I know a number of you on the line might have a different fiscal year schedule and as such your local fiscal year may be one year and the HUD program year will be different. Your action plan should be the HUD program year. Second, confirm that the action plan is associated with the correct consolidated plan. Chris spent a little bit of time talking about that. As we talked about earlier make sure that your goal outcome indicators are the same for the strategic plan, the consolidated plan, the strategic plan and your annual action plan goals and projects.

And finally, ensure your projects are correctly set up. Okay, so to confirm that A. your action plan program year and your consolidated plan association is correct you can look on the AD-26 screen as shown here and just remember, again, we said this a number of times once you create your action plan you cannot edit this information. So if it is incorrect you need to go back and create a new action plan.

Chris: Great – thanks, Jon. We will just talk about as you are working through your action plan a best practice in aligning your goal outcome indicators and it is very important in your planning process as you go from your consolidated plan to your action plan to your projects and activities and ultimately into your CAPER that your goal outcome indicators are aligning. The reason being is that it will make the reporting in your CAPER that much easier. I think the vast majority of you on the line have gone through at least one CAPER in IDIS and in working through your outcomes you may have been having to pull outcome data from the CAPER template but then also having to manually associate outcomes with different strategic plan goals. And one way to limit that need for manual corrections is to make sure that you are using the same goal outcome indicators throughout the process. So when you set up a strategic plan in your five year plan and here in this example it is homeowner rehab. So you are rehabbing existing housing stock in a neighborhood is your strategic plan. And your five year goal is 200 units to be rehabbed. When you then set up your action plan goal you want to make sure that you are using the same goal outcome indicator and the IDIS does not require you to use the same goal outcome indicator and you can use a different goal outcome indicator but it is a best practice if you are using the same one and manually checking and make sure okay my action plan goal using the same GOI as my strategic plan.

And then finally when you get to the project tab making sure that your goal outcome indicator listed in your project is the same as what is in your action plan and in your strategic plan. To think about this a little bit differently let's just look at this flow chart here and it begins with

your strategic plan you have a goal in which the outcome is again homeowner rehab. And in your five action plans you have a goal in which the outcome that you are measuring also units, rehabbed units. Now within that you want to – you may have two projects, a better set up and both have a goal outcome indicator. You want to make sure again that those are also homeowner rehab as the goal outcome indicator. And then finally, where it drills down and where it will connect to the reporting in your CAPER is when you move away from the eCon Planning Suite and into your activity set up and to make sure that you are using the appropriate matrix code. And in this case that matrix code would be one of the 14 matrix codes indicate homeowner rehab. And if you are able to go in and do a quality check from strategic plan to action plan goals to your projects through your activities and making sure that you are using the same goal outcome indicator or matrix code you will make that reporting when you get to this screen on your CAPER in the CRO5 screen so much easier to navigate and so much more of the data will be automatically populating this screen.

The last reminder or tidbit we have for you on your action plans is on your projects. If you copy your annual action plan it will automatically copy all of your prior year projects and maintain them as a prior year project. That means in see here on the screenshot that program year stays at 2016. And I will show you this at IDIS in a minute, but when you copy those projects forward you are not able to edit that program year. So while all of the other content copies forward you are able to keep a lot of that more general content within your action plan you will need to delete and create new projects each year. If you are deleting your project and the project name has a special character an ampersand or dash or a pound sign you will need to rename that project without the character. Save, and then click remove. You are not able to remove projects with any of those special characters. That will be fixed in a future release of IDIS but for right now that is the troubleshooting tip. Let's go into IDIS and we will come back. I am going to come back to the action plan that we just created by copying and so that was the 2017 4.4 click edit coming down to the project screen I can click edit on any one of these. You see I can edit all of the content except for that program year. I can't change that program year. So again, what you need to do is you need to remove those projects and create a new project for 2017. The exact same process as what you would have done with your projects prior to the eCon Planning Suite you need to continue that process.

Beth, before we move onto questions we have gotten a lot of great questions that have come in. Any other recommendations that you would like to make on action plan set up?

