

**Consortia Grantees and the eCon Planning Suite  
Webinar Transcript  
February 4, 2016  
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**

Jon Kunz: ...Consortia Grantees and the eCon Planning Suite webinar. This webinar will include a presentation geared towards Consortia members on topics such as the process for setting up consolidated plans, making substantial amendments, adding action plans and CAPERs, and troubleshooting common issues in the eCon Planning Suite. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session.

Before we get into today's content, we have a few logistical announcements. Today's webinar will be approximately ninety minutes, and is being recorded. The PowerPoint presentation transcript and recording will be posted on the HUD Exchange Training and Events page.

First, let's meet our presenters. With us today are Chris Andrews, a senior planner at the Cloudburst Group. Chris is a subject matter expert in community development planning, the consolidated plan, and the eCon Planning Suite. He is a lead trainer for the HUD eCon Planning Suite trainings and the primary author of *The ConPlan and IDIS Guide* and other resource materials.

We also have with us today Beth Hendrix, from HUD's Office of Block Group Assistance, and Peter Huber from HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Programs.

Again, today's webinar will be approximately ninety minutes, and is being recorded. The PowerPoint presentation transcript and recording will be posted on the HUD Exchange Training and Events page.

To improve the performance of the webinar application, you may wish to close email and other programs on your computer. If you are experiencing any technical difficulty, please first log off and then log in again. This may clear up the problem. You may also request assistance by using the "Question" pod on your screen and we'll do our best to quickly assist you.

Because of the large size of the audience, all attendees will remain on mute for the duration of the webcast. Your questions are important to us. You may submit questions at any time to the "Question" pod on the right side of your screen. There will be a formal question and answer session following the presentation.

The presenters will answer your questions verbally. Due to the many anticipated questions, we may not have time to answer all of them during the webinar. We will provide information on how we will address unanswered questions later in the presentation.

As we get started, we'd like to know who is with us today and the timing of your consolidated plan. TJ, can you please load up the first poll question? Great. Please look at the first poll question on your screen. Click on the appropriate button. All responses are anonymous. Once you click on the button, you can submit. You have a few more moments.

Okay, so the results we show now are about a little over half, 57%, of the participants are lead grantees and another 43% are participating grantees. Great.

So now, let's look at the second poll question, if you could load that up, please. All right. Again, if you could submit the year in which you submitted your most recent consolidated plan or perhaps you're submitting it in 2016, we'll give you a moment to submit your response.

All right. So it looks like 2015 was a very active year; 66%, with another 21% of you planning to submit your consolidated plan in 2016.

All right. With that, I'm going to turn it over to our presenter, Chris Andrews.

Chris Andrews: Great. Thank you, Jon, and good morning or good afternoon to everyone. It looks like we've got a great crowd for this webinar. So excited to really talk through the management and the process of submitting, completing, amending consortia con plans and action plans and CAPERs in the eCon Planning Suite.

The agenda for today, we're going to start with just a quick review to make sure that we're all on the same page of some of the con plan and eCon Planning Suite basics. And since we do have a number of you that, about a fifth of you, planning to submit a new consolidated plan this year in 2016, we'll take a little bit of time and go through and just talk about the process for setting up your consolidated plan and making sure that you're doing it the right way the first time.

We're going to go through a couple of examples of how to amend your consolidated plan or action plan, and we'll look at that from both the perspectives of the lead grantee and the participating grantee.

We'll then do a quick demonstration for those of you who have submitted a plan in 2015 or in 2014 or 2013 of how to go through and do your subsequent year action plans, your year two to five action plans. And again, as so many of you with plans having been submitted in 2015 or earlier, you're probably beginning to think about your CAPER. And we'll make sure to talk a little bit about the steps that you all need to do in completing your CAPER.

We'll then talk through a couple of common issues that we see often coming into the HUD Exchange AAQ or direct communication to me or to other TA providers or someone from HUD, and talk through what those issues are and how to address them.

And then finally, we will open it up to a Q&A.

Our objectives for the next hour and a half or so, we want to make sure that we're defining the roles and the responsibilities of different Consortia grantees and that everyone is feeling confident and comfortable with what those roles and responsibilities are. We want to make sure that everyone is comfortable in being able to complete the con plan and action plan setup for both the original con plan but also, amendments in IDIS. And to finally identify common issues that you may be facing and understanding and being able to describe how to address them. And speaking for myself and speaking for both Beth and Peter from HUD, our goal for the next hour and a half is to answer your questions. Please don't be shy. Submit your questions into the Q&A pod. We're going to try to get to as many questions as we can. And really, our goal is to just make sure that everyone leaving today's session is feeling more comfortable as a Consortia grantee in the eCon Planning Suite.

So to start, let's just make sure that we have a few ground rules and basics covered, that we're all agreeing. As a consortium, there's two key requirements for when you're submitting and setting your consolidated plan. All Consortia members need to be on the same grant year cycle. So if you're looking at a 2016

submission, all members need to have a con plan start year of 2016. And not only do they need to have the same start year, but you also want to have the same program year start date. So you'd want everybody in the consortia to be a July 1 start year or January 1 start year, or whatever your start year may be. If, as you're thinking about that, you're realizing that your dates or year may be different from other members of your consortium or you might not be sure, it's worth checking with everybody in your consortium to make sure that you are on the same grant year cycle and do have the same start date. And if, for some reason, those are off and if those have changed, consult with your HUD rep right away to be able to get back on cycle before starting and before submitting your consolidated plan.

