

**HUD Environmental Review Online System (HEROS)
Open Forum Q&A: Using HEROS
Roll Out Webinar Series 2015
Webinar Transcript
December 10, 2015**

Ben Sturm: Good day, everyone. Welcome to the open forum Q&A for using the HUD Environmental Review Online System or HEROS. My name is Ben Sturm, and I work at Cloudburst Consulting Group. I'll be introducing today's webinar and supporting the responses to your questions. This webinar includes helpful information in accessing and using HEROS. Most of the session is an open forum for all participants to ask questions and solve HEROS-related concerns through a discussion with HUD's Office of Environment and Energy.

With us today, and live from HUD headquarters, please, welcome Lauren Hayes, Lauren McNamara and Liz Zepeda. As we get started, we'd like to know who is with us today. You will see two poll questions on the screen. Please, click on the appropriate button. All responses are anonymous.

Before we get into the content, we have several logistical announcements. Today's webinar will last approximately 90 minutes, and is being recorded. The Power Point presentation is posted on the HUD Exchange Training and Events page, or you can open them by clicking on the links listed in the handout section of the control panel. Because of the large size of the audience, all attendees will remain on mute for the duration of the webcast. There may be also a slight delay in the advancement of the slides due to the audience size. You may submit questions at any time through the question pod on the right side of your screen.

Your questions are important to us. There will be a formal questions and answer session at the end of the webinar, however, we may not have time to answer all of the questions during the webinar. If we do not get to your question, please submit them through the Ask A Question on the HUD Exchange address, which is listed on the screen. Please, reference this presentation HEROS Q&A webinar in your question. If you experience any technical difficulty, please, request assistance by using the question pod on your screen, and we will do our best to quickly assist you. An email will be sent to all attendees following the presentation with instructions for how to get credit for your participation and also to request that you complete the feedback survey.

During the Q&A Session, we may be sharing our own computer screens in order to demonstrate HEROS. In order to see this most clearly, you may want to click the full screen button on the upper right side of the window. This will maximize the shared screen. In order to submit a question, you will need to click the full screen button a second time to resume the normal window size. It is now time to turn over the presentation to Lauren Hayes.

Lauren Hayes: Thank you, Ben. Hi, everyone. Before we get started, we want to go over the objectives for the webinar. This webinar is intended to introduce HEROS and updates HEROS users on system features, resource tools, and potential issues. We also want to give everyone an opportunity to ask specific questions about the system, so you will have the opportunity to do that shortly. Then the agenda for today, we'll do a quick overview of HEROS and go over some tools

and resources. Then we'll jump into Q&A by category. Also a reminder, you will continue to see some poll questions throughout, so please, feel free to participate in each question.

Okay. Overview of HEROS. I believe that, before we start, we'll do a quick poll question about experience with environmental reviews. You should see that on your screen.

Okay. It looks as if the majority have moderate experience, so that's good. Thank you for your response on that. Okay. As you may know, HEROS is a comprehensive online system that replaces HUD's paper-based, environmental review process. Right now HEROS is in its rollout phase for several HUD programs, but when it is fully operational, it can be used by all participants in the environmental review process including responsible entities, non-RE recipients such as nonprofits and public housing authorities as well as consultants that prepare HUD environmental review.

We like to say HEROS is a TurboTax like system. It walks the users through the environmental review process from the beginning defining the projects all the way through the end of the review and finalizing. It walks the user through compliance with all related laws and authorities and then packages everything into an electronic environmental review record that is then posted on our public-facing website.

The purpose of HEROS is, through this electronic process, to streamline the environmental review process and to help document and manage environmental reviews. It also provides policy-guided instructions along the way and, like I mentioned before, posts completed reviews to our public-facing HUD Exchange website, which increases transparency of the environmental review process.

A quick note about HEROS and IDIS, HEROS is designed to function within the IDIS system, so you'll be able to log into HEROS through IDIS and see the HEROS environmental review ID number on the IDIS activity screen. I know we're also working with DRGR staff to link to that system as well.

Then another quick note to know is that HEROS does not guarantee that a project has been compliant. It is still up to the user to make sure to comply with all of the laws and authorities. HEROS, also, does not create any new obligations for HUD staff to monitor the environmental review records prior to completing the review, so there will be no up-front monitoring by HUD. It will be the same process as it's been in the past. Now I will turn it over to Lauren McNamara for tools and resources. With tools and resources.

We have several resources posted on the HUD Exchange website. The first is the Part 58 User Guide, which is in the HUD Exchange. We can pull it up and take a look at it, so you see what it looks like. There's a link to that on our website, which walks through all of the processes and all of the steps in HEROS, if you have any questions, so that's a good resource to look at if you're just getting started in the system.

There's the full table of contents. It walks through each stream in the system. Then another resource on the HUD Exchange is the e-Tutorials. They're short, a couple-minute long, video that also walks through each step in the environmental review process, so we can take a look at that screen as well. They're also really good resources for getting started or if you're having any specific issues on certain screens or certain pieces of the environmental review process--just to give you a place to get started. Here's a list of the videos by topic.

Then we also have a Frequently Asked Questions page on the HUD Exchange that's organized by topic. We will be updating that shortly as well to incorporate any new questions that come up in this webinar or have come up recently, so that's another good resource to look at before you submit a question about the system, which we'll talk about next.

Finally if you don't see your question in the FAQs, there is an Ask a Question feature on the HUD Exchange where you can type in your specific question about HEROS, and it will get directed to us to answer. You just have to select my question is related to environmental review and HEROS in the dropdown menu.

