

Ben: Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us for today's webinar on the Best Practices for setting up the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan in the e-Con Planning Suite.

My name is Ben Sturm, and I work with The Cloudburst Group.

Before we get started, I would like to share a couple housekeeping notes regarding today's session. This webinar is scheduled for 90 minutes; however, there is a chance that the session could run longer if needed. We are also expecting a large number of you in attendance, so all lines are muted.

The session will be recorded, so the recording and PowerPoint slides will be made available on HUD Exchange within the following week.

If you look at your WebEx control panel on the righthand side of your screen, please take note of the following. Computer Audio. If you would like to change your audio settings from phone to computer, please be sure to click the Click Start menu on the top left of your WebEx screen, and then go to Audio Conference section to switch the selection from phone to computer audio.

The Chat Pod, by default, is set to host. Please use the dropdown arrow to select Presenter Panelist Host option.

The Q&A pod. All questions should be submitted through the questions pod. By default, this pod is not automatically selected, so please now take the time to locate and click on the Q&A pod so that it is added to your screen. The Q&A icon should be located within your control panel at the top righthand side of your screen.

We will be stopping throughout today's session to answer questions that are submitted through the Q&A pod, so please submit your questions as you're thinking about them, and we'll respond to them when appropriate. If we're not able to get to your questions today, you can go ahead and submit it through the HUD Exchange Ask A Question e-Con Planning suite.

If you are having technical issues related to audio or screen sharing, please also submit those questions through the Q&A pod on the control panel.

Joining me today are my colleagues Rob Sronce and Joel Warren as well as Gloria Coates from the Office of Block Grant Assistance.

Before discussing today's objectives, we would first like to get an idea of where everyone is at in their current Con Plan cycle. When I read aloud each cycle, please click the hand icon on the control panel to indicate which is the most appropriate for you.

So let's give a raise of hands for who is currently in their 2015-2019 Con Plan cycle? Okay, we see a good number of you for 2015-2019, and this indicates that a lot of you are getting ready to gear up for developing your 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan.

Let's see who here is currently in the 2016-2020 Con Plan cycle.

And how about the 2017-2021?

2018-2022?

And finally, let's give a raise of hands for 2019-2023.

Okay. Particularly those that are currently in the 2015-2019 and 2019-2023, today's objectives will be speaking directly to you as we will look to correctly set up a new Consolidated Plan template in IDIS, incorporate new program requirements into the Con Plan, and correctly set up a new annual Action Plan. This will be the second year of your Action Plan.

So those that are currently in the 2019-2023 cycle, you may be looking to create your first year two Annual Action Plan. And we will be addressing that at the end of today's presentation.

At this time, I would like to turn this over to my colleague, Rob Sronce.

Rob: Thank you, Ben. I appreciate it. Hey, welcome everybody. Thanks for joining us today.

So we've got a few – I'll advance the slide there. Here we go. We have a few reminders/updates from HUD. I'd like to take the opportunity, now that we have your attention, to remind you of a few things.

First, we do have a federal budget through September 30<sup>th</sup> and we have formula year FY '19 formula allocations, so those of you submitting as soon as August, you know how much money you have, which is always nice. Not always the case.

We want to remind you, in the case – it's a great notice – but HUD CPD Notice 19-01 does talk about what to do if we do not have allocations and also some other really valuable information in there, reminding you that the drop-dead statutory submission date is August 16, 2019. It also talks about how to plan when there's not an allocation award.

So I do recommend that you go to that, view it closely. If you do have any questions about that notice or about this process, please reach out to your CPD rep. We're not fielding questions about this in particular today.

With that out of the way, we'd like to get into how to actually create your Con Plan in IDIS. And remember, if you have any questions, use that Q&A pod, and we'll get to them as soon as we can. We have plenty of time at the end to answer questions, so we will do that, get to all of them as we can, time permitting.

Also, remind you that we have an Ask A Question for e-Con Plan. So if you have any questions after this, you can always ask how do to something and then access your e-Con Plan. Please remember, we have the IDIS e-Con Plan or Ask A Question for e-Con Plan.

So there are two paths to create your next Con Plan. You can copy, or you can create a new one. So the example here is your 2015-2019 Con Plan. This can be any Con Plan period three to five years long, and you can, again, edit-revise, copy-edit-revise, or create a new one and enter new content.

There are some pros and cons and caveats for each of these. Copying is kind of handy. It migrates all the information and the narratives from your last Con Plan, including typos. So you must review that copied information. And there it is; you must update it. Dates, things that have changed. You must carefully review it. It does update to the most current dataset, so that data will be updated in different sections. We'll go over those today.

We want to make a note that you cannot change programs or the PHA selected. If you copy, that carries over. You cannot change those things. So if you're planning for a new program, one not included in the last Con Plan, for example, you started administering ESG, you cannot copy. You need to create a new one. Also, do not use this if you need to update or correct the selected PHA. You cannot change those.

And a new one, you start from a clean slate, which is nice sometimes. You start from scratch. The default data are loaded in there for you. You need to complete all those fields and tables. They will be blank and empty, ready for you.

You can, and you must select your programs and your PHA. But in either case, whichever one you use, you can update, copy and paste text that you draft locally in a work document or the Word version that you downloaded of your last Con Plan. Which, by the way, you can copy and paste into those; you can update all those fields. It's a little handy sometimes to copy.

Remember, if you're a new Entitlement community, you have to create a new Con Plan; there's nothing there to copy. And if you're not sure, remember about your particular situation, remember we do have Ask A Question for e- Con Plan. And then we'll be glad to help you if you submit a question.

All right. Right, Ben, I'll pass it back to you.

Ben: Thank you, Rob, for that plug on the HUD Exchange AAQ desk for e-Con Planning Suite.

Rob: You bet.

Ben: So first, before we get into IDIS, we're going to briefly touch on the first way that we can create a new Con Plan, and that is by adding a new, blank template.

To add a new Con Plan, we first want to click Add in in Consolidated Plan submenu. And this really gives – well, why don't we go ahead. We'll jump into IDIS, and we'll show exactly what this looks like. So bear with me just as I start sharing my screen.

When you log into IDIS, to create a Con Plan, you're first going to want to go to what we call the e-Con Planning Suite. The e-Con Planning Suite is not a separate system; it's really essentially a tab in the IDIS system. It is found in the Plans, Projects and Activities. So when you log in, first click the Plans, Projects and Activities tab, and then you will notice a number of subsections on the left-hand side of your screen.