So, as we're talking today, we'll be talking about a couple of different grantee types and just want to put those definitions out there so everyone is comfortable with what we're talking to today. The lead grantee, this is the PJ who is receiving the HOME funds directly from HUD. The lead grantee is responsible for submitting the consolidated plan on behalf of the consortium. And that is when the lead grantee submits the plan, that is also automatically submitting all of the non-housing community development plans through the mini-templates that are generated for all of the participating grantees, and we'll demonstrate this in more detail in a little bit.

A participating grantee, this is a consortium member who might be receiving CDBG, ESG, or HOPWA directly from HUD but is part of the HOME consortium. So the participating grantee is responsible for preparing their own non-housing community development plan in which you're describing your strategic plan for those other grants for CDBG, ESG, or HOPWA, but that's also part of the greater consortium plan.

And then finally, essentially, other members of a consortium. These are local governments that do not receive any entitlement grants, they're not receiving CDBG, ESG, or HOPWA from HUD, and they don't have any specific con plan responsibilities within IDIS. But in your own internal process, you may find a way to work with them and collaborate and get information and data from those other members.

Drilling in a little bit more detail, what are the responsibilities of the lead grantee in the eCon Planning Suite and as it relates to your consolidated plan? The lead grantee is responsible for setting up the consolidated plan for the consortium. When the lead grantee sets up that plan that automatically is creating the mini-plan for all of the other participating members. The lead grantee is responsible for completing the consolidated plan template, and as we'll discuss in a little bit, this can be done in conjunction with the other participating members. The lead grantee is responsible for submitting the consolidated plan to HUD, and because you are a consortium, when that lead grantee submits the plan to HUD, it not only submits the consortium-wide plan, it automatically submits all of those mini-templates - the CDBG-only templates - for all of the participating members.

The lead grantee is also responsible for setting up and submitting the subsequent year action plans. Just like with the consolidated plan, the lead grantee is one who creates the action plan for the consortium as a whole, and it automatically creates those mini-action plans for all of the participating grantees. And the lead grantee is also responsible for submitting that, which again, submits all of the participating grantee plans to HUD.

As a result of these setup and submitting responsibilities, it is the lead grantee's responsibility to coordinate all amendments in IDIS. Even if that amendment is just for a participating grantee and it doesn't involve the consortium plan or it doesn't involve the lead grantee, the lead grantee is still responsible for coordinating and creating and submitting that amendment in IDIS. That doesn't mean that the lead grantee is necessarily writing the amendment or making the amendment, but it is responsible for the administrative process of

creating the amendment in IDIS to allow for that participating grantee to amend their consolidated plan or action plan.

And finally, I can't say this enough and I know that Beth and Peter agree. Successful consortia are those that are coordinating often and making sure that everyone is on the same page as it relates to your consolidated plan, your action plan, your amendments, whatever it may be. Those grantees who are in regular communication are having significant more success in navigating the eCon Planning Suite.

Quickly, what are the responsibilities of a participating grantee? The participating grantee is responsible for developing their non-housing community development plans and that mini-template. The participating grantee is also responsible for contributing as requested, as required or coordinated, with the lead grantee - with the consortium lead - and other participating members to add to the broader consortium wide consolidated plan.

The participating grantee is also responsible for completing their action plan templates for their entitlement programs - for CDBG, for ESG, or for HOPWA - when it is created by the lead grantee.

And the participating grantee is also responsible for coordinating amendments with the lead grantee. If the participating grantee needs to amend their consolidated plan for their block grant program or needs to make an amendment to an action plan for the block grant program, that participating grantee needs to coordinate with the lead grantee. Because again, it's the lead grantee who is actually setting up that amendment in IDIS.

Beth or Peter, do you have anything that you'd like to add to that?

Peter Huber: Not at this time.

Chris Andrews: Great. Well, let's start to move away a little bit from the PowerPoint and we'll come over into IDIS and just talk quickly through the process for correctly setting up the consolidated plan. And so we'll be going through the setup process. Let me just pull over IDIS and hopefully, everyone is seeing my screen, is seeing IDIS. So I'm in the UAT training site, so this is going to let us do some demonstrations of what it looks like to set up a consolidated plan, and we'll also look at action plans and CAPERs here.

So, to set up a consolidated plan within IDIS, you click on the "Plans, Projects and Activities" tab. And to create your consolidated plan, you'll come over here and you see that has a menu of Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and CAPER. If, for some reason, you do not see this, you need to consult with your IDIS administrator, your local IDIS administrator, to make sure that you have this access. And again, this is just the lead grantee's responsibility of setting up the plan. The participating grantee will never be setting up a plan in IDIS.

So for the lead grantee to set up the plan, under the Consolidated Plan sub-menu here, click on "Add" and this will bring up the AD-25 – the Administration of the Consolidated Plan screen here. And we'll go ahead and enter your con plan start year, 2016, and ending year of 2020. You have to give it a title. I'm going to call it Training 4. And a version, this is the unique identifier in IDIS for your consolidated plan. And all of the lead grantees and the participating grantees will all end up with the same version. So I'm just going to call it 2.4.16 for today's date. This is not an amendment. You're going to want to make sure, for the lead grantee, that the correct programs are checked. Here, it's just CDBG and we'll check HOME and ESG, as well.

And then, this is the important stuff for a Consortia grantee, and this is where it's different than a regular grantee. Under this consolidated plan is four tabs. You want to select "Consortia" and this will open up another dialog box, another question for you where it's asking, "Does it have any participating grantees?" And this is again the participating grantee, the definition that we're using is that a grantee that's a member of the consortium that is also receiving CDBG, ESG or HOPWA directly from HUD. So, I'm going to go ahead and say "Yes" and it will then ask me to add a participating grantee. So, clicking on that button, we're in here as San Mateo County today so I'm going to add South San Francisco to that participating member, click on "Search," and here we go. South San Francisco pops up, so I check this radio button and clicked the "Select" button and South San Francisco is now incorporated into the plan. And again, make sure that you check the appropriate programs that the participating grantee is receiving. If you have multiple participating grantees in your plan, you'll go through this process, you'll add another for each participating grantee in your plan.