Then finally a note on AAQ. It helps us to identify bugs in the system, so we appreciate folks reporting those to us or letting us know if you have any issues or need some troubleshooting. Just a note that we are planning to incorporate new updates for the system including a central library and a revise request Release of Funds screen, so look for those updates coming soon.

Alright. Now we will start the Q&A by category. Feel free to start entering your questions as we go through the categories, and I'll turn it over to Lauren McNamara.

Lauren McNamara: Great. Thank you, Lauren. We're going to be going through some categories for Q&A. Those categories that Liz and I will be covering are [as follows:] user access, starting a review, conducting analysis, tiering, completing reviews, and, finally, an open forum for follow-up questions or questions that were not covered during the categories. Please, use the question pod to submit your questions at any time, and they will be asked during the appropriate categories.

User access. We had a bit of a break during the rollout to address issues with the HEROS server, but now we're back up and running. HEROS is now open for RE users representing CPD Entitlements. In-house consultants are allowed access to HEROS on a case-by-case basis. These are consultants who are the principal environmental review preparers for an RE and work full time for the RE in a position. They're allowed to have access to HEROS at this time. An example of this would be if an RE does not have staff and has hired consultants to handle the environmental review process. They function as an RE employee. This an in-house consultant who can have access to HEROS.

If you have a consultant who falls into this category, please, contact your local regional or field environmental officer. We have a letter that needs to be submitted for the consultant on behalf of the RE to get access. HEROS is also open to HUD staff conducting Part 50 reviews for RAD, and the Office of Environment and Energy, which is where your regional and field environmental officers are, are working in the HERO system to do reviews. We will continue to work on introducing HEROS to different HUD programs as we continue over this fiscal year '16.

As Lauren said, when HEROS is fully operational, REs will be able to work with all of their partners on the environmental review including nonprofits such as shop grantees, public housing authorities, and consultants with whom they work. At this time do not complete reviews for PHAs and HEROS. PHAs will be introduced to the system during a separate rollout. We will alert you when we start this rollout process for public housing and HEROS. We'll let you know in our quarterly newsletters, but we don't expect this to happen until late 2016.

For requesting access, most of you on this Q&A session should already have access to HEROS but for those of you who don't, to request access to HEROS, please, contact your local regional or field environmental officer, and they can help you with getting access. The registration process takes about two weeks to process your request. You will receive a welcome email with login information and links to HEROS training resources that Lauren walked through before.

All users, when they sign up for access, have access to the HEROS production environment and training environment. If you have issue with logging into either of these environments, for the production environment, you have to call the HITS National Help Desk. The number is also listed on the Login screen. If you have an issue with logging into the training environment, you submit a question through Ask a Question. Please, be sure to include your B or C identification and a description of the error you're receiving. We work closely with our contractor to sort these issues out.

Alright, so now I'll open it up for questions.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Our first question is about consultant access and when consultants can get access to HEROS.

Lauren McNamara: In-house consultants, we are accepting access to HEROS now on a case-by-case basis, but for consultants in general this will most likely be late 2016. We still have to rollout some user role issues in the system to make sure that everything runs smoothly before we get consultants in there to work as part of the process with the responsible entities.

Lauren Hayes: Our next question is about logging in. "Is HEROS the same login account as IDIS?"

Lauren McNamara: If you have IDIS access, you have to request access to HEROS. When you request access to HEROS, we set you up an account in HEROS. When you are in IDIS you'll notice on the left-hand side there's a tab to jump into your user role in HEROS, so you can jump back and forth between IDIS and HEROS, but if you have an IDIS account, that does not mean you have a HEROS account. You have to register for a HEROS account.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is, "Is using HEROS only for entitlements and not states?"

Lauren McNamara: At this time HEROS is open for Entitlement-responsible entities. We have been working the Council of State Community Development Agencies (COSDA) on a pilot for state programs who work with non-Entitlement recipients such as small local towns or local governments who only get grants every few years. We've been working on a separate pilot with COSDA. We anticipate that rolling out to small non-Entitlement communities will probably be, hopefully, late 2016.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question for user access is "Will certifying officers ever need access to HEROS?"

Lauren McNamara: Okay. Right now, certifying officers we have a user role set up in HEROS for certifying officers, but certifying officers do not need to have access to HEROS. They can sign the paper, request for release of funds, and that can be uploaded into HEROS just like signature pages. After getting a lot of feedback through AAQ after some of our pilots, we kind of see that the

certifying officer role is unrealistic to have in a system, so as we go about doing updates to they system and Request Release of Funds screen, we will probably eliminate the certifying officer role in the system. Any other questions?

Lauren Hayes: I think that's it for this category. We can move on to the next question category.

Lauren McNamara: Okay. The next category is starting a review. When starting a new review or tiered review, you will be taken to the initial screen. Here's where you will provide project-specific information such as funding and contact information. Be sure to gather this information beforehand because all of this is required to save the screen and start the environmental review.

If you're unable to save and continue from this screen, it's likely that there's an error message at the top of the screen letting you know what information is missing. In this example, the value for the Estimated Tool-Project Cost wasn't entered, so a person would have to go in and fill that in before saving this screen. We've had some questions come through AAQ about selecting a HUD program for the HUD funding source chart. I'm just going to quickly walk through the different HUD programs and program names.