We have your Project section, Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and the Consolidate Annual Performance Evaluation Report, also known as the CAPER.

Today we're going to look at how we create a new Consolidated Plan. So to create a new plan in the system, first we will click the Add link in the Con Plan submenu. Once we're on the setup screen, also known as AD-25, we want to enter the Strategic Plan beginning year and ending year.

What these years are, the start year – the Strategic Plan beginning year – is the first program year of the Con Plan. So say we're getting ready to start our 2020-2024 program year Consolidated Plan. For my start year, I am going to put 2020. For the end year, I'm going to put the last program year of my Con Plan cycle. So this would be 2024.

You will enter a title for your Con Plan. There's no official guidance for what the title should consist of. The title will be displayed on the cover and at the top of each page of the printed report, so this could be changed even after the plan is created.

Next, we have the plan version. This field identifies different versions of a plan for the same beginning year. The version cannot be edited after the plan has been created. Also, when you copy a plan, you always need to enter the

plan version ID exactly as it was entered when the Con Plan was first created. So, as a best practice, it's always best to keep the plan version as simple as possible. Either a numeric value or something that's very – not as many characters, no capitals, something that's easy to copy over.

So since we're adding a new blank template, we're going to keep the amendment section as not applicable. Now, when you add a new blank template, by default, the system will check all of your programs, all of your CPD programs. If you don't receive a certain CPD program, such as if you don't receive HOPWA funds, just go ahead and unselect it. If you don't receive ESG, unselect it, and the same with CDBG and HOME. So make sure you are looking at what is checked for programs included.

And at least one selection must be indicated in order to create the plan. So if you don't have any checkmarks for any of these programs, then you're not going to be able to create your plan. You'll probably receive an error message at the top of this screen.

Okay. If you receive housing trust funds, states would most likely select yes. If you are a subgrantee that receives CDP HDF funds from a state, you would select Yes.

Next, for Consolidated Plans, make sure that you select one of the three types of grantee. You can have grantee; this would be your regular entitlement state and entitlement grantees.

If you are part of a home consortium, and this is very important for all consortium members out there today, only the lead entity of a home consortium can create the Consolidated Plan. If you are a lead entity setting up your Con Plan for your consortium, you would select the consortium type. If you are a lead entity setting up a regional Con Plan, you would select regional. Today we are going to select grantee.

And you also notice when you do add a new template, if you created a previous Con Plan in the system and added alternate data sources, those sources will automatically be added to your new Con Plan. You can choose whether or not you want those sources included. So if you do not want them included in your plan, you can check the box listed in the Do Not Include in Plan column.

Finally, you'll want to select a Public Housing Agency. You will not be able to create your plan unless you select a PHA. So to do that – and I kind of jumped the gun a little bit – you will simply just select the PHA button, and you can easily find your PHA by just clicking the search button and that will generate a list of all of the Housing Authorities within your area. And if you have a lot in your region, it may take you a little bit to find the right housing authority.

So once you do select your housing authority, just go ahead and click the select button. Take a final look to make sure everything has been entered correctly, and then click save.

And you have successfully created your Consolidated Plan.

By default, you'll be taken to the Con Plan submenu, but if you want to make sure that your plan has been listed in the Con Plan list, you just click the cancel button, and then you'll notice you'll see your new plan with your new start year included with your total Con Plan list.

All right. so that is how you add a new blank template in IDIS.

Now, we're going to discuss the second way of how you can create a new Con Plan which is copying the previous Con Plan. So I'm going to jump out of IDIS, and we're just going to briefly talk about how you would create a new Con Plan by copying the previous Con Plan.

When creating a new Con Plan by copying the previous Con Plan, it is important to first make note of the year and version of the plan to be copied. You can easily do this by clicking the search link in the Con Plan submenu and taking a note of looking at your Con Plan list and making sure that you identify the plan that you want to copy.

Sometimes you may have multiple Con Plans for the same cycle. Some may have been amendments, some may have been corrections, so it's always best to look at your most recent Con Plan that is marked review and completed, and then take note of the version ID and the start year.

On the copy screen, after you click copy in the Con Plan submenu, you want to enter the source year and version from the plan that's going to be copied. So ensure that you enter the version exactly as it appeared in the previous plan. So if you're creating your 2020-2024 Con Plan by copying your 2015-2019 Con Plan, you will enter 2015 in the source Con Plan start year, and then you will enter the exact version ID that was originally selected for that Con Plan.

Next, you will enter the start year and end year and Version for your new Con Plan. So you would enter 2020 for the start year, 2024 for the end year and any unique identifier that you would like to use for your version ID.

Again, anytime you are creating a new plan, you will ignore the If Amendment drop down menu.

And then, just click the copy button, and that will create your new Con Plan.

Again, for consortia grantees, only the lead entity can copy plans. So if you are a participating member of a home consortia, wait until your lead entity has created your Consolidated Plan in IDIS. Once the lead has created the plan, the system will automatically generate a template in IDIS for you to use in your entitlement programs.

So there is a number of resources on HUD Exchange that you can use to help you through these processes. We suggest always looking at the Con Plan in IDIS Desk Guide and well as the Quick Guides that we have as well. And there are specific Quick Guides that are for state and entitlement grantees, for regional grantees, and consortia grantees as well. These Quick Guides provide step by step instructions that you can use to help create your Con Plan, either by adding a new blank template or by copying a previous version.

And once again, some reminders for Consortia Grantees, the Con Plans and Action Plans can only be created by the Consortia lead entity. And as I just mentioned a little bit ago, when the lead entity creates the Con Plan or a year two to five Annual Action Plan in IDIS, the system will automatically add that template for the participating entitlement grantees. The participating members would then use that template to report on their entitlement programs, whether it's CDBG, ESG, or even HOPWA.

And the lead entity would report on all HOME program requirements for activities in their Con Plan and Action Plan.

In addition, only the lead entity can submit the Con Plan or Annual Action Plan in IDIS. So as a participating member, after you've updated your template, it's a best practice to notify your lead entity so that they have a better idea of when they can submit the plan. Because once they submit their plan, the system will automatically submit the Con Plan or Action Plan for all participating grantees as well.

Okay, Rob, I'm going to turn it back over to you to talk a little bit about the Con Plan template.