Once all of your participating grantees have been added – and again, this is just for the lead grantee – you need to select the public housing agencies in your jurisdiction. And, you want to select all of the public housing agencies that are operating within the consortium boundaries. So, there may be, depending on how your consortium is set up, there may be two or three PHAs in your geography. So I will go ahead and I will just search for San Mateo. Sometimes the search criteria, it's a little bit less-is-more approach to find your grantee, so I'll go ahead and click "Search." And here, I've found the Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo, so I'll check this radio box and click "Select." And what that will do, that will now, when I create my con plan template, that will bring in all of the public housing data from PIC, which is the Public and Indian Housing Information Center database, and incorporate all of that data into my consolidated plan for the County of San Mateo Housing Authority.

Once this screen is complete – and really, I urge you, urge you, urge you – double check it, triple check it. Most of this information cannot be changed once you create your template. Probably two or three times a week, I will get a phone call or an email from a grantee saying, "I forgot to check that we received ESG," or, "I forgot to add a participating grantee. I'm halfway done with my consolidated plan. Is there a way to retroactively add it?" No. You'll need to start over. So really make sure that this screen is correct and perfect before you click "Save." I've double checked everything, I've made sure that it's the correct programs included, I'm comfortable with my title and version, the start and the ending year, my PHA, my added grantees, and their programs. Come down here and I will click "Save." It's a little slow. Go ahead and this will automatically create my con plan template. And it will not just create the con plan template for the lead grantee but it will also create the con plan template for the participating grantee. And those templates are a little bit different, right? The lead grantee template is including everything. It's including everything focused on the housing and the demographics on your economic development, on your homeless of both the housing and the non-housing components on it, while the participating grantee template is just focused on the non-housing piece, because all of the housing and the demographic information is embedded within the lead grantee's plan.

So let me go ahead and I will show you what that breakdown looks like. Let's see here. I'll come over to show you what that breakdown looks like by showing you what the participating grantees looks like. And so to do that, I will just look and I will pull up the participating grantee, South San Francisco's, and go ahead and click on "View." And here, we're seeing that the template for the participating grantee is much, much, much smaller, right? It is just including the overview of the needs assessment, the focus on the market analysis for the non-housing community development piece, and then the strategic plan and action plan as it relates to the block grant program. But it's a significantly smaller template.

Now, let's just take a quick pause for a knowledge check here. TJ, if you could pull up poll question number 3, "When does a participating grantee create a con plan in IDIS?" We'll give everyone just a minute to answer that question. I'm still waiting on a few people to vote. Go ahead and vote. I'm going to start calling people out by name for those who haven't voted, so please go ahead and vote.

And great, if we can share those results. So 78% of you said that the participating grantee never creates the con plan and about 20% of you said for the grantee CDBG allocation, 2% if the participating grantee is completing an amendment. The answer is "Never," right? So just again, I mean, I really want to reinforce this. A participating grantee is never creating a con plan template. All of that is driven by the lead grantee's creation of the consolidated plan, right? And again, when that happens, it automatically creates this much smaller template for the participating grantee, where their information on CDBG or ESG or the other allocations that they're receiving directly from HUD would be entered. But the participating grantee will never, never, never create a con plan template or an action plan template in IDIS. That is driven by the lead grantee.

Peter or Beth, anything that you would like to add to that?

Peter Huber: Yeah, we're just echoing what you're said. Just never, ever, ever.

Chris Andrews: And really, it's one of those things. It's you setting up your plan correctly. When I'm doing a full con plan training, when we get to this point of having the plan set up correctly, I joke that you're 80% of the way done. And I think you really are – if everything is set up correctly, it is so much easier to complete and do your consolidated plan. For the participating grantee that sets up their own template, what will end up happening is that when it gets submitted to HUD, your rep is going to reject that and make you manually copy and paste all of that over into the consortium template. You know, into that mini-template, into your mini-plan created by the consortium and that's associated with the consortium. So really, you want to make sure that it's set up correctly. And we have a number of resources. There's a quick tutorial video, there's some handouts that we'll make sure are available on this course page and sent out to all of you after the training on how to properly set that up.

I'm going to come back, we're going to move to just talking a little bit about locating your plan and a little bit about what you're seeing here. So, to locate your consolidated plan, once you've created it – you've created it, you're given yourself a pat on the back, you went to go get a cup of coffee to celebrate and you're coming back to now complete your consolidated plan and you want to come back and find it. To locate that, under the Con Plan submenu, you'll go ahead and you'll click on "Search" and that will bring up the Search functionality. You can just leave the criteria as "all years and status." Just under Select and click "Search" and this will bring up all of the consolidated plan templates that are there. And you'll see that I've used San Mateo County and South San Francisco for a few different trainings and a few different tests, so there's a few different plans here. But what you'll see – and we're coming in here, again, as the lead grantee – what you'll see as the lead grantee is that you are able to edit and open your plans – right here is the plan that we've created, Training 2.4. You're able to open that to edit it. But also, what you're able to do is you're able to view the plans of any participating grantees. Now, as the lead grantee, you're not able to edit the participating grantee's plan. That again, is their CDBG-specific plan, but you are able to view it.

I'm just going to switch profiles real quick and I'll come in as South San Francisco, and I'll show you what that looks like from a participating grantee. So again, to get where we were, we'll click the "Plans, Projects and Activities" tab. Under Consolidated Plans, I'll go ahead, I'll click on "Search" – search criteria for all years – and click on "Search." And here you see that I'm able to view the South San Francisco plan and I'm

able to open that up to edit. And this is where you will be entering your CDBG-specific plan. This is South San Francisco's Non-Housing Community Development Plan.