Community Planning and Development, or CPD for short. If you're a non-HUD user of HEROS and you work for a CPD Entitlement, this is where you should be selecting from. This is where you'll find the main CPD program such as CBDG, CBDG-DR, Section 108 Home and Shop. The next on the list of the dropdown is Housing. Housing would only be used by HUD staff at this time for completing Part 50 reviews. PIH, at this time, non-HUD HERO users should not be selecting from PIH. Once we introduce public housing authorities that you work with to the system, you would work with them to figure out what program within PIH they are using the funding from, but at this time you don't need to select PIH until we roll out to PHAs.

Then Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control. That program hasn't been rolled out into HEROS, yet, so you shouldn't be selecting it at this time. If you have any question about which HUD program you should be selecting from, please, contact your regional or field environmental officer.

Alright, so navigation. As you can see on the left-hand side of this slide, there's a side menu. This is also where you can find the side menu in HEROS on the left-hand side of your screen. The side menu depends on your level of review and will expand as your work your way through the environmental review process. When returning to review in HEROS, you can use the side menu to get back to the section on which you were working on quickly. Use the blue information button found throughout the system for various text tips. We have a lot of useful text tips throughout the system that can easily help you with a point on which you might be a little confused, or if something is confusing and you think there should be a text tip, please, let us know through AAQ. We can always add more of those to the system.

Do not use your internet browser's back button. Be sure to use the Save and Go Back, or the Save and Continue buttons throughout the system. If you are on a screen and you don't need to save anything, you can always use the side menu to move between screens.

Finally due to HUD IT system protocols, if you're inactive within the system for 20 minutes, you will be logged out of the system, do definitely use those save buttons often. With the 20-minute

logout, you will receive a warning message after 17 minutes to let you know that you will be logged out shortly. Now I'll open that up to questions.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Our first question is, "What internet browsers can I use for HEROS?"

Lauren McNamara: Okay. HEROS was designed for Internet Explorer, but we, the HEROS team, generally uses Chrome. The system works well with Chrome. It's our preferred browser. It is possible to use Firefox and Safari, but we haven't fully tested it in those environments. Even if we found issues in those environments, we wouldn't be able to fix them because HEROS is designed for Internet Explorer.

Lauren Hayes: The next question is, "I accidentally started a test review in HEROS production, what should I do?"

Lauren McNamara: Okay, so if you accidentally started a phony review, a dummy review in the production environment, you can go ahead and "cancel that review" in the production environment. You can do this from the dashboard. When you do select "cancel a review" on the dashboard, it will ask you why is this being canceled. Was the review canceled or withdrawn for environmental reasons? Here you will reply, no, because it's more of a system thing than an environmental thing. Another example of why you would cancel a project for non-environmental reasons would be if a project's funding fell through, or if you had to choose different sites. An example of something that might cause your review to be canceled for environmental reasons would be site contamination if it couldn't be cleaned up, or any issue with flood plains, you might have to cancel your review for environmental reasons.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, then we have another question about starting a review on the initial screen. "Do I need to know total project cost before to enter to begin a review?"

Lauren McNamara: You can always enter an estimated project cost on the initial screen and go back and edit it once you know the final project cost. Just to get the screen saved, so that you can start the environmental review, you can enter an estimate and go back and update it once you have the final amount.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then the next question is, "What if two Entitlement cities share one project but the site is in only one city?"

Lauren McNamara: Okay. How environmental review processes work now outside of HEROS is you can share the information between responsible entities. In HEROS it's not possible to share an environmental review between two REs, but you can share the information that you've both gotten on the environmental review. When one of the responsible entities has finished the environmental review, it's posted on our website, and that information can be taken by the other responsible entity to continue working on their review, but you cannot share reviews between responsible entities in HEROS. Here is a screenshot of the environmental review records we have on our website. If for example, New Haven, Connecticut has a project, but the county in which New Haven, Connecticut is, is also funding the same project, then you can take the information from the New Haven, Connecticut project that's on the website and reference it and pull it into your environmental review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then we have a follow up for the question on canceling environmental reviews. "Will canceled reviews ever be deleted?"

Lauren McNamara: Canceled reviews won't be deleted. When you go into HEROS, before you cancel you have this red x button, but if you do cancel the review, you have a folder, and it says canceled. It will stay within your dashboard. If you were to reopen the project. Let's say you started environmental review for a project for one funding year, and it didn't get funded, and the next year it did get funded, you can reopen a canceled review and all of the information that had been previously entered would still be there.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, one more question from this section. "Can another RE access an environmental review record if they do not have HEROS access?"

Lauren McNamara: Yes. All of the environmental review records, once they are completed--this is for reviews that are categorically excluded subject to that convert to exempt an environmental assessments--these environmental review records are on our website. So if those environmental reviews are up for public comments, they'll be there, or if they're archived, they will also be there. The archived review, let me just pick one from Massachusetts. One that I did. I don't want to call out anyone, any environmental reviews.

I'm pulling up the review that I actually worked on. You could share the information, the environmental review record has links, so these PDFs can be shared between the responsible entities, or the responsible entity can also reference the other responsible entity's environmental review record on our website.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. I think that's it for this category, move onto the next category.

Lauren McNamara: Okay. Now onto conducting analysis. For each of the 16 related laws and authorities, HEROS walks users through a series of questions and provides a suggested compliance determination based on their answers. You are strongly encouraged to add to this provided determination text. Here you should provide project-specific information such as dates of consultation, descriptions of documents that have been uploaded, if you have to reference any page numbers, and any additional requirements specific to your region would be entered here. Here is where you can also enter URLs if there is any information that you have that's on a website if it's your own website or another website, government website or place where you have information that can be accessed on a URL you can provide it in this determination of access file.