Rob: Great. Thank, Ben.

I see lots of questions coming in. That's great. Please use that Q&A pod. We're going to answer those live as we can, and then we'll go through those and we'll curate them, and at the end we'll field some questions from you. So keep those coming. Thank you.

So now we've talked about how to create the Con Plan. We'll talk about what's actually in the Con Plan template and how to complete it, how to fill it out.

So there are seven sections in the Con Plan template. In IDIS, you're going to see seven different sections with a number of different screens. There are the AD screens. Let's start with ADs. So those are your setup screens.

ES screens which are executive summary.

The PR screens that talk about your planning process where you talk about how you conducted your Consolidated Plan.

The NA screens which is your Needs Assessment.

MA are Market Analysis, your housing market analysis.

SP is a Strategic Plan.

And then the AP screens are that first year Action Plan that, remember, is embedded within our five-year Con Plan.

So to walk you through what you're going to see when you go in there, every section will have screens or pages. Sorry, we sort of inherited screens from the old days of IDIS. But also are these different web pages that you'll go to; we'll call them screens. They'll have tables, have short answer fields, have text boxes. Each field's going to have a prompt next to it that will communicate to you HUD's baseline expectation for the response.

Some of the fields will be pretty clear about what you can add in them. On a lot of fields you'll find some links that will allow you to provide more detail. You can upload maps. You can add custom tables. You can add images. And all those text fields you find in there are going to have a couple tools there at the top, simple formatting tools such as bold, underline, italicize, bullets, spell check. And also, we do want to call out that you do not want to use the Paragraph for the HTML tools. Those are problematic, so please don't use those.

So those text boxes that you'll have there will expand as you enter text. They're going to dynamically expand. There's no vertical scrolling in there. If you want to make that box a little bigger you can. You can just drag the little right-hand corner; you can expand that box and make a little more room for yourself. So you've got that 4,000-character limit, so you can use it. Sorry, CPD reps out there, but you've got 4,000 characters in those text boxes there.

Remember, that's including any hidden characters in there, so make sure you're a little bit short of that 4,000 characters. I'm sure your reps would appreciate that.

Let's see. Pasting. You can paste in. That supports some minimal formatting. We do ask that you use those little widgets there, the little texts, paste and

text or paste and Word widget. That will help you from getting all the gobblygook in your screens when you download them.

Again, be aware of those little characters is there. So use those widgets there, those paste from widgets, they paste from text or Word, so you don't get some strange symbols in your text.

Next – we had a question about this, too – so within the Need Assessment and Market Analysis sections, there are data that are in these static tables. And in each table, depending on which table it is, you're going to see one of four things. Also, regarding which table it is and the availability of the data that are called for in the table, you're going to see one of four things.

You're going to see the default provided data filling the entire table, or you'll see it filling some but not all of the table. So parts of those, either it's not available or the expectation is you will provide that data. Or there is no provided data to fill the table. It's empty. In that case, you'll need to provide those responses from your own data source. Or, the fourth one, you have provided data in lieu of the HUD provided default data, and we'll talk a little bit more about that later.

So depending on where you are in the Con Plan, one or more of those – one of those things will be true. It's either going to completely fill, partially populate, you provide some, or it's empty and you provide it all.

So in the first case that the data source, it's HUD provided data. It'll be identified as related to you, so your data, based on who you are, will populate the table.

In the other cases, you're going to need to tell us where that data is coming from. So if you're providing it, you need to make sure you note where that data is from.

And we'll talk more later, but you can select also alternate data sources. And you should be seeing – it updated ACS/CHAS data, so the 2011-2015 set. So you should be seeing that. If not, please submit to Ask A Question, and we'll see what's going on there.

Use of Alternate Data. You are able to use alternate data in some of the sections. You'll click that button. That'll make the table editable. The system will then walk you through how you provide a description of that data, noting that not all of those fields are required.

There'll be a couple buttons. One is Survey Data, and one is Administrative Data. Just quickly here, Survey is informal surveys and formal local studies, so either of those are considered survey data. A formal study is one that's developed with social science methods, and then an informal one is just one

that you have crafted yourself.

The Administrative data source would be something like permits, records, code enforcement records, other state and local, national sources like the HMDA data, unemployment, something like that, so you can add those other sources as administrative data.

We do want to note that once a source is added, if an alternate data source is added, it will be available as an alternate data source for the data table in the Needs Assessment and our Market Analysis sections. And this data source will remain in the system in perpetuity, so the next time you create a plan you have to deselect it so that you don't want to use it in your future plans, otherwise, it will live in IDIS forever.

As we mentioned, there are a number of places at the end of fields to add additional information at the bottom of tables, text boxes, a couple links down there. There's one for adding a jpeg image. There's one where you can add some additional text. You can create a custom table. You've got to click those links and then follow the prompts on how to do that.

Note that the CPD maps connection is not currently working, so please don't use that. But feel free to use the add jpeg, text, or table if you need to add some more information.

For each field, almost every field, but definitely every section, there's going to be a regulatory citation to give you some guidance as to what is HUD asking for here? In addition to the prompts, there's going to be that citation, so this is the requirement that you're fulfilling. So in this case, Housing Need Assessment, 24 CFR 91.305 (a, b, and c). So if you want to know which regulatory requirement you're meeting, that's it. You can refer to those requirements in the regulations. You can go directly to the Code of Federal Regulation, e-CFR. And then we have the link there in the slide. You can also just google e-CFR to find it.

Please also just consult the HUD Exchange. Lots of great resources there. And, of course, your CPD rep.

When you're all done, remember you submit your Con Plan through IDIS. This is the official submission. Remember to submit by your review deadline, and no later than August 16<sup>th</sup>. Do not wait until August 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>. Allow some time for technical difficulties. We really encourage you to do this well in advance of your deadline or when you want to submit it.

Make sure you have all required attachments signed and ready. If you don't know what those are, again, talk to your CPD rep and make sure you confer with them what their expectations are to have attached and uploaded in IDIS, what they want to have emailed to them, what they want to have Fed Ex-ed.

Make sure that's clear well before that deadline.

Before you submit, you can use the quality check button that's indicated there. It'll pop out a number of error message to show missing information or some of the issues. Look through those, just scroll through those. See if there's something that flags that you need to address.