Beth: So the really important things we have hit on several times already. One, make sure you are associating with the correct original consolidated plan. Two, make sure that AD-26 screen is correct before you hit save and three, it is real important that you delete out those old projects and look at setting up new projects for each annual action plan. That helps streamline your CAPER and the data that pulls from IDIS on a regular basis. It creates less headache at CAPER time as well. Chris is going to show you a little bit on how to do that.

Chris: Yea, so and I think it is important to note as you remove a project you are not removing it from all of IDIS when you remove it from your action plan. You are only removing it from that specific action plan. Click remove it will give you a warning message saying just that. You say yes and it will remove that project for you. So that is a process that you will want to do going through with all of your projects. For me, when I am working on an action plan what I like to do is if I am going to have a similar set of projects going from 2016 into 2017 is I may print out those 2016 projects and have those projects out in front of me. And then as I am creating a new project I can use the same general description, make sure I am using the same goal outcome indicators that you

will need to create new projects. And you do that at the very bottom of the screen by clicking on add a project. And then selecting create a new project and you will see here when I do that the program year is now 2017.

So with that let's pause I know Jon we have gotten some great questions coming in. We want to turn to a few questions.

Jon: Thanks, Chris. Yea, a lot of good questions coming in. So let's get to them. So the first question actually is a consortium question and it goes if I am a participating grantee in a home consortium but receive my own allocation of CBDG do I create a separate action plan for CBDG?

Chris: Great question. Beth referenced this earlier, but no for planning purposes your entire CPD planning process is linked within that consortium. The lead entity when they create their action plan it will create a separate action plan template for the participating jurisdiction to be able to go in and fill out the content related to CDBG. But participating grantees should not ever create a separate or standalone action plan for CDBG or ESG or HOPWA all of that is embedded in the consortium template.

Beth: That is a really good answer, Chris. This is Beth again from HUD headquarters. The system is set up for those who are members of consortia that when the lead creates that consolidated plan it also creates a package of all the other plans that are needed for entitlement and participating members. Those who get CDBG and ESG as well. So there is no need to set up a separate distinct plan if you are a CDBG entitlement. They are all packaged together so that the lead will create for you in the system.

Jon: Aright. Thanks again Beth and Chris. Okay another question. Here is one on the action plan. I'm trying to change my annual plan goals in my action plan, but they are not editable.

Chris: Great question. I'm going to IDIS and we can demonstrate that. I'm going to close out here from the projects and open-up my goals screen and your annual action plan goals are pulling directly from your strategic plan goals. So I am not able to create a new goal or I'm not able to significantly revise a goal in the action plan template that may require an amendment to my strategic plan. What I am able to do in my action plan is I can choose which of my strategic plan goals I will be including in the current action plan. And I can also just click here on edit – I can update my narrative that you will see that some of my content my category, my start year, end year, outcome and objective I can't edit any of that content because that is tied to my strategic plan goal. So I would actually need to go in and make an amendment to my strategic plan to be able to edit that content. Then you will see here on the home screen it looks like I click on add goal if there is any additional goals. I get an error message that says there is no con plan goal available. That means that all of my strategic plan goals for my consolidated plan are already included in the action plan template. I can't create an additional goal. Again, if I wanted to create a new goal I would need to go in and make an amendment to my consolidated plan.

So, for those of you who in the first or second poll question were wavering, you are not sure if you are going to have to make an amendment to your consolidated plan prior to your 2017 action plan if you need to significantly revise or add a new strategic plan goal for your 2017 program year you would need to do an amendment and complete an amendment to your consolidated plan to your strategic plan prior to beginning your 2017 action plan.

Beth: Those of you who are on the fence about whether you will need to do an amendment or not it is good to know that strategic plan SP screens of your consolidated plan that information feeds down to future year action plans and CAPERs and that is that grayed out information that shows up on your different screens. Those changes are made in the SP the strategic plan screens not in your annual action plan.

Chris: Right, so to build off of that Beth, the same point I am seeing a couple of questions on this is if you are receiving a new funding source. I know an example here is a grantee who will begin receiving ESG funds to add ESG funds that will require an amendment to your strategic plan to include ESG in your consolidated plan and then allow those funds to trickle down and feed into your 2017 and future action plans. Great questions. Jon, other questions coming in?