What you'll also notice is that I have the access to open up and am able to edit San Mateo County's plan. And the reason for this – and this gets back to one of those early points in making sure that you're coordinating, is that San Mateo County may be asking South San Francisco to contribute to a discussion of the housing needs or the housing supply or the demographic conditions. And South San Francisco can go in and directly edit elements of the San Mateo County plan. Now, because of this – and I imagine there's a few of you out there who are thinking, "Well, how do we make sure that we're coordinated and that everybody's entering things correctly?" It really comes back to that communication and make sure you're establishing a plan early on, on how you're going to be completing your consolidated plan.

With that, we're going to jump back to the PowerPoint here and we've gone through a couple of these slides. But, want to switch to talking about amending your consolidated plan or your action plans. You've made it through, you've completed your plan, you've submitted it to HUD. HUD probably sent it on for a Pulitzer Prize, it was that well written and perfect. But things change, right? And you may need to amend your consolidated plan or your annual action plan. So again – and can't emphasize this enough – the lead grantee is responsible for initiating the amendment, even if it is just for the participating grantee. The lead grantee has that administrative responsibility in IDIS. And we'll go through and we'll demonstrate how to do this.

Once the lead grantee initiates and creates the copy for the amendment, the lead grantee or the participating grantee will input their amendment as needed. Once the amendment is made in the template; again, it is the lead grantee's responsibility to resubmit it through IDIS to HUD. And, in general, it is a best practice to do all of your amendments at once. You can hold your amendments and do them near the end of your program year, so you're not having to go through and consistently amend, and re-amend the consolidated plan or annual action plan in IDIS but to go in and just do it at one time. It should be less of an administrative burden on you as the grantee, as well as on HUD in reviewing and approving those amendments in IDIS.

So, we'll just go through and look at how to do this quickly in IDIS. So we'll come in, and I'm actually going to switch back to San Mateo County here. So, the first step of making your amendment is to look at, is to make sure that you know which plan it is that you want to amend. And there's two key pieces of information. So, if we're looking to amend that consolidated plan that we just created, we need to know the version – 2.4.16 – always make sure to jot that down, and the start year – so in this case, 2016. If we're wanting to amend that consolidated plan, this is the information that we need to know.

And to then actually go through and make the amendment, you'll go ahead and click on "Copy" under the Consolidated Plan. And here, it's asking for our source year so that information that we just looked up, the beginning year, that's 2016. And the version, 2.4.16. And so now it'll ask what is the new con plan start year, and it's still 2016 because it's an amendment. The new end year is still 2020, it's an amendment. And our version, just going to call it 2.4.16 version 2. Now here, we have this dropdown box to indicate if it's an amendment or not. I'm going to go ahead and say "Yes" and we'll call it a substantial amendment. And remember, your amendment is defined being either minor or substantial by your citizen participation plan.

So I've entered my information. Again, double check it and make sure that it's correct, and go ahead and click on "Copy." And here we go, we might need to – and here it is, here's our new copy that we just made of our consolidated plan and our year 1 action plan is embedded in it. You can see the version is now

2.4.16, version 2. I might as well just show you, clicking over through to San Mateo, we're able to – or excuse me, in South San Francisco, let's see. It's coming up on the other page. But that copy was also made for South San Francisco. And so then either San Mateo County or South San Francisco can go ahead and can make the edit to their consolidated plan and it would be the exact same process if you're amending your action plan, since your year 1 action plan would be the exact same process. Because remember, your year 1 action plan is embedded in your consolidated plan. And if it's your year 2 or 3 or 4 action plan; instead of making a copy of your consolidated plan, you would just be making a copy of that action plan.

Let's just go ahead and do a couple of quick knowledge checks. TJ, if we could pull up poll question number 4. Here we go. So what two data pieces does a grantee need to copy a plan for an amendment? Is it your version and title? Is it your title and start year? Or is it your version and start year? Go ahead and click on the appropriate radio button there. Okay, I'm going to give everyone a few more seconds, okay? And here we are; 7% of you said version and title, 15% said title and start year, and 78% said version and start year. So, version and start year is the correct answer. Remember, the information that it's looking for when you're wanting to copy your con plan or copy your action plan is what is your source start year and your source version. Those are the two pieces of information that are identifying your con plan or your action plan in IDIS and that you need to make a copy.

And TJ, let's pull up poll question number 5, as well. Great. So who initiates the amendment process for a participating grantee? Is it HUD? Is it the lead grantee? Or is it the participating grantee? Okay, great, the vast majority of you said lead grantee and that is correct. Remember, the lead grantee is the one in IDIS responsible for creating that action – or creating that amendment, excuse me. So even if that amendment is just for South San Francisco's block grant program, it is the responsibility of San Mateo County to create that amendment in IDIS. And so they are creating it and then they are also submitting it. Now, it would of course be South San Francisco that's making the amendment itself, but the one who, it's the lead grantee's responsibility to create it and to then also submit it.

Beth or Peter, anything that you would like to add?

Beth Hendrix: No, not at this time, thanks.

Chris Andrews: Great. Okay, well, just a few more quick demonstrations that I want to give before we move to your questions, and it looks like your questions are coming in fast and furious. So that's great, we're looking forward to getting to those. For a lot of you, and especially for the two-thirds of you or so on the call who completed your con plan in 2015, you're beginning to think about your year 2 action plan. And just want to talk through that process a little bit and then do a quick demonstration of that. Skip ahead here.