Some of them, in fact, a lot of them, may not apply. They're really meant to call out things for your attention like, hey, did you mean to leave this empty? However, there may be some things in there that are real issues that will result in your plan being rejected as incomplete. So make use of that. Go through it and see which ones apply. It's a good tool, though a lot of them are just sort of FYI to let you know that there's something missing here.

You do not need to clear that QC before you submit. If you want to know what all those error message mean, a look at Appendix A of the desk guide, and it talks about those error messages there.

To actually submit it, you use that drop down, change the status to submitted. Hit save and return, and you're on your way.

We wanted to take this time, while we have your attention, to call out some new planning requirements. Remember, we're not taking policy questions today, but we would just like to remind you of these things again while we have your attention. If you have any policy questions, make sure you reach out to your CPD rep and check out the HUD Exchange.

First one, Broadband Access. So all plans created after January 1, 2018 must address the availability of broadband access. This adds a requirement for consultation and a requirement in the housing market analysis. The new consultation requirements are that you talk to public and private organizations about broadband access, including local ISPs, internet service providers, and organizations who are involved in narrowing the digital divide.

In your Housing and Market Analysis, you want to look at the broadband needs of housing that is occupied by low- and moderate-income households. You're going to analyze that data based on access for low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

There should be a local and a state specific analysis.

You're also going to want to look at specific broadband needs such as wiring, connectivity within household units, and the level of competition in the local market for internet services.

There are some data sources available that I'd like to call out. One is a

national broadband map and also, the broadband availability that SEC puts out. I want to note that there's not any specific goals or projects that are mandated here. It's really at your discretion to determine how you include this in your five-year Strategic Plan and your annual actions plans; however, the consultations and the analysis is required.

The next one – the first one was broadband – now we're moving to Resiliency – is to evaluate the vulnerability of housing occupied by low-mod households to natural disasters. This impact both consultation – so additional consultation in housing market analysis requirements. Again, a lot of agencies involved in land management, public lands, water resources, agencies involved in emergency management, emergency response, if you consult with those.

And then you have Housing Market Analysis, talk about the availability of low-mod occupied housing to natural disasters specifically associated with climate change. So the possibility, the increasing likelihood of impact due to climate change, impact from natural disasters.

Remember, as you're doing these consultations, that's all going to be noted in the Con Plan. So as you do these consultations, you're going to need to plug them into your Con Plan so that we know that you've done them and the results of those consultations.

And some data sources. You can look at your state or local FEMA approved hazard mitigation plan. You can also look at a great guide called the Community Resilience Planning Guide put out by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. And that's available, just go others [www.nist.gov](http://www.nist.gov), or just search for this document and it'll pop right up. You should be able to find it.

Again, there's no specific goals or projects, and it's at your discretion on how you discuss this, but the analysis is required.

EnVision Centers. So EnVision Centers. So this is a HUD initiative that's seeking to empower residents of HUD assisted housing to become responsible homeowners and renters out in the private market. Check of CPD Notice 18-04 that talks about EnVision Centers. There are also, again, there's a consultation requirement here. You need talk to PHAs and the residents of public housing. You also need to talk to businesses in the private sector. You need to consult with them. And again, those consultation requirements are going to be in that Notice.

EnVision Center analysis may end up being included in the Need Assessment or End Market analysis, and they may be included in the Strategic Plan

efforts around revitalization, economic empowerment, public housing priorities objectives, anti-poverty strategy and coordination efforts you may have with the business community and with the PHA.

Next one is Opportunity Zones. So this is not a required element, but we'd like to mention the opportunity zones. So this was created in the 2017 Tax Act to provide some tax benefits for investments in designated areas, areas designated as opportunity zones. Every state has opportunity zones.

HUD really encourages you to consider this designation as an area to target investment, and also wants to note that opportunity zones may overlap with neighborhood revitalization strategy areas or be part of a NRSA strategy or other geographically targeted efforts. Be aware of opportunity zones; know which ones are there. HUD would like to see you coordinate your investment with private sector investment, both public and private sector investment coordination.

And I was going to say last but not least, but it's not last. Section 108. HUD just wanted to remind you that Section 108 loans have some preapplication planning and citizen participation, public notice, public involvement requirements. So it's really wise to address those in your Con Plan and Strategic Plan rather than having to back an amend it.

We also want to make notes that states, you need to address Section 108 in your method of distribution. And again, if you have questions about this, reach out to your rep.

Note that the citizen participation requirements for individually funded projects after the 108 award still apply, so public noticing, amendments that involve new projects funded with 108, that has to be done after those commitments are made and as those planning actions are done. But there are some preapplication planning and participation requirements you can get out of the way at the Con Plan when you're doing it originally.

Oh yes, existing plan Section 108 Debt Service should be discussed in your plan. So if you have a 108 loan, actually applying to have one, you'd talk about debt service in your Con Plan.

There are some very specific pre-submission requirements for entitlement communities. Please talk to your field office and HUD headquarters financial management division. They can help you make sure that you're meeting those requirements. And again, this is not complete. We just wanted to remind you.

States, as well, have some very specific requirements. You need to make sure you're talking to your field office about that and headquarters.

Disaster. So remember all of your disaster, CDBG disaster recipients. Yes, the compound requirements are waived for DR funding when its appropriated. You want to do that, so you can get that funding out right away. Disaster funding, it's emergency funding.

But we want to remind you that waiver is time limited, but that actual time limited depends on the appropriation. What we want to remind you is that your DR funds may now be subject to the Con Plan requirements, so make sure you check out this guidance that we have linked here and consult with your CPD rep. And, of course, always look at that exchange. But make sure that you're aware. We just wanted to remind you that you may have new Con Plan requirements that are applied here to your DR funding.

So I'm going to pass it back to you now, Ben, to talk about Strategic Plan and Action Plan.

Ben: All right. Thank you, Rob.

And now we get to the fun stuff. Talking about the Strategic Plan and the Action Plan section.

Let's now talk about really how the Strategic Plan aligns with the Annual Action Plan and how that aligns with your projects, and then how the projects align with your IDIS activities.

It is important to keep in mind that the information entered in the Strategic Plan is to cover the entire cycle of the Consolidated Plan. So if you are set on a five-year cycle, your Strategic goals will need to cover that five-year period. You will want to identify all goals for the five years that you plan to accomplish throughout your cycle.