Jon: Yea, here is a common one another action plan one. When is it better to copy or create a new action plan?

Chris: So again going back we can go back to that – wrong direction. I can go back to the slide. It is really up to you if you would rather copy or create a new action plan template. I think generally if you – if it is going to be very similar in what you are doing year in and year out or for a period of two to three years then it may be easiest to copy. If you are going to have more significant changes then I would recommend creating a new action plan. That doesn't mean that you won't manually take content from the previous action plan and copy that into your new 2017 action plan but it may be easier to start with a blank action plan. I think Jon, we have time for two more questions.

Jon: Alright. Let's do a quick one on projects. Can you explain why to remove projects from a copied plan again?

Chris: Absolutely. So let me come out of here and come back into IDIS. This is an important point. Removing the projects, when you copy your plan from 2016 to 2017 it will automatically copy those projects verbatim forward meaning that it will not update the project year. You therefore need to remove those projects and update them with a new project for 2017. So otherwise you will be rewriting or writing over your 2016 project not necessarily updating it or creating a new 2017 project which is why you need to remove those projects and create new projects.

Beth: Chris, could you talk a little bit about what that means when it comes time to do the CAPER if you don't remove those old projects, you just use them again?

Jon: Yea, absolutely. So you would be essentially rewriting over the goal outcome indicators that are included in that project for both 2016 and for 2017. So, you would be in a position where you would be under reporting on the outcomes and on the accomplishments, that you are realizing because everything would just be tied to a single project with less funding associated to it because it would just be your one year of funding still.

Jon: Alright, should we slip in one more here? Let's see. How do we copy the first year action plan that is embedded in the con plan to create the 2017 action plan?

Chris: Sure. Great question, Jon. So just go back in time here. Pretend that we are going from 2015 into 2016. If that's the case we are wanting to – we are using San Antonio here for our example.

You are wanting to copy the action plan that was embedded in our 2015 consolidated plan version 1. So I would come into my consolidated plan. I would make note of the year 2015 version one and where I would click copy under the annual action plan still and that's an important distinction. Still copying just the annual action plan screens so I will want to put copy here. Here is where I will enter 2015. Here it would be 2016. It may not let us do 2016 still and it does. Back to 2016 now. You see here we have the version three that I just created a copy of and that would be how to copy your action plan for a year two. So I think with that we can pause and we will move on to talk to our amendments and I think we will have more time for questions after talking through amendments.

Jon: Alright, we'll start – yea, we are going to do a poll now. So I am going to put a poll up there basically asking about have you completed an annual action plan amendment in the eCon Planning Suite. So let me launch the poll and again just go ahead and type in the answer that applies to your situation. Have you completed a manual action plan amendment in the eCon Planning Suite?

Alright. Let's take a look at our plans – at our results rather. As we can see just about a third of you 32% have completed an amendment in the eCon Planning Suite while half of you have not. But there is a 18% of you that said well I haven't done it yet, but I will before the end of the program year 2016. So some have not yet done it yet but intend to do it very shortly.

Chris: Great. So for those of you who are planning to do it soon or who are maybe in the middle of the process now hopefully we can answer some of your questions. And for those of you who haven't done it we will talk through the process as you may be completing an amendment at some point in your con plan cycle. Let's just look at the amendment process here and where it falls together. So we begin with the consolidated plan and that moves us through our year one through year five action plan and then that moves us through our corresponding CAPERs. Now let's just say hypothetically at the end of year two you will be amending your action plan. So now what that means is all of the sudden your amended year two action plan is what you will want to be using to inform your year two CAPER and you don't want that year two CAPER to be based off of your original year two action plan and you also don't necessarily want that original year two action plan to be the basis for your year three action plan you want that amended year two action plan to be the basis for your year three action plan.