So again, I know I sound like a broken record here, but it is an important point, it is the lead grantee who creates the action plan template and that will create the action plan – all of the templates for the entire consortium so the CDBG action plan template for the participating grantee, as well as the consortium-wide action plan template. And there's two different ways to create your action plans in IDIS. You can either add a new action plan, or you can copy a previous action plan. And the difference is that when you're copying a previous action plan, it will copy all of your information from the previous year. So if you have a 2015 action plan and you're looking to your 2016 action plan, if you use the copy function, it will copy all of the information – your information about your goals, your information about your resources, about your monitoring plan, about your affordable housing indicators. All of that will be copied forward and you'll have

to go back into that, review it, update it, make sure that information is correct. But all of the information copies forward.

If you're adding a new action plan versus copying it, it will create that new action plan and you would still associate that with your current consolidated plan, but it would be a blank template and you would have to go into IDIS and update all of that information yourself. I think generally, it is a best practice to copy and then go through and make those edits and manually adjust it to change from – you're going from 2015 to 2016 and the changes to your program in the new year. I think that is a little bit less work than having to add a new action plan and enter all of that information again. But it's up to you, you can do it either way.

And again, it's the lead grantee who submits the annual action plan templates for all of the members.

So, a couple of key tips. Again, if you're using the copy function, it really limits the manual copying and pasting that you'll need to do. If you do choose to add a new action plan, make sure that you're associating it with your most current consolidated plan. If you've amended your consolidated plan, make sure that it's being associated with your amended consolidated plan.

And if you are copying your annual action plan, it copies everything, including your projects, from the previous year. And it's copying those projects still as, let's say we're on our 2016 action plan, it's still copying them, those 2015 projects and just bringing them forward still as 2015 projects. It doesn't update the project year to 2016 for those projects it copies over. So you'll need to remove those projects from your action plan and create new projects for the 2016 program year.

And let's go into IDIS and see exactly what this looks like. Okay, so I'll just cancel out of here and come back to our Plans, Projects and Activities tab. So, to copy an annual action plan – and let's just say that we're going to continue to use our action plan from our year 1 consolidated plan. So again, make note of the version and start year, right? 2.4.16 because again, your year 1 annual action plan is embedded in your consolidated plan. So make note of that version and that year. Now, we'll come over to the Annual Action Plan tab and we'll click on "Copy." And it's very much the same process as before. So we'll type in the source year and we'll see if this will let us go forward to 2017, and it might not. Go ahead. Okay, great, it does. So it will – we're now seeing that we just created our 2017 annual action plan by copying that previous action plan. And so all of that information, had we completed and filled out that action plan template, all of that information would've copied forward here into our annual action plan. And again, you'd want to go through, you'd want to make sure that you were updating your executive summary, updating the description of your consultation with stakeholders, updating the information on your community hearings and citizen participation, as well as adjusting your resources and your goals and your projects and reviewing all of this information. But the baseline information would be copying forward for you.

And we'll just go ahead, I'm going to come back here and copy this action plan earlier. Should be able to open this up. The project's been copied over. Sometimes the UAT site is, of IDIS, doesn't stay current from day-to-day. But if you do have your projects here and you're copying them forward, this is where you'd want to be removing those old projects and adding your new projects from – you know, taking out the previous year projects and adding the new projects.

Peter or Beth, anything that you can add on action plans?

Peter Huber: No, thanks, Chris.

Chris Andrews: Last thing I just wanted to talk about, and this is a little bit different, is setting up your CAPER. So, unlike your action plan, unlike your consolidated plan, all consortium members are responsible for setting up and submitting their own CAPER. So in this example, San Mateo County would do their own CAPER. That would be for San Mateo County's CDBG program, ESG program, and the HOME program. And South San Francisco would be responsible for doing their own CAPER, and that would just be for their block grant program.

Two really important things. So this is – everybody who just did their plan in 2015 as you're beginning to think about your CAPER coming due this spring or this summer, make sure any amendments are complete and marked as Review Completed in IDIS. That will make sure that your CAPER is pulling from your most recent action plan. So, if you've made an amendment or you've submitted your consolidated plan, make sure that it's marked as Review Completed in IDIS. Even if you've gotten an email back from your Field Office rep saying that your plan is approved, make sure that it's marked as Review Completed in IDIS.

Also, before setting up your CAPER, before creating your CAPER, make sure that all of your accomplishment information for your activities is entered in IDIS, right? At the point where you create your CAPER, it will pull all of your accomplishment activities from IDIS at the point that were entered when you created the CAPER. So make sure that all of your information is entered for your program year before setting up your CAPER template in IDIS, and that will limit the amount of manual editing you're needing to do in your CAPER.

So with that, TJ, if we could just pull up our last knowledge check, if we could pull up question number 6. Great. So who sets up the participating grantee's CAPER? Is it HUD? Is it the lead grantee? Or is it the participating grantee? I'll give everyone about ten more seconds. Okay. So two-thirds of you said the participating grantee and a third of you said the lead grantee. Again, this is different than the con plan and the action plan. The participating grantee is responsible for setting up their own CAPER in IDIS. And the reason for that difference is the participating grantee is just reporting on their block grant program or their other HUD entitlement programs, and therefore, it's an independent report. So in this example, South San Francisco would be creating their own CAPER and submitting their own CAPER to HUD. That is not the responsibility of the lead grantee to set that up and submit. So that is different than your con plan and your action plan.

I'm going to move to Q and A in just another minute or so. And before we do that, I just want to share a couple of common issues that we see come through the AAQ portal and that are submitted to Field Offices and submitted to HUD headquarters, and talk through how to address these common issues that we see.

So the first issue is that a participating grantee is not included in the con plan template when it is set up. So when setting up the con plan template, the lead grantee forgot to include one participating grantee in the AD-25 screen and saved the consolidated plan template to begin working on it.