On the next slide, I'll talk a little bit about setting up the central file or central library. Here where you can reference documents located within another archived review or within a current review that you're working on. At the bottom of every screen summary, there's a follow-up question. Let me pop into HEROS. At the bottom of every screen summary, there's a yes or no question. This question you can't answer on the Main screen.

You have to answer within the screen. There's a question, "Is there any formal compliance steps or mitigation required?" This is yes or no. If you had mitigation, if mitigation was required for this specific law and authority, the answer would be yes. If not, the answer would be no. In order for review to convert to exempt all of these yes-or-no answers need to be no. For example on this review, this review cannot convert to exempt because mitigation is required for contamination.

Uploading documents. Documentation is a very important part of any review. You can upload a document such as maps or photos once per review and reference it throughout. You don't need to upload the same document in multiple places within a single review. You can upload it once and then reference the document by its name in different parts of the review such as in the compliance determination. We do have an FAQ that goes a little bit deeper into this that you can find on our website. For documents that you were referred to on many or all reviews such as sole source aquifers or coastal barriers resource system units, you can refer to attachments in a previously completed review as long as the archived review has been completed within the last year. This means that the archived review can be found on the HUD Exchange website and that the documentation is up to date. We also have an FAQ that talks about this.

As Lauren said, based on feedback that we've received through AAQ and through other people, we are working on a central library feature to simplify uploading and referencing documents. We're really excited about it, so hopefully that will be available in 2016.

Okay. Bug alert. A few users have run into this issue, and we've been able to troubleshoot it with our contractors pretty quickly. Be wary of long blocks of text. Entering too much text in the textbox will not trigger an error message. We're working on a fix that will make it trigger an error message. If you run into an issue where you've entered a lot of text and then down the road you're trying to re-access the screen, let's say the HP screen, and you can't seem to be able to get the system to open that screen, that's a symptom of this bug. If that ever happens, please, please, use AAQ. We'll address this with our contractors as soon as possible.

We're able to sort this out every time it happens, but if you feel as though your responding in a textbox, and it's kind of longer than normal, you feel it's a lot of text going in there, or if you're typing away and you're slowly not seeing your text anymore because it's going up so much, what you can do is upload a Word document with the information that you would've entered into a textbox. So if you're ever wary about, well, that seem like a lot of text for a little textbox, just copy and paste it into a Word document and attach it, upload it to the screen.

One other note. When you report this issue to AAQ, just reference the name of your environmental review, so that we can start working on it immediately. As I said before, we're working on a fix, so that if there is ever an issue where there's too much text textbox, there would be an error message pop up. That's how it should work to let you know that there's too much text in the textbox, so we're working on that, but we will continue to troubleshoot any of these issues through AAQ as they come up.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The first question is, "I only do an emergency repair program that assists families for up to \$5,000. When I used the program, I had to put in a lot of attachments. I didn't have to when using the worksheet. Will I need to add attachments for every job?"

Lauren McNamara: It depends on if the attachments are the same for everyone or if they're different. If they're the same general compliance areas, then you could upload them to one environmental review, and then reference that review and those documents in the subsequent reviews that you do.

Liz Zepeda: I'd also make sure you're keeping aware of which documents are required, and which are places where the system allows you to upload but isn't necessarily requiring you to upload. So if a document is required, the system will usually say something, like upload this map at the bottom of this screen. It'll usually show up in red, as opposed to, a lot of places there's an option to upload, but there isn't necessarily text or a statement saying that you should or have to upload something there. Make sure you're not just putting something in every upload even though the system isn't telling you to. It's just allowing you to.

Lauren McNamara: Thank you, Liz.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is, "is there a limited amount of attachments and a limited file size of documents being uploaded?"

Lauren McNamara: Alright, let me pull up our FAQ. We have an FAQ on that. Okay. Here are the different types of file types. We also, in our user guide, have information about the number of megabytes. I believe it's 50 megabytes. Let me pull it up in our user guide. We definitely have that written down somewhere. We have not ever run into an issue of a document not being able to upload, and we have tested this very thoroughly for phase 1s and phase 2s and everything that could possibly be attached to an environmental review. We know these files are large.

We know that these are not going to be small files. We have tested it. Okay, here it is. 50 megabytes per document is the limit, but we know we have been able to upload larger than that. So if you're trying to upload something and there's an issue, definitely let us know using AAQ, and we'll figure out what the issue is, but 50 megabytes. We've never run into the issue, and we've uploaded larger than 50 megabytes. We have uploaded phase 1s multiple times to single reviews to make sure it could handle the stress of uploaded document size. Alright. Hopefully that answered that.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is, "When you say referenced the document and reviewed, do you mean by project name, number, or document name?"

Lauren McNamara: We mean by project name. This would be how a person who is in the public would see the review. If I worked for Boston, and I put all of my source documentation into the 4 Beachwood Street, if I was referencing that information for 349 Park or for 620 W. Park, I would say found in the 4 Beachwood Street. You would just reference the project name because that's the easiest to find on the website.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. It looks like that's it for the analysis question, so we can move onto the next category. As a reminder, we'll have kind of an open forum for additional questions at the end. If your category-specific questions didn't get answered, we can address them more at the end.