So let's look at that in a little bit more detail and walk through that process. So we begin with our approved year two action plan and our goal the end of the process is to get to our year two CAPER and our year three action plan. So the first question is do you need to make an amendment to your action plan? And this is where you are looking at your citizen participation plan to determine if you are making a substantial amendment or a non-substantial amendment or you may determine that what you are doing is actually only a change to activities and doesn't necessarily constitute an amendment to your action plan. So beginning with the answer being no it becomes a very easy process. Your year two action plan directly informs your year two CAPER and you are able to create a copy of that year two action plan to be the basis of your year three action plan.

We're not spending a lot of time talking about CAPERs today, but I think this is a very important note to make – hold off on creating your CAPER in IDIS until the end of the program year once you are absolutely positive that you won't be amending that current year action plan. If you are amending your current year action plan do you want that amended version to be the basis for your CAPER? Your CAPER is automatically created and based off of your most recent action plan. So if you haven't created that amendment yet at the point of creating your CAPER that CAPER will be tied to the original year two action plan not the amended version.

So what does that look like? We can look at now what the process would be if we are amending our plan. If you determine that you need to amend it, your first step will be to create a copy of the year two action plan. Once you complete that amendment it is a substantial or non-substantial that amendment needs to be submitted to HUD and marked as review completed in IDIS. The reason being that action plan being marked as review completed is what signals to your CAPER to pull from the most recently approved or recently completed action plan. So that process that that action plan amendment being marked as completed needs to happen before you create your year two CAPER. Once that is done you can then create your year two CAPER and then use a copy of that to create your year three action plan. And again, you want to be using that amended version as the basis for your year three action plan. And that is absolutely true if you are amending your consolidated plan and wanting to keep your year three action plan tied to your most current consolidated plan.

There is a lot of moving parts. I am going to pause there and Beth or Jon if you have any other clarifying points to make through the amendment process.

Beth: It is just really important to stay associated with the most recent consolidated plan so your information flows correctly into the next annual action plan and CAPER. And more importantly as we mentioned at the beginning of this webinar that review completed status whether it is for your action plan or your amendment is what tells IDIS to have the rest of the information flow to future action plans and CAPERs. So not only do you want to do the amendment prior to creating a CAPER you also want to make sure it is in review completed status before you create the next action plan or CAPER document.

Chris: Great. Thanks, Beth. So with that, just like in creating the 2017 action plan there are some exceptions for consortia grantees. A consortia lead must initiate all amendments. The participating jurisdiction within the consortia cannot start an amendment just as it cannot begin a new action plan or create a copy of a new action plan it can't start the amendment or create the copy for the amendment. With that in mind it is a best practice for all of the members of the consortia to coordinate the timing of their amendments that they are entering into IDIS. That is to avoid creating copy for one jurisdiction and then a copy for a second and a copy for a third and a copy for a fourth all at different times in the program year. And then finally, the lead must also submit the amendment in IDIS and submit that to HUD even if the amendment is only for one of the participating members the lead is the one in IDIS who is submitting that.

A few best practices that we have touched upon already. As Beth just said always work off of your most recent action plan consolidated plan. That will always help to make sure that you are staying current within the program.

Two, within IDIS we recommend completing your amendments at one time and at the end of the program year. Now you still need to follow all of the requirements of your citizen participation plans, you still need to be documenting your amendments in your program file, but we do recommend that you enter them in IDIS at one time near the end of your program year and this will prevent you from having multiple versions in IDIS. And you can enter all of those amendments at once in one amended version. And again, your amendments must be marked as review completed prior to starting your CAPER. Beth, any other best practices that you would like to recommend?

Beth: I think you have hit them all.

Chris: Great. So I know that second point is on completing your amendments in IDIS at once. Bringing some questions. So I would like to just walk through the approach and compare it to the paper version of action plans and amendments and just show you how we can build off of that on a parallel track.

Just to review prior to the eCon Planning Suite the amendment process was getting with identifying the amendment need. Completing the amendment to your plan. It was a substantial amendment completing the public comment period, public review. Updating your program file with the amended action plan and then notifying HUD of the amendment on a per 24 CFR part 91 .505C it should either be notifying HUD at the point of the amendment being made or at the end of the program year.