You may not be working towards them every single year, but you want to think five years out. What goals do I want to accomplish? What are my priority needs for the five years, and what goals are we going to take to accomplish to meet those priority needs?

You'll enter you goals on the SP-45 goal screen in the Strategic Plan. When setting up your strategic goals, you'll need to select Goal Outcome Indicators to specify the proposed numeric accomplishments your jurisdiction hopes to achieve over the course of the Strategic Plan.

When setting up the first year Action Plan, much of the data entered in the Strategic Plan will filter into the Action Plan screens. For example, the AP-15 anticipated resources table will not be editable for your first year Action Plan

because the funding information for the first year would have already been entered into the SP34 anticipated resources screen in your Strategic Plan.

So when you go to your Anticipated Resources for your first year Action Plan, if you can't edit your table, don't fret, just look back at what was entered for the first year on your SP-35 table in your Strategic Plan and just make sure that those amounts for the first-year column are accurate for your first year's Action Plan. And then when you set up the next years Action Plan, you will be able to edit that table for that specific year.

Now, when you're adding your annual goal on the AP-20 goal screen of your first year Action Plan, you can only select the goals that were first identified on that SP-45 goal screen of the Strategic Plan. You may not want to add all of your strategic goals that you've identified, you only want to add the goals that you anticipate in meeting the accomplishments for in that specific program year. But you won't be able to add any new goals that weren't identified in your Strategic Plan.

And that's really important to keep in mind for when you do go ahead and create your future Action Plans between years two and five of your cycle. If you have new goals that come up that you want to meet that were not identified in your Strategic Plan, you're not going to be able to add them in your Action Plan without first amending your Consolidated Plan.

Now, when adding an annual goal on AP-20, after you select it from the dropdown list of strategic goals, when you go to set up those goals, you need select the same goal outcome indicators that were originally selected for that strategic goal in the SP-45 screen.

Of course, the values that you enter may be different, but it's important to keep in mind the alignment between how the strategic goals are set up to how the annual goals are set up. So when you set up your annual goal, make sure you select the same goal outcome indicators that were selected in the strategic plan section for that same goal.

Now, we will be discussing projects in more detail later on, but when you go to add your project in the Annual Action Plan, you also want to select the same goal outcome indicators for the associated goal, for the annual goal that project is associated to. And in a little bit, we'll give an example of what this looks like.

So why do we do all this? Why are we aligning the strategic goals, annual goals, the goal outcome indicators for the strategic goals, annual goals, and the projects in the Action Plan? Well, when setting up your activities in IDIS, you'll want to use the suggested CDBG matrix code or home activity types

that are paired with each goal outcome indicator that's selected in the associated project.

All goal outcome indicators have a suggested pairing with the CDBG matrix code or home activity type. And these are listed in Appendix B of the Con Plan Desk Guide in IDIS. And the ultimate reason why you want to make sure these are aligned correctly so that you can set yourself up for accurate CAPER reporting when you go ahead and create your CAPER at the end of your program year.

CAPERs generate from how the different sections are set up in IDIS. They pull information from your Strategic Plan, from your Annual Action Plan and from your projects.

Now, this next diagram will kind of give a little more clear example of the alignment. Again, you start with your SP-45 goals, which then connect your AP-20 goals. And then, for the AP-35 projects, your Action Plan, you associate each project to a goal and select the same goal outcome indicators that was originally selected for that annual goal and strategic goal. And then when you set up your activities, the matrix codes or home activity types for the activity that you're creating should be aligned with the outcome indicators that were initially selected during the setup of your Con Plan and Action Plan.

So when you are creating your strategic goals, it's important to keep in mind the type of activities that you eventually see being tied to these goals through projects. You want to make sure that the type of activities that would be under this goal would meet the suggested pairing of the goal outcome indicator that you'll be selecting during the goal setup.

And here's an example of what this could look like. So say we have a rehabilitate existing housing stock in a neighborhood. That's a strategic goal. For the goal outcome indicator selected, we're selecting 200 homeowner units to be rehabbed when you add your annual goal in the first year Action Plan on the AP-20 screen and you add the rehabilitate existing housing stock option.

When you set that goal up, again, you will make sure that you're selecting the same goal outcome indicator that was selected on the SP-45 screen in the Strategic Plan: 40 homeowner units rehabbed. Of course, the only value is what you anticipate accomplishing for that program year. Looking back at the strategic goal, the value entered is what you anticipate accomplishing for the five-year period.

Now moving on to your project, you set up a project in your Action Plan for a

homeowner rehab. You associate that project with the annual goals to rehabilitate existing housing stock in neighborhood x. Since you selected the homeowner units rehabbed indicator for the annual goal, you want to make sure you select that same indicator for your project and enter the value 40 units.

Sometimes your project may be tied to multiple goals, so the value may not always be the same as what was listed for the goal. But as long as you're selecting the same indicator, that should lead to correct CAPER alignment when you do create your CAPER at the end of the program year.

Now after you set up your project, at a later point you can create your IDIS activity. And say, for this example, we have 53 Main Street rehab, it is tied to the homeowner rehab project which is listed on the Action Plan. The matrix code set up for this activity is number 14A, which will align with homeowner units rehabbed.

So now let's talk a little bit more about setting up projects. For each program year, grantees must create new projects and add them to the AP-35 project screen in the Annual Action Plan. Projects provide a concise summary of the eligible programs or activities that will take place during the program year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the Strategic Plan.

More importantly, projects bridge a grantees' activities accomplishments in IDIS with the associate annual goals selected for that program year. The correct alignment between the Annual Actions Plans project and the IDIS activities is key when preparing your CAPER.

So we're briefly going to go over some of the best practices and tips and tricks with projects. However, there is additional information such as a project setup webinar and project setup quick guide that's available on the HUD Exchange.

So after today's session, if you want to learn more about projects, we highly encourage you to go to the consolidated plan web page on HUD Exchange, and under the featured resources, you should be able to find Quick Guide for Setting Up Projects as well as a webinar that speaks specifically to the setup of projects in the Annual Action Plan.

So new projects can be setup one of two ways. You can create a new project directly in the Annual Action Plan through the AP-35 project screen. This method should be used by all entitlement grantees, and state grantees are encouraged to use this method too, even though state grantees are not required to add project level detail on the AP-35 project screen. Much of that

information is included on the AP-30 Methods of Distribution screen.