So, the solution to this, you're going to need to create a new consolidated plan, making sure that all of those participating grantees are added. And then you're going to have to manually copy and paste all that information from the plan that you started that didn't include all of your members, and then submit that plan to HUD. Your Field Office reps, as they're reviewing plans, are going to look to make sure that all of the members are included in that template. And if they're not, they're going to request that you go back through and create a new consolidated plan template that includes all of your members. And this might happen if you've already created your year 2 action plan. You're going to first need to go back and create a new con plan and the year 1 action plan and then redo your year 2 action plan. So again, this is why it is so,

so, so important to make sure that your AD-25 screen is set up correctly and that you're setting up your consortia correctly from the very beginning.

Okay, the next troubleshooting issue. A participating grantee creates a standalone consolidated plan. So the grantee creates the standalone consolidated plan in addition to the participating grantee template, the non-housing community development section or the mini-template that we're looking at for South San Francisco.

How to fix this or the solution? The lead grantee will need to ensure that the plan, the consortium plan is open and editable. This may require an amendment if it's been reviewed and then the review has been completed. The participating grantee will then need to manually copy and paste all of the information into the consortium consolidated plan to make sure that that information is all correctly associated with the plan that's tied to the consortium. And then, the participating grantee will need to associate all of their projects with the annual action plan that's associated with the lead grantee and associated with the consortium.

Again, it really comes down to making sure that your plan is correctly set up at the start and that will limit any issues that you have down the road and really limit the need to go back and make these types of corrections that can involve a lot of manual copying and pasting to make sure that your plan is correctly set up. And as your Field Offices are reviewing your plans, this is something they're going to be looking for. And your plan won't be approved if it is set up with one of these issues of having multiple plans, one to – you know, a separate standalone plan for the participating grantee, or if a participating grantee is left out of the plan as shown in the first troubleshooting issue.

So with that, we've kind of gone through a quick forty-five minute review of some of the most frequent issues that we see. We have about half an hour now to open it up to Q and A. So please submit any questions you have by the Questions pane. If you submit a question that is not answered, we hope to get to as many as we can, but if we don't get to your question today, you can submit them through the HUD Exchange Ask-a-Question.

So with that, we will turn it over to the Q and A. And before we do, Beth or Peter, any additional comments or thoughts that you all have?

Peter Huber: Chris, no additional comments, but we're looking forward to helping answer the questions.

Chris Andrews: Great, okay. Okay, well, first question, "What is the distinction between a consortium and a regional plan?" The regional plan – this is a new designation in the eCon Planning Suite, and that is really just set up as a regional planning structure to be able to think about your consolidated plan needs at a regional level, but with each grantee involved in the regional plan responsible for managing their own HUD fund while the consortium is a formal HOME consortium and is tied through the HOME program.

Peter, anything that you would like to add to that?

Peter Huber: I think that was good. I mean, if they want more information on HOME Consortia, they can see the HUD Exchange site under HOME topics. There is a link for Consortia, there's a link to our notice, our most recent notice on consortia designation. And then also, they can visit the HOME regulations to learn more about consortia. But consortia is an official designation for units of contiguous local government that join together for a period of three years to administer the HOME program as a single participating jurisdiction.

Chris Andrews: Great. So, the next question is, “A lead agency in a large municipality consortium, how do you give other members access to IDIS and in the resulting template?” So again, so for any of those participating members – and I’ll click back over to IDIS here – for any of those participating members that are also HUD entitlement grantees that are receiving CDBG, they will automatically have access to their own mini-template. And they will also – as we see here under the Search function or as we saw earlier, we’re still here in San Mateo County – be able to come in and edit and contribute to the lead grantee’s template. So, they should automatically have that access. And how that association is created is by making sure that when you’re setting up your consolidated plan, they are included as one of the participating grantees and automatically, those participating grantees will be able to have access to your plan.

Now, you may also have members that do not receive CDBG or other entitlement programs from HUD, but you would still like them to contribute to the development of your consolidated plan. You have a couple of different options. One that I think might be the easiest if they don’t have IDIS access – I’m just going to go ahead and open up this template – is that you can download the template as a Word document here from this link. So you’re able to download the entire plan or download a specific section, and that will download everything. That will download the data tables, that will download all of the narrative that is entered and all of the question fields in the con plan template, and you can share that with members to add information. And then send that back to you as the lead and then you can manually copy and paste that into your template. Great question.

The next question is, “Can you please demonstrate how a participating grantee can access the annual action plan that the lead grantee set up?” So sure, I’ll switch profiles here back to South San Francisco, and I’ll come under the Plans and Projects and Activities tab. And I will just go ahead and under Annual Action Plans, I’ll click on “Search” and click on “Search” again. And I will see here, here’s the action plan that I created the copy of, the 2017 for version 2.4.16, version 3. And that action plan is automatically populated in my list here. So I’m able to go ahead, open that up to edit it, and I can enter my corresponding information. Once I’m done, I will be able to let the lead grantee know and then the lead grantee can go ahead and submit, my action plan along with all of the other action plans back to HUD. But, so coming in as the participating grantee, you would just search under your own annual action plan tab, click the “Search,” find the appropriate action plan, and go ahead and make your edits there. And again, if you don’t see the Con Plan or the Annual Action Plan or the CAPER tabs here, consult with your local IDIS administrator and ask them to make sure that you have access to the Con Plan and Action Plan screens. Great question.

Okay. So let’s see. Next question is, “Do you only add a public housing authority if they are a part of your consortium, or any housing authority in your service area, especially if you give them money? Right now, we only treat them as subrecipients.”

Peter or Beth, do you have a thought on this question?

Peter Huber: Could you repeat the question one more time?