Within the eCon Planning Suite that process is really pretty similar. You again begin by identifying your amendment need. If you are not wanting to complete multiple amendments in one year in IDIS you can complete that amendment in hard copy, still go through all of the requirements as set forth in your citizen participation plan, completing public comment periods, public review, putting the document before council. Updating the program file with your amended action plan. Notifying HUD of the amendment per the same set of requirements at 91.505C and then what we recommend is entering all of those amendments at one time in IDIS. This will really help you within the system manage the version control of having multiple amendments in IDIS.

Beth: Chris, you just made a really good point. Throughout this webinar we talked a lot about making sure you have the latest and most correct version when you make a copy or do an amendment. And by doing your amendments all at one time in IDIS it helps control how many versions you have in the system and to make sure that you are attaching those future year action plans and CAPERs to the right most correct version as well.

You know the reg at 91 505 really states that a jurisdiction can decide to submit a copy of each amendment to HUD as it occurs or at the end of the program year. So we do recommend that you notify HUD that you have made the amendment just like you would with the regulation already states you send a letter to your field office and a copy of that amendment that public comment process that happened. But in the system you do that update all at one time right before you do the CAPER in the system. Similar to what we used to do in the paper process so if you have been around a while you would notify HUD that you did the amendment but in the back of that paper CAPER you would submit a list of all of your amendments at one time then. We are doing the same thing now we are just doing it in the system instead.

Chris: A great point, Beth.

Beth: And a final comment I think I want to hone in on is the consortia. We talked throughout the webinar today about how the lead of the consortia drives the whole eCon Plan Suite process. This is a really nice time to do amendments all at once for consortia members and the lead. Since the leads makes that copy and makes that amendment occur in the system for all the participating members it's great to coordinate that that happens at one time for everyone to do their updates and amendments and not multiple times for the lead to have to take that action.

Chris: Thank you, Beth. And I do also want to add-in a point on state grantees. There have been a couple of questions on state grantees about the project process and on the housing trust fund for state grantees. There is more guidance coming out soon on the housing trust fund. And for projects our recommendation to make sure that your projects and your outcomes are being included in the – in your CAPER and in your outcomes and in your reporting is to go through this amendment process near the end of the program year and to complete the AP-35 screen with all of the projects that were set up during the course of your program year and then that will include all of those projects and then linking the corresponding activities and ultimately linking the outcomes to your CAPER and making it easier for you to tell your story, highlight your accomplishments within your CAPER.

Beth: That's right, Chris. It would be okay for a state grantee to leave that AP-35 the project screen blank or not completely filled out. Since they need to do their method of distribution to get their funds out. They will fill out their method of distribution screen with that detail and once that process is completed they know what their projects are they can go back into the action plan through the amendment process to complete the project screen.

Chris: Great. I do want to at the very end just highlight where all of the resources are on the HUD Exchange but I think we have time, Jon for a few more questions.

Jon: Okay, great. So we did have some questions come in on amendments. We will focus on those. So one question is – what is the difference between a substantial amendment and a non-substantial amendment?

Chris: That is a great question. I think, Beth, I think that is one of the most frequent questions you and I get as it relates to amendments. There is two places that you should be looking in understanding the definition of a substantial amendment. The first is the regs on amendments which is that CFR part 91.505 describing amendments and second and more importantly is your citizen participation plan and your citizen participation plan is where you are defining both what is a substantial amendment, but you are also describing the process that you as a grantee will be carrying out to complete those amendments to engage the public, to engage your council, to engage other stakeholders as you work through the amendment process.

So it varies quite a bit in terms of what is a substantial – doesn't vary quite a bit but it does vary some for what is a substantial amendment for one grantee versus another. So always important to look at your citizen participation plan.

Beth: That's right, Chris. So basically, you want to follow the regulation at 91.505 that's clearly lays out what qualifies as a substantial amendment. And then your citizen participation plan could have added additional requirements that require a substantial amendment. That is a local decision in this participation plan as long as the requirements at 505 are also covered.

Chris: Other questions, Jon?