But still, to ensure accurate CAPER reporting, grantees will need to add their IDIS projects to the Annual Action Plan if they want their actual accomplishment data to populate correctly into the CAPER. So if the detail is known ahead of time, state grantees are encouraged to set up their projects in the Action Plan. If not, they can create a project in IDIS through the submenu. And then at a later point direct the program here, they can add that project through an amendment to the AP-35 project screen in the Action Plan.

And that is the second way you create a project. You can create it in the IDIS project submenu. But again, the recommended way to set up projects now is through the AP-35 project screen in the Annual Action Plan.

A common misconception about grantees that create the Annual Action Plan by copying a prior year's Action Plan is that projects copied over are automatically updated to the new program year. This is not the case. When a prior year Action Plan is copied to create the current year Action Plan, it copies over the prior year projects into the current plan.

So as soon as a project is created on the AP-35 project screen, it is automatically added in IDIS. As a best practice tip number one, we ask that you avoid duplicated projects in the system. Make sure someone else doesn't setup the same project separately. Someone may be setting up projects in the Action Plan while someone else is setting up projects in IDIS.

It's important to make sure that before you create a project, whether it's in the Action Plan or in IDIS, run a project search in your projects IDIS submenu and select the program year that you're setting your Action Plan up for. And just make sure that there isn't already projects created for that program year. If there is, you can simply add them to your Action Plan instead of creating a new project. If you don't have a project created for that program, you can create the new project through the AP-35 project screen.

As soon as you create the project in the Action Plan, it will automatically be added to IDIS. However, when you create a project in IDIS, that project will not automatically be added to your AP-35 projects table. So that is why, again, we recommend setting up your projects in the Annual Action Plan because that ensures that your project is associated with the correct annual goal, and you just set yourself up for better CAPER reporting when you do go ahead to create your CAPER at the end of the program year.

Another tip, which I just briefly touched on, projects not included in the AP-35 screen will not link to the CAPER. So if you're only creating your projects

in IDIS and not adding them to the Action Plan, then that project is not going to be associated with the accomplishment then that populates on the CAPER.

So, again, make sure that however you choose to setup your IDIS projects that you do in fact add them to your AP-35 projects screen, whether that's by creating a new project or adding an existing project. That way you can set yourself up for better reporting in the CAPER.

In the Action Plan, when you are setting up your project detail, and this is, again, on the AP-35 project screen of the Action Plan, you would want to make sure you select the annual goal that project was associated to and enter the goal outcome indicators. As we indicated before, you want to use the same goal outcome indicator that was selected for the annual goal that project is associated to.

Some other details about the project setup is the AP-35 projects table lists out the projects added for the Action Plan. It also lists a number on the table. It is called the sort column. It's important to not confuse the sort number for the IDIS project number. This sort number just indicates what order the projects are listed in the Action Plan on the AP-35 screen. That number does not indicate the actual IDIS project ID number.

The ID number is created as soon as you create that project either in IDIS or the Action Plan. It's system generated, and you are not able to edit it.

Also, when you add your projects, make sure you look at the program year. The program year should be at the top of the project detail screen, and make sure that program year is the same year for the Action Plan that you're working in.

If you're creating a 2019 Annual Action Plan, and your project says 2017, that means you have a prior year project. You'll want to remove that project and create a new project for the 2019 program year.

And that takes us to Creating a New Year 2-5 Annual Action Plan. And Rob, I am going to turn this back over to you for that.

Rob:

Great. Thanks, Ben, that was really helpful. Remember those tips to make sure you setup your Con Plan so your CAPERs going to work and then your subsequent Action Plans.

So I'm going to go really quick. I now it's a little after 11:00, and we've got a lot of questions. We want to be able to get to them. I'm going to go through this really quick. But remember, we do have webinars specifically on creating your Annual Action Plan, setting up projects.

There's going to be two ways. So here's where we are. It's March 2021. You just got back from Cancun. Okay, Six Flags over in St. Louis, but anyhow, you're wrapping your annual planning process. It's time to create that Year 2 Annual Action Plan. And remember, you can copy or create new.

So what we wanted to highlight is that when you copy that Action Plan, you want to make a Year 2, remember that it's buried in your Con Plan. So you're going to go to copy, and you're going to already have looked in your Con Plan to remember what version number it was and that source year, of course. And you're going to enter the new program year and version to copy that out of your Con Plan in here.

So you're just going to put that source year, maybe 2020, and your version number, whatever letter or string you had there that makes sense, and you're going to copy that to 2021. So it's in there, it's greyed in there, but it is in there, so make sure you put that program year and that version number.

Then, of course, if you want to add that this starts from scratch, create that new Action Plan, you want to add it and, again, that new program year. Give it a title, give it a version number, select your programs and associate it with that Con Plan. Make sure you do that. You got your correct program selected, and you associate it with the Con Plan. Don't forget to do that last step because otherwise it'll end up an orphan Action Plan. And remember, those fields cannot be edited once you save them, so make sure that you've got those how you want them.

Then we're going to jump right into questions.

Thanks, everyone.

Moderator: So, Rob and Ben, we have quite a few questions coming in. Starting from the top the question is the data in my Consolidated Plan says 2011-2013. First, is this accurate? And then, when will this data be updated?

Ben: If you created a new Consolidated Plan after January 1, 2019, then the data that populated should be the 2011-2015 ACS/CHAS data. There was an issue in IDIS where the labeling, even for plans that were created after January 1, the data was reflective of 2011-2015, however the labeling at the bottom of the table still said 2009-2013.

That issue has since been corrected in the last IDIS release. If you are still unsure about your data, you can always submit a question through HUD Exchange AAQ and we'd be more than happy to kind of just take a look or give you a call to discuss it.

But the data for all new plans created after January 1, the data should be the 2011-2015 ACS/CHAS data.

Moderator: Perfect. Thank you, Ben. Next question. What do we do if we need more than 4,000 characters to answer a question in the IDIS Con Plan template?

Rob: That's a great question. And we know from experience, having completed some of these, that some areas you got plenty of room and other areas you feel really squeezed to respond well.

There are some places where you can use a table. You can add additional text to the end of the question. Make use of those. Get creative with bullet language, maybe make your language a little more concise, brief.

Then, if that's not enough, and I know there's some places where it won't be, you can attach documents to your Con Plan. For example, I know that personally I provide a pretty detailed summary of public participation, and you can attach that to your Con Plan.