Liz Zepeda: Okay. Thank you, Lauren. I'm Liz and we're moving onto our next category, which is tiering. I think that we also have a poll question coming in here. Sorry. Making sure that I can actually view that. It looks, well, it's in flux, but we have a fair number of people who use tiering, about half of you use it from time to time. Then the other half are kind of split between never using it and often using it, so okay. We've got some experience. For those of you who are not familiar with tiering. Tiering is an alternative procedure for completing environmental review records. Tiered reviews are conducted in two stages.

First there is one broad level review, so before the sites are known when you just have an idea of what kinds of activities are going to be done, but not necessarily where they are, then you do this broad level tier 1 review, which looks at the big picture, considers the laws and authorities that can be considered at that point, and then develops a plan for addressing specific sites with any laws or authorities that can't be dealt with at the broad level. Then there are many site-specific reviews. As sites are identified, you would conduct a site-specific or tier 2 review, which would look at any remaining environmental concerns that weren't addressed in the broad level. We have this umbrella represent the broad umbrella tier 1 review with all of the smaller site-specific reviews under it.

If you are interested in conducting environmental reviews using tiering, we strongly recommend working with your field or regional environmental officer to make sure that you're doing it properly to discuss good procedures. We actually do have guidance that we're working on at headquarters that should be issued in the near future. Keep an eye out for that. We'll have clear guidance, which we know people have been asking for, for a while.

In HEROS we have a completely separate procedure for conducting tiered reviews, which is kind of just an alternative, separate process from regular environmental reviews. I strongly, again, recommend viewing the e-tutorials if you're interested in tiering in HEROS. We see a lot of confusion about how to use the tiered screens. The tiered review e-tutorial should really help clarify that, and make sure that you're putting the right things in the right spaces. Please, put your questions into Ask a Question if you are still confused about how to do it. We're happy to help you with the process. Definitely do not use the standard environmental reviews to try to complete the tiered review. That's really going to make things difficult to you. If you are tiering, you need to go to the tiered-review dashboard.

You get there from the regular dashboard. You would press the Go to Tiered Reviews button. When you log into HEROS from the regular My Environmental Reviews dashboard, you would go to this button, and then you would see any tiered reviews you've worked on, or you could start a new broad level review.

A lot of people wonder what to do when they want to add a site-specific review to an existing broad level review that they did outside of HEROS. In that case unfortunately there isn't a good way to pick up midstream in HEROS. If you already did your broad level, say last year you did a broad level, and now you're working on a site specific, keep doing that on paper for the time being. Next time you have a new broad level review that you start up, we'd encourage you to put that into HEROS, so that you can start attaching those site specifics to the broad level, but we just want to keep everything together, so either all on paper or all in HEROS. It really doesn't work just halfway through the process to start putting reviews into HEROS that are already in progress.

Here's our second bug alert. It is a new system. Sorry. We're still working out some of these kinks. This one is kind of tiering related. We do want you to be aware of it. It's rare, but every once in a while, someone will start a regular review, and somehow, somewhere along the way, it becomes tiered. We don't know what causes this, and part of that is because it is really rare, so hopefully it won't happen to you. But we do have a way for you to keep an eye out for this. At the very top of the screen when you're working on an environmental review, it will say either tiered or non-tiered. If you're in HEROS if you're back in the standard non-tiered section, you start a new environmental

review. Up here where it says whether you're Part 50, Part 58, or both, it will also say non-tiered. Try to keep an eye out for that. Again, on this screen I'm still good. It says that I'm non-tiered.

If things start seeming weird, you might look up to here and see if it changed to tiered. If you do come across this issue, please, please, please, report it through Ask a Question, so that we can help you, and also we can study this issue and figure out what's causing it because right now we don't really know, so we can't fix it. We'd love more data points on that. I apologize for the inconvenience there, but keep an eye out.

Now ready to move onto questions you have on tiering.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Just to reiterate, we had a lot of questions about if you finish a tier 1 outside of the system, should you add site-specific reviews in HEROS. The answer is, no. You should complete those outside of the system. Just to clarify because we had a lot of people asking that. The second question is, we had a request to go back to into the system to show where to find tiered reviews. I think we went through that kind of quickly, and some folks screens didn't switch in time, so just clarify.

Liz Zepeda: Okay. Here I am back at the My Environmental Review dashboard. This is the first screen you'll see when you log into HEROS. You should be familiar with it if you've ever used HEROS before. For example, if I was doing a regular environmental review, I would press, "start a new environmental review" here. If wanted to start a tiered review, I would go to this go to tiered reviews button. From there I will go to the My Tiered Reviews dashboard, so you can see here I have two broad level tiered reviews that are in progress, Name and Project. These are very creatively named tiered reviews.

From each of these I'm going to call out one of our original environmental officers and see what he has in here I guess. You'll see these are each broad level reviews. Then you can edit these, view these, view the authority to use grant funds, or go directly to the Site-Specific Review screen. For this if you were doing site specifics, attaching them to your existing broad level review, you can just add these and add as many as you want to attach to each of your broad level reviews.

From here you have the same menu at the top of the screen that you do for regular non-tiered reviews, but on your side menu you'll see, a, it's completely different because tiered reviews go through a different process, but also at the very top, you can return to the My Tiered Environmental Review dashboard. And we're back.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next question is, "Is there a format for site-specific reviews?"