Jon: Okay, yeah. So we have another amendment question. How do we amend the 2013 through 2017 consolidated plan in IDIS if it is marked review completed? Ask the field office to mark it open for editing? And that is your amendment question.

Chris: A great question. Looks like we just timed out here so I will actually come back to the PowerPoint we won't go back in and log in. But if your consolidated plan or if your action plan are marked as review completed you will need to create a copy of that consolidated plan or of that action plan to create the amendment. And when you are creating a copy we will just come back a ways into our slides. When you are creating that copy either of a consolidated plan or of the action plan you would just be entering your source program year as 2016 your version and your new program year would be the same year. It would still be 2016 and then you would check the if amendment box and you would select substantial or non-substantial from that dropdown menu. That will create a complete copy of your consolidated plan or of your annual action plan and you will be able to go through, make the corresponding edits and then submit that new version to HUD. What it is doing for you and this is a security for both the grantee and for HUD is that it is not letting you overwrite that original version so you are still able to keep that within the system and it documents the revision history of your consolidated plan or of your action plan for that year so it creates a brand new version with the same years either the con plan cycle or the action plan year and you are able to update that and then resubmit that new version to HUD.

Jon: Okay, we are running a little late, but do you want to do one more question?

Chris: Yea. I think we have time for one or two more questions.

Jon: Okay. What is the process to update the citizen participation plan? Does it have to be updated along with the action plan?

Chris: That is a great question. Looks like a number of questions on citizen participation plans have come in since the question you just asked. The process for updating your citizen participation plan in part it actually should be described in your citizen participation plan what would be the process for updating that. Generally, it is something that you can do at any point in the program year. It is often done at the same time as the action plan or the con plan or now as part of the AFH. There is a requirement as you are moving into starting your AFH that all citizen participation plans need to be updated at the start of your AFH to incorporate your assessment of fair housing into that plan. And then there is the process and the requirements for your CPP are described in the regs and I don't know off the top of my head the exact citation for your citizen participation plan but it is included in 24 CFR part 91.

Beth: That is right, Chris. So for local governments entitlements it is at 91.1 and then at 91.2 if you are a state.

Chris: Thank you, Beth. Jon, I think we have time for just one more question.

Jon: Alright. Here is another one – may we amend a con plan and a path action plan prior to submission for 2017?

Chris: Absolutely. I think especially if you are making an amendment to your consolidated plan to reflect maybe it is a new target area. Maybe it is a new goal or you are revising a goal you can begin that amendment process now prior to starting your 2017 action plan you actually need to do it prior to starting your 2017 action plan so that 2017 action plan can be associated with the amended consolidated plan. Likewise, if you need to make an amendment to your 2016 action plan you can go ahead and you can start that amendment now and work through those changes and make sure

that you are able to finish that amendment before you begin your CAPER. So I know a number of you have asked questions on timing of and what is the anticipated timeline for funding, which we don't have a definite answer for you on. But if you are in a position where you do need to amend your consolidated plan you can go ahead and get started on that amendment process now while you are waiting to begin your 2017 action plan.

I do – I know we just have one minute left so I would just like to highlight where all of the resources are that we have talked about and we will make sure to send all of these out to you. We will also be putting the transcript and the PowerPoint slides and a recording of this PowerPoint if you just couldn't quite get enough of Beth, Jon and me talking you can listen to it again. All of that will go up on the HUD Exchange. But we will also send out links to where are all of the con plan resources that are available and they are all on the HUD Exchange on the consolidated plan and on the eCon planning site.

And what I do just want to point out here we are in our last minute is the set of quick guides and these walk you through step by step transitionally how to create a con plan, create a year two or a year three action plan if you are a state grantee, if you are a consortia grantee, if you are a regional grantee, amend your consolidated plan or amend your action plan and then create a CAPER. So we will make sure to send all of these links out to you after today's session and we will also send you an email when the content from today's session gets posted on the HUD exchange.

With that, I know we are just about out of time. Thank you all for joining us. Beth and Jon thank you so much for joining and presenting with us today. Good luck everyone on your action plans and on your amendments.