Chris Andrews: Sure. “Do you only add a public housing authority if they are a part of your consortium, or any housing authority in your service area, especially if you give them money?” So what’s the rules, the protocols for adding PHAs to your con plan template?

Beth Hendrix: So this is Beth Hendrix. It’s very important that the lead select as many housing authorities that are within the geographic area of the consortium. You can also add additional public housing agencies and authorities if you do give them money. The data that public housing authorities submit to HUD will

automatically download into your public housing screen to allow both the lead and the participating to do their needs assessment and their analysis about what their public housing needs are.

If you select more than one public housing agency for your area, you will get aggregate percentages and numbers for a combination of what that housing authority looks like. If you select one for your area of consortia, whether you're a lead or participating, you will get the actual numbers reported. It's really up to you and what level of analysis you need to undertake for your plan.

Chris Andrews: Great. And we just had a question on who is the local IDIS administrator come in, and I've talked about that a couple of times. Your local IDIS administrator is the person in your grantee who has the manager control of IDIS and can give IDIS users different access within your grantee, and you can run a report to determine who that local IDIS administrator is. And Peter, you confirm for me, but I think it's the PR-30 report, is that correct?

Peter Huber: It's correct.

Chris Andrews: To determine – yeah, so if you run the PR-30 report in IDIS to determine who your local IDIS administrator is and the rights and privileges of all the IDIS users for your jurisdiction.

Beth Hendrix: Chris, this is Beth real quick. If you could also note, so folks out there, there are different access levels for folks doing con plan and CAPER. Those are separate and apart from normal IDIS access.

Chris Andrews: Yes, absolutely. And there's also different access levels within that. So there may be some people who have access to be able to create and submit a consolidated plan or a CAPER. There may be some people who just have access to edit an existing consolidated plan or action plan or CAPER. And then, finally, there's access where you can't make any edits and you can only view a con plan or an action plan or a CAPER. Great questions.

Okay. Okay, next question, "I submitted a 2015-2019 consolidated plan that included the action plan and it was approved. However, when I go to copy the action plan, it's not an available option under Copy Action Plan. Why is the action plan not available for copy?" This is a great question, I think, especially so many of you are beginning your year 2 action plan. Worth reviewing exactly how to do this. As you noted in the question, your year 1 action plan is embedded in your consolidated plan, right? So here, we'll pull up our version from today and we'll note down here at the very bottom, our action plan, our year 1 action plan, is embedded in that consolidated plan. So to copy your year 1 action plan into year 2, if you're going to search for that action plan and you search under the Action Plan tab, you actually won't find it. You'll need to search under the Consolidated Plan tab to find that. So again, here we're seeing that 2.4.16 version that we created at the beginning of today's session. And to copy that year 1 action plan, you'd actually be taking the year and the version from the consolidated plan because that's where the year 1 action plan is kept, and using that information to make your copy. So if you're copying your action plan, you'll need to get the year and the version from the Consolidated Plan tab, and then use that information.

And we'll go ahead and we'll just do a quick demonstration of that again, as I think this is such an important thing. So if I am wanting to copy and create my year 2 action plan, I'll actually come under my con plan, make note of the version and year of the con plan and year 1 action plan that I want to be copying. And then under Annual Action Plan, I'll click on "Copy" and I will go ahead. I'll enter that information. It's 2016 and 2.4.16, and enter my new program year so it'd be my next program year so it'd be 2017. I'll just call it Version 2. It's not an amendment, it's a new action plan, so I'll leave that as not applicable and go ahead and click "Copy" – oh, and I see that – I apologize, I'm still here, part of South San Francisco. I hadn't

switched back to the San Mateo County, so I'm getting this error message. It's not allowing me to copy that action plan. But coming in as San Mateo County, I would be able to make that so I'm going to switch my profile back to San Mateo County. But that would be the process for going through that. Great question.

Okay. Next question, and there are a couple questions about amendments. "After an amendment is submitted to HUD, how long does it take for HUD to accept it?" And, "is there a forty-five-day review period on amendments?"

Beth or Peter, would you like talk a little bit about the process of reviewing amendments and the difference between minor and substantial amendments?

Beth Hendrix: So HUD reviews and approves consolidated plans and action plans. They only review amendments, they do not approve. So when you do an amendment; normally, prior to the system, you would follow your citizen participation process and the regulations around amendments, have your thirty-day public comment period, have your public hearing, and you would notify us probably towards the end of the year; for example, in your CAPER.

With the new system, because we are copying data and information you've entered into IDIS, we're having this Copy function happen with the amendment process. What you're doing is sending it to HUD, not to approve, but just to review to say, "Yup, you've followed that citizen participation process. Move forward and do good things." Chris mentioned earlier in this webinar that you should, as good practice, limit the number of amendments you do. That means that throughout the year, if you do several amendments to your plan, you should still do those public hearings, still follow your citizen participation process; but hold all of those edits, those updates, those amendments to your plan until one time, probably towards the end of the year prior to you doing your CAPER. Make that copy to amend things, send it to HUD so that they can check it, send it back to you so that you can then initiate your CAPER and move forward. It is not the same as a normal submission process for your con plan or action plan.

Chris Andrews: Great. Thank you, Beth. Great, and a couple more questions coming in on amendments. You know, "If you've amended your consolidated plan, can you copy your action plan or do you have to create a new action plan?" That's a great question and there's a couple of different ways that you can go about doing that. So I think first, if you're amending your consolidated plan in year 1, your action plan is embedded in that consolidated plan template so you can just copy that again directly as if you were following the Copy function and entering the version and the year for that amended consolidated plan. If you're in years 2 through 5, you cannot just copy your previous action plan if that previous action plan is associated with your original consolidated plan.