Liz Zepeda: No. We do not have a format for site-specific review in HEROS. In fact we only have a format for categorically excluded object to 58.5, tiered reviews even at the broad level. If you're going to tier an environmental assessment level review, you would actually have to do your own format even for the broad level. Part of performing a broad-level review, we think, is establishing a format for the site-specific review because those should be tailored to each review to each project, so the user has to make their own format for the site-specific review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, and then this will probably be the last tiering question it looks like. "Does tiering walk through the analysis for each law and authority, or does it vary."

Liz Zepeda: Again, for an environmental assessment level review, the user is completely on their own to create the format and do everything. For categorically excluded reviews, we don't walk you through the analysis, but we do have a bit more of a format to guide the user's thinking, so sorry we failed to make a demo review for tiering. As you go through a broad level review, it'll look, initially, very similar to a non-tiered review. The level of review determination is a little different. Then you have your project summary is very similar but a little--

Again, notice that you'll see tiered is in the top of the screen and the name of each screen. So things start to get a little different for tiering. Like, we'll ask the size of the project area, how many years the review covers, the maximum number of units, some different questions. Then, I'm just thinking this through. It'll show you each of the laws and authorities and give you an opportunity to determine whether compliance can be determined for each at the broad level review, or if it needs to be considered at the site-specific review.

I'm going to go back to the dashboard at this point because I don't know what we're going to find, but hopefully I have not frozen the system. It should be fine. I might have put it through just a little too much just now. It'll help you go through the analysis but not kind of take that TurboTax, hand-holding approach that you'll see in the standard, non-tiered environmental reviews. We'll give this a minute. Do we have any more questions on tiering, Lauren, or shall I go on.

Lauren Hayes: You can go on to the next category.

Liz Zepeda: Okay. We'll give HEROS a little time to think about that, and see if it can come back. Our last category or group we're going to be talking about today before we move into the open forum is completing reviews. We see kind of two separate and almost opposite issues with completing environmental reviews. And we want to draw your attention to those and make sure that this process is clear. Some people aren't marking their reviews as complete even after they do take all of the steps to complete an environmental review. They just miss that last final marking it complete step. Whereas others are marking reviews as complete, even though they aren't done, and there are still steps that they've failed to take. We want to show you how to avoid making either of those mistakes.

We tried to make HEROS very intuitive and user friendly, but it is the user's responsibility to make sure that everything is done. Lauren mentioned this in our fine-print slide, but the system isn't necessarily going to do that for you. I think some people expect that, before they complete, there'll be a step where HERO says, oh, you forgot to do flood insurance, and unfortunately it isn't that smart yet. It is your job to make sure that you hit each of these steps.

The easiest way, we think, to make sure that you get that is to generate the environmental review record and then make sure that everything's filled in, everything looks right, before you take those last steps of completing your review. You would start by going to the Package Screen. You'll find that in a side menu kind of in the middle here. Then press generate preview of environmental review record. At that point you'll get a little popup. It might take a few minutes to generate, but you'll get this Word document such as we've looked at over here. At that point, maybe, all of the finalized steps won't be completed. You won't have necessarily the certification filled in or all of the approval documents showing, but make sure that everything is filled in here, you don't see any blank spaces before you move on to complete your environmental review.

Here I have slides showing that again. For those who haven't seen it, again, this is the environmental review record. It's okay to have blank spaces here and there. For example if you don't have a grant recipient that's different from the responsible entity, or if you don't have a consultant, these are going to be blank. That's fine, but you do want to have most of this body thing filled in. For those of you who aren't familiar, your attachments are going to show up as links here, so you want to make sure that those are showing up. Before you mark everything as complete, you are going to want to make sure that these final steps are filled in. You'll want to see a date for the 7015.15 7015.16. You can see that it's done there. Here we have our approval documents. That shows that everything is fully ready to go and the environmental review is read to be marked complete.

Here is that statutory checklist. All the laws and authorities. Again, you want to make sure that there aren't any blank spaces here. At this point, we just have the summary just the compliance determinations, but then when you move down to the end of the environmental review record, you'll have Appendix A, which will walk through every answer you provided for each of these laws and authorities, as well as, all of the documents that were uploaded.

This is the document that's posted on our public-facing website during the public comment period, and also for one to five years after the review is completed. Just for your comfort, it does stay in HEROS indefinitely. It's only available to the public for this set period of time, but you should be able to continue accessing it in HEROS for a while. Still it is safe. We do strongly recommend that you save a copy of this for your record. You don't need to print it out or have a paper copy, but just it's probably a good idea to save it on your computer somewhere just in case something catastrophic happens to the system, always a possibility. It's not a strong possibility, but I can't promise anything.

If you're completing exempt or categorical excluded not subject to 58.5, 58.6, this is the screen you'll use to finalize those reviews. You'll automatically be routed here after you complete all of your required analysis. This is kind of big screen. That's why we have the Save and Exit button. We realize you may not be able to complete all of this in one sitting, but just follow the steps through this screen. First you're going to generate a Word document, very similar to the environmental review record by "pressing print signature page."

Once you've printed that, had all of the required parties sign it, then you would scan that, upload it, and it'll show up here. Once you have that uploaded, you'll be able to complete steps two and three, which is to select a date that the environmental review record was signed and generate that final environmental review record for your record. At that point it's very important that you press the Save and Finish button. The Save and Finish button is what marks your review complete, so once you press that, that's the status that will show up. For any HUD staff that are on the line, this process is slightly different for Part 50 reviews, so we recommend that you watch the e-tutorial to get through those steps. This is specific to Part 58.