If you're going to attach anything, make sure you talk to your CPD rep, so they know to expect it. But that's one of the ways that you can provide a greater, more detailed response. And make sure that you refer in your response within the template that you point to, if it's somewhere else, make sure you point to it, so the reader knows where to find it and communicate with your rep that's reviewing it, of course. Good question.

Moderator: Thanks, Rob. Next question. How do we set up our Annual Action Plan to make the CAPER work more smoothly at the end of the year?

Ben: When setting up your Action Plan, there's a number of different things that you want to be mindful of in order to ensure an accurate CAPER. A big thing is make first making sure your Action Plan is associated to your Consolidated Plan. If you're in your first year Action Plan, this is easy because that first year Action Plan is part of the Con Plan template.

But if you're working in your years two to five Annual Action Plans, you want to make sure that plan is associated with the Con Plan. Because if it's not, if you somehow create a standalone Action Plan, then that Action Plan is not associated to your Strategic Plan that is set up in your Consolidated Plan. So you want to make sure that the association of the Action Plan is tied to the Con Plan.

Next, make sure your projects that are on the AP-35 screen are set up for the accurate, the correct program year. If you create your year two to five Action

Plan by copying a previous Action Plan, make sure that you remove the prior year projects that copied over, and then create new projects for that program year. Because if you continue with prior year projects, then those projects are still reporting for the previous year, and they won't accurately populate. Those accomplishments won't accurately be reflected in your CR-05 screen of the CAPER.

And then again, when setting up your annual goal, make sure that you're using the same goal outcome indicators that were selected for the strategic goal in the Con Plan. And then, when setting up the projects that you use the same goal outcome indicators as the goals, that that project is associated to.

And be sure that those outcome indicators selected are paired correctly with the CDBG matrix code or home activity types that you set your IDIS activities up for.

Now, there's a number of resources on HUD Exchange such as recordings of our CAPER webinars that we've done in the past that speak more detail to what to look for in your Action Plans and when you do create Action Plan amendments what you could be doing to prep for accurate CAPER reporting. But we do anticipate doing more of those CAPER webinars this summer. So keep a look out for anything on HUD Exchange for any notification for any upcoming webinars that we're going to put together for setting up the CAPER.

Moderator: Great. Thank you, Ben. Next question. The person asks, I have some funds left over from past years. Should I include these in the newest Action Plans and if so, how?

Rob: Good, good question. Thanks.

First, make sure you talk to your CPD rep. Let them know you've got prior year funds, how they expect to see those presented, discussed in your Action Plan, in your Strategic Plan. And also, be mindful of grant-based accounting rules. But the short answer is yes, there is a spot to talk about prior year funds that you're using in the first year and talk about resources available.

And Ben, which screen is that? I'm forgetting the number. Do you know it offhand? But there's a place in there that you can talk about your prior year funds that you're carrying forward.

And again, make sure in addition to where you enter them, that you discuss them correctly with the public when you print your plan out and you're following all your citizen participation requirements for describing the use of prior year funds. Talk to your CPD rep about that.

And do you know Ben, offhand? I can't remember what the screen number is for that.

Ben: It's the AP-15 screen. And there is a line called prior year resources, and you can enter any unexpended funds from prior years or unallocated funds from prior years in that prior year resources line of the AP-15 screen of your Action Plan.

Rob: Perfect. Thank you.

Moderator: Cool. Thank, Rob. Next question. How do we ensure that our year two through five Action Plans stay associated to our Consolidated Plan if we copy the previous plan?

Rob: Ben, do you want to field that one?

Ben: Yeah. Let's see. How do we ensure that our year two to five stays associated with our Consolidated Plan if we copy the previous plan each year?

Rob: Yes.

Ben: If you go to the AD-26 Administration screen of the Action Plan that you intend to copy, there is the Con Plan association section that tells you the Con Plan start year and the version ID of the Con Plan that the current Action Plan is associated to. So before you copy a plan, just go to that AD-26 administration screen and check the association of your Con Plan. If the Con Plan that's shown looks like it's your most recently updated Con Plan, then you can go ahead and copy that Action Plan. Because then the association will copy over into your new Action Plan because when you copy a plan, the content association copies over into the new Con Plan.

Now, if you setup, create a new Annual Action Plan by adding a blank template, and you may want to do this if you had a recent Con Plan that was amended and you want to make sure your new Action Plan is associated with that Con Plan, then you can add a new blank template and then manually associate that Con Plan on the setup with – or manually associate that Action Plan to that Con Plan on the setup of that Action Plan.

Another option that you can do, if you amended your Con Plan and that new Con Plan version is no longer – or the version that your current Action Plan is tied to is no longer the most recently updated Con Plan, when you go ahead to create your new Action Plan instead of copying the previous Action Plan, you could copy your Con Plan. So you would go through the same steps as you normally would when copying your Annual Action Plan by clicking the copy link in the Annual Action Plan sub-menu, but for the source AAP start year

and plan version, you would enter the information for your newly updated Con Plan. So you would enter your Program Year – so say your Con Plan was recently amended – you would enter the start year of that Con Plan. Let's just say it was 2015. And then for source AAP Plan version you would enter the version ID of that new Con Plan Amendment. And then you would enter your new Annual Action Plan information just as you normally would, click copy, and then your new Annual Action Plan would be created and be associated with your new Con Plan. So there's a couple ways you can create the new Action Plan and ensuring that the Association is correct to the Con Plan.

Moderator: Perfect. Thanks Ben. Next question. This person asks I have an approved Action Plan and I kept in the Prior Years projects. I've already submitted the Action Plan. What should I do to fix this?

Rob: Okay yeah, that's a real-world situation there. So if it's not approved – so if you submitted it and it's not approved you can ask for it to be rejected and then you can revise it. So contact your rep and say oops I made a mistake, please reject it, allow me to fix it. If it's been approved, you're going to need to amend it to pull those out. And again, we have a whole webinar recording about Amending Action Plans, creating a copy, and creating an amendment. And actually, I would suggest that you do submit a question to eCon Plan, IDIS eCon Plan Ask A Question desk and we can look at the specifics of what's going on there and give you the best answer we can. But short answer is we're hoping that it's not approved yet and you can just get it rejected.

Moderator: Alright, thanks Rob. Next question. What exactly does the AD Survey administrative data do? Do we need to add our own data? Is this required?