So there's two different options that you can take. First, you can add a new action plan and you will have to enter your information again, but when you add that new action plan, you would make sure to be associating that with your amended consolidated plan. Or, your second option would be to actually copy the year 1 action plan that is associated with the amended consolidated plan, but just set the year for the current year. So, instead of copying my annual action plan from my 2016 plan, instead of just moving it forward one year, let's say that I was doing it in year 3, I could actually copy that so it'd automatically be going into my new 2018 action plan.

So two different ways of doing it. It's a little tricky there in just kind of thinking through this process of copying your original plan, or from the year 1 from the amended version into the new version. But that is one way you can do it is copy it, or you can add a new action plan.

Beth Hendrix: Chris, this is Beth Hendrix. That was a lot of information for folks who are newer to the system to digest. So, we are updating the desk guide for eCon Plan Suite that'll have step-by-step instructions for those years 2 through 5. In addition to that, you'll be able to get direct instructions if you should use this after today through the AAQ system, as well.

Chris Andrews: Absolutely, yes. If you are in that position, strongly recommend submitting an AAQ just for quick step-by-step instruction, making sure that you're doing that correctly.

A few more questions coming in just between the relationship of lead agencies and participating grantees in the – or excuse me, lead grantees and participating grantees. Lead grantee is responsible for setting up and creating the consolidated plan and the action plan for the lead grantee, as well as all participating grantees. And the lead grantee is also responsible for submitting the con plan and the action plan, and that will submit the con plan template for the consortium as a whole, as well as the participating grantee.

And then again, the difference being in the CAPER. For the CAPER, each grantee is responsible for creating and submitting their own CAPER. But the lead grantee is responsible for creating the con plan and the action plans and administratively creating the amendment, even if it's just for a participating grantee. And the participating grantee is not able to view their template until the lead grantee has done that.

Ann then – follow-up questions, we have a question that was just asked, "Is the year 1 action plan included in the 2016-2020 con plan or is it two separate submissions?" Again, that year 1 action plan is included in the con plan template. So just coming back here to look in IDIS, we'll open up the version that we created today, and you'll see all of the con plan information, and then at the end, you will see your annual action plan. And that's your annual action plan for year 1. The action plan, your year 1 action plan is embedded in the consolidated plan. You do not need to create two submissions. Again, this is something that your Field Office is looking for, and if you end up creating it, a standalone year 1 action plan, your Field Office is going to ask you to go back and integrate that into the con plan so it's all just one document and not two separate documents. Great question.

One more question coming in, "If the lead grantee copies the action plan, does it then create a copied version for the participating grantee?" Yes, it does. So, when the lead grantee creates the copy of the action plan – and again, we'll go in here and search – this is the action plan copy that we created earlier today, the 2017, the year 2017 and the version 3. You'll see here's the action plan copy that was created for San Mateo County, and there's also the template created for South San Francisco here. So that will automatically create the copies of the action plan – or the con plan if you're making an amendment – for all of the participating grantees. Great question.

We have just a few more minutes. Let's see. A few more questions, a lot of questions coming in here on amendments, so one more amendment question here and then maybe a few on the CAPER. "If you're amending your year 1 action plan, does this mean you need to amend the consolidated plan, as well?" If your year 1 action plan is embedded in the consolidated plan, within IDIS, you are having to create a copy and amendment of the consolidated plan template. But if the changes are only to your action plan, I think how you're communicating that to your community, to your council, whoever that may be, it's really just an action plan amendment. It's just that in IDIS, your year 1 action plan is embedded in the consolidated plan template so that copy to make the amendment and to make those amendments would be happening through the consolidated plan.

Let's see. There's time for one more question here, "If the participating grantee is responsible for submitting the CAPER, does that mean that HUD will receive a copy of the CAPER for each member in IDIS for the consortium?" Yes. So once you submit your CAPER, and each participating grantee and the lead grantee is submitting their CAPER through IDIS, all of those CAPERs will be viewable and they will be separate CAPERs that are submitted to HUD. So again, each of the CAPERs are standalone. They're not tied to the lead grantee. Great question.

I know there's still a few questions that are coming in. I do know that we're running out of time and I want to give our guests from HUD, Beth and Peter, a chance for any last thoughts. So with that; Beth, Peter, any final closing comments that you would like to make?

Beth Hendrix: We want to thank you for participating in today's webinar. We recognize that it has been a large learning curve for HOME Consortias to be able to embrace the new eCon Plan Suite. It's really important to us that you get on board with the system, because it is designed around the HOME Consortia regulations for the consolidated planning process. And we hope if we did not get to your question today that you still send them in so that we can respond to them directly through the AAQ. Thanks again for your time.

Chris Andrews: Thank you, Beth and Peter, for being with us and I know there were a couple of questions on the AAQ so I just want to pull up quickly here just so everyone's seeing how to submit an AAQ, the AAQ being the HUD Ask-A-Question. And here we are on the HUD Exchange. And if you do have any questions, please, please, please, please submit them. From the HUD Exchange, if you click on the "Ask a Policy or Reporting System question," you'll be able to go through, enter your information, and on the second page, you will be able to submit your question. And someone from the HUD team will be able to respond to your question and provide the appropriate guidance.

Thank you again everyone for joining us. And please, if you do have any additional questions, please submit them through the AAQ portal that I'm showing here on my screen. Again, the PowerPoint slides, as well as other resources, will be posted on the training site. We'll make sure that all of you have a link for that. And as a quick reminder for everybody, all the Field Office staff on the call, there will be a debrief for Field Office staff - a required debrief for Field Office staff - starting right now; you all should have the login information for that from your email.

So thank you again for joining us and I look forward to any questions that you all may have.