To complete CEST, categorically excluded and subject to and environmental assessment reviews, it's a little different. You have to work a little bit harder to get to this screen. We recommend using the side menu. It's down way at the bottom at the Complete an Archive screen. But once you get to the screen, it's very easy, you just press these two buttons. Press archives and then press finish, and your review will be marked complete. Make sure that you don't do this until everything else is

done including your 7015.15 the Request for Release of Funds, and the 7015.16, the Authority to Use Grant Funds, unless of course your review converted to exempt. We'd also ask that you repeat step one if any changes are made. If you reevaluate your review, if you update your mitigation as you complete it, please, come back and press that archive button again to update the archived version on our website, so that it reflects your latest version.

Any questions about completing reviews?

Lauren Hayes: Okay. We've had several questions about completing the AUGF in HEROS and if the RE can upload a paper copy.

Liz Zepeda: Of the AUGF? Oh, okay. Yes. The RE can upload a paper copy of the RROF 7015.15. I'm going to move into this review. You'll notice at this point it's even marked "in progress," so if we edit this one-- I'm logged in as a responsible entity right now. I'm going to start from the Package screen, which we saw a few slides ago. We save and continue from there. We need to go through the Signature and Posting screen. This is when the review would initially go on our public-facing website. Then follow up after Notice of Intent to Request for Release of Funds. Then we'll move into the Request for Release of Funds screen. There are two ways of completing this screen.

We have all the same fields as the paper request for release of funds, so you can just go through and complete this exactly as you would the paper version if you're a certifying officer or their designee is willing to go into HEROS and do it electronically. Alternatively you can upload your request for release of funds. You can have the certifying officer continue to do it on paper, and then just scan it and upload it into HEROS. Now once you're done with the request for release of funds, you'll route it to HUD using this email-notifications system under notification. Then HUD will put in the authority to use grant funds. HUD will use this screen. Only a HUD user can edit this screen, but they'll use this same kind of process to complete their side of the authority to use grant funds.

The responsible entity cannot upload the authority to use grant funds. It needs to be had. So if you have a review that needs to have an authority to use grant funds attached to it, you should coordinate with HUD with your CBD rep, or your field or regional environmental officer to make sure that it's put in there because that is their responsibility, and they should be doing that.

Lauren Hayes: The next question is, "If reviews are completed and archived in HEROS, should we retain a hard copy as well?"

Liz Zepeda: We recommend keeping an electronic copy, but you do not need to keep a hard-paper copy. As the Environmental Office, we love for you to keep things paperless. It's just not necessary to have that many different copies of it

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is, "Is there an option to complete an archived tier-2 review as well?"

Liz Zepeda: For tier 2 reviews, you would attach those to your existing tier 1 review and kind of the same process. You would re-archive the completed review every time you update it with a new site-specific review, but you don't have the same steps to completing and archiving a site-specific review because you complete your site-specific reviews outside of the system, it's really

just a simple upload. If we go to our tiered reviews, all you're doing with your site specifics is uploading them. Once you do upload them, you will be directed to the Complete an Archive Screen, where you can re-archive the review. That will, again, update the archived version, so that it reflects the most current version of your review with all of the site specifics, but it'll already be part of a completed, broad level review, which should already be archived. You'll just be updating it with each site specific.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question I, "How do we make amendments to a submitted review?"

Liz Zepeda: You can continue to edit your reviews in HEROS once they're done. They don't get locked down. I'm going to mark this as reviewed and complete, just so that we see how that works. If I'm at the Authority to Use Grant Funds screen I press continue. That's when I would be automatically routed to this screen, but again, you can just go here from the complete an archive version. From there, press archive. You'll get this notification saying it's going on our website. Then press finish. I'll get a popup saying that your review is complete.

As you can see, when we go back, we'll be routed here where my review is now marked complete condition done mitigation because, as we saw earlier, it does have to have some mitigation for contamination. Now if I want to update something, if my funding amounts change, or I notice that I left something off, or I wanted to just clarify something, update something, you're free to do that. The review remains editable. You're just going to want to keep aware of when reevaluation is necessary. If it comes to a point where 50.47 would require you to reevaluate your review, then you're going to want to take those steps. There's a screen for that.

If your edit kind of rises to a level where you're really having to relook at the whole review, then you would use this screen to consider those updates. We also have the Mitigation Follow-Up screen where you should continue updating to document that mitigation measures were completed. So as I take care of this cleanup and building design stuff that I said I would do. I will upload documentation, make any comments, and then when that's all done, I can mark that complete. Again from here, you'll be prompted automatically to re-archive your review to update on the latest changes to the review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then we've had a couple of follow-up questions about retaining an electronic copy. Hopefully this answers that. The question is what forms should go into the file to demonstrate the environmental has been done if we don't need to retain a hard copy on file.

Liz Zepeda: This environmental review record Word document will be automatically generated by HEROS. We just tell you to save this in your records. If the environmental review was lost from HEROS, then your attachments could theoretically be as well, so you might want to save those as well in your records, but just save this, and that will satisfy our record-keeping requirements.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. We've also had a couple of questions about public notices, so, questions about how HEROS affects requirements for posting and publishing, and do we still need to do a local advertisement and provide evidence of that to HUD?