Ben: Okay, so when you want to add alternate data sources, it's not required unless there is no default data available. However, in order to add that alternate data, you first need to identify the source information on the AD-25 Administration screen of the Con Plan. So when you go to the AD-25 Administration screen you'll see two buttons that say add survey data add administrative data for whatever is most applicable you would select that button and there's a series of questions that asks for information about that data source. And you would first need to add that source information before you can select the alternate data button underneath the desired data table whether it's the needs assessment or the market analysis.

You don't have to if the default data populated, and you want to use the default data you're not required to add your own data. Only when default data is not available are you required to add your own alternate data. But sometimes the default data may not be the most compelling source to tell your story in your community and you may have other data that more accurately reflects your needs, your community. So that's one example of where you may want to add alternate data instead of default data. And to do that you would go back to your AD-25 Administration Screen and select add Administrative Survey Source or

Administrative Source buttons and just add some information about your alternate data source.

Moderator: Good deal. Thanks Ben. Next question. Can more than one person from the agency have permission in IDIS to enter information from the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan templates?

Rob: Thanks Joel. Yes. Not only can they, but they should. You know, if somebody wins the lottery tomorrow and they don't show up to work you want to make sure you have more than one person that can get in there. Each person's roles in IDIS are something your grantee administrator can do. But also you can submit the form for the IDIS Access Request form and indicate that person has the role or responsibility or the right to edit the eCon Plan, Action Plan, CAPER, and if you don't know how to do that and want to learn how to do that, submit a question to IDIS Ask A Question and we can help you with that.

But I want to emphasize not only can they – but you really should have duplication of roles just in case somebody goes out sick or like I said they win the lottery. And also make sure that you are clear on who was doing what when so that you're not writing over each other or undoing each other's work. That's the warning I have about having more than one person but please, please, please don't be the only one who can do it.

Moderator: That's a good point Rob, thanks. Next question HUD has said that HEROS works best on Internet Explorer and can have problems within Chrome. Is that also true for the Con Plan template or is Chrome an alright browser to use?

Ben: So with all HUD online systems, Internet Explorer is the recommended browser of choice. So yeah, I would say as a best practice always make sure that you're using Internet Explorer. You can use Google Chrome, but you may be susceptible to maybe some more errors, but HUD's recommended browser has always been Internet Explorer.

Moderator: Thanks Ben. Next question. If we have already created a project in IDIS that already has draws, can we add it to the AP-35 screen or will that cause a duplication?

Rob: So yeah, that's a good question but this is sort of a question within that question. So if that is already drawing down, it's already associated with an Action Plan (we hope) and so it can stay living in that Action Plan. You can continue to do things that were discussed in other Action Plans in following years. You don't need to bring those forward into your Action Plan every year. We do have a discussion about multi-year projects in one of our webinars, you can go see that. But the short answer is that you shouldn't need to do that. You can continue to undertake an activity started last year in the next year without bringing it into your current year Action Plan. Your rep may want you to talk about it somewhere in the narrative, but no you don't need to. And I don't know

Ben there could be some issues if you bring it forward, correct?

Ben: I think if you – and this may be with a state grantee who set up their project in IDIS and looking to add their project at the end of their program year - it shouldn't impact anything. I think yes, even if the project has activities that have draws on it, you can add it to your Action Plan later on in the program year through an amendment and it shouldn't have any impact that I'm aware of.

Rob: Alright looks like we have time for maybe one, maybe two more questions.

Moderator: Alright so one more question if it's a long one, two more of they're short. Ben, I think you've covered this a little bit but it's worth probably going back to because we've gotten quite a few questions about it. This person asks, so we've created our 2020-2024 in IDIS a while ago and it looks like it is drawing the 2009-2013 data. How do we update or verify if it is that data?

Ben: Well, the easiest way is to go back to your AD-25 Administration Screen and look all the way at the bottom of the screen. There is a status bar. There is a time stamp at the bottom of the screen underneath the status bar and that tells you the last time the status of your Plan was changed. So if you had not submitted your review or change the status at all it would still be in progress and that time stamp should be reflective of when you created the Con Plan.

If you created that template in 2018, then your data is definitely reflective of the 2009-2013 because the updated data is only integrated January 1, 2019 and that would only be reflected in plans that were created after January 1<sup>st</sup>. So if your plan has a 2018 date at the bottom of that AD-25 Administration Screen, then your plan was automatically updated with the 2009-2013 data. To resolve that, you can create a new plan by copying that Con Plan. That way your narrative is copied over to the new template and the data tables would then be updated with the new 2011-2015 data.

Moderator: Alright, thank you Ben. Alright so time for one last question. This person asks I'm a new director, when do you suggest that an organization begin working on the 2020-2024 Con Plan template.

Rob: Alright. Great question, great last question and congratulations on becoming a new director. The quick answer is when you hang up the phone. Well actually, seriously. If you are due, you know your program year, your next cycle starts next July, you need to start now.

At the very least start thinking about getting your timeline out so you know what sort of targets you need to hit. But you know we're having this now because this is the time when you should be thinking about your year out from, just about a year out from submitting. So you need to start thinking about it. So if your program year begins July 2020, it needs to be submitted May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – maybe it's the 16<sup>th</sup>. But yeah, right around the 45 days before your program

year begins and if you're on a different cycle, it's 45 days before your program year begins or the absolute drop deadline is always set August 16<sup>th</sup>.

So the short answer - get out there and get to work and give yourself enough time to plan out a thoughtful process and engage the public and have a plan that will serve you well for the next five years.

Ben: Okay, and I think that brings us to the end of today's session so thank you everyone for joining us today. Just some quick reminders: we will be sending out a recording of today's session as well as a transcript and a copy of the PowerPoint slides. We will be sending them out sometime next week, once they are made available and they will be posted on HUD Exchange. So keep an eye out on HUD Exchange to see when the PowerPoint slides and recording of today's webinar will be posted. We will also send out an email out to all participants today as well.

Rob: Great. Thank you, Ben and one last reminder, that if you're feeling completely lost go to the HUD Exchange. There's tons of information including an actual timeline on completing a Con Plan and the Citizen Participation Guide has a sample timeline in there.

Ben: Thank you Rob, and again if you have any other questions that we did not get to today, please submit an Ask A Question through HUD Exchange. Thank you everyone and have a great rest of the day.