Liz Zepeda: HEROS doesn't change your publishing and posting requirements. The same rules that you'll see in our regulations, still apply even with HEROS. What we recommend people do is, when you do publish your post, you can refer people to the URL and tell them where they can find

the full environmental review record, but posting on this website doesn't change the requirement to publish your post. That's still in our regulation, and until or unless we have change to our environmental regulations, you'll still have to publish your post.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then we've also had a couple of question about kind of electronic signatures. "How does the CPD field office know when the RROF has been submitted, and how will I know when the AUGF has been signed by the HUD?"

Liz Zepeda: That works through our email-notification system, so when you complete your request for release of funds, you'll put in the email address of whomever you submit your request for release of funds to. It varies by field office, but this could be your CPD rep, your field environmental officer. Follow the same procedures you've been following up to this point. Put in their email address in this section, then your email address in the carbon copy, so that you do get a copy, and you can make sure that it's sent. If you "press send notifications," within five minutes, you should get an automated email. This will say there's a request for release of funds that's ready for your review.

As long as you put your email on the carbon-copy line, it will send you a copy, so you can be sure that it's sent. We do recommend, just to be safe, that you follow up with a phone call or an email, or however you usually communicate with your HUD office to make sure that they got your notification just out of an abundance of caution, but that should come through the system. Then likewise, you'll get the same thing from HUD. They have the exact same email system on the Authority to Use Grant Funds screens that you have on your Request for Release of Funds screen, so when they're done, they'll put in your email address in this box and send you a notification. You'll get a very similar, system-generated email saying that there's an authority to use grant fund for your review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then we had a couple of questions about mitigation follow up and reevaluation. "Are users prompted to complete the Mitigation Follow-Up screen?"

Liz Zepeda: There's not a point where you're prompted necessarily to do that. It's kind of the responsibility of the responsible entity to just keep on top of that, so it should happen based on the project schedule based on how you completed the mitigation. You should just try to keep it in mind as you do your mitigation as you complete the project to come back into the review and take care of this record keeping. If a review requires mitigation, you'll see it in the status. This review is just marked completed because no mitigation was required for that one or mitigation has been completed for it. You'll see the ones that do require mitigation that shows in the status line, so you can keep on top of it.

Lauren Hayes: There's question about Reevaluation screen, so if the project increases in unit size, for instance, 100 units to 102, can we use the Reevaluation screen to update the project if the change is not significant?"

Liz Zepeda: If the change is not significant, then no, you don't need to do reevaluation in every case. It's based on how significant the change is. I can't give you numbers right now. That's another thing that we're working on guidance within this office, so hopefully there will be clearer guidance on when reevaluation is required, but if you're not sure if your review needs to be

reevaluated, work with your field or regional environmental officer. This is really something on which to work with them to make sure that you're taking that step when it is necessary.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then this will probably be the last question for this category, but hold to your questions for the general Q&A. "Are the time limits still the same for submitting information in HEROS?"

Liz Zepeda: Sorry. We're just looking for clarity a little bit on that one, but basically HEROS doesn't change any of the requirements for your reviews. It doesn't change the way you do your reviews. It just changes the format. These time limits that are in our regulations, or the procedures you follow with you HUD office, those don't really change. We're just doing them electronically, so continue to follow what's in our regulations, just do it in HEROS instead of paper. Let's move on to our final slide.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. We just had a question about testing. "If we enter a review in the test environment, can we move it to the real HEROS version later, or will we need to reenter it?"

Liz Zepeda: You would have to reenter that. There's no way of transferring from one to other. We use the training environment to conduct training a lot, but I tend to not think that it's super necessary to actually use it to practice. Certainly feel free to do so if that appeals to you, if you want to test it out before you do a real review, but generally I think that it's safe for HEROS users to just dive in with a real review and start working in the production environment because we can't always help if you run into any problems, but it should be fairly intuitive, and should walk you through it.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next question is on the Confidential screen, so "for those sites who sees, and who does not see the location information, and should we use this feature for something like single-family rehab?"

Liz Zepeda: That's a good question. To those who aren't familiar with this, when you start a new environmental review in HEROS-- Oh, actually, I'll go back to one I've already started. The second screen you'll get to asks, about sensitive information. It's good to read this prompt and think about whether you're putting anything sensitive that goes in our publically facing website. Make sure that you're not putting in anything that shouldn't go to the public. If you did say that your project type is sensitive, for example if you were funding a domestic violence shelter or something that you might not want to tell everyone where it is, you'll go to this Sensitive Information screen.

This goes through a lot more guidance about how to deal with sensitive information and asks for you to create a confidentiality plan. Basically what you get from this screen is not a system change, it's guidance on how to deal with that. It doesn't cover up your project location if you say that your project is sensitive. It just tells you don't put in your project location. Make very sure that you're following these instructions and doing what the system tells you to do, so that you're not divulging sensitive things. I wouldn't worry about just regular single-family rehab. That's not going to be sensitive. It's more something where it's domestic violence shelters or inherently private or secret materials. The other place where this comes up would be historic preservation.

In the Historic Preservation screen, there are places where you're asked if there's confidential information, for example sites that are significant to a tribe, something you don't want to divulge

their information. Let me get to that part of the screen, maybe, if it will let me. Sorry about that. Alright. We're really making you go through the ringer. If you say that there's sensitive information, this actually won't show up in your environmental review record. The environmental review record will cover up anything that you say is sensitive. Do make sure that you preview the environmental review record. Make sure that it's working right, that you're not accidentally, through some kind of systems error, divulging this kind of information before you put it on our website, but that should cover up those addresses and locations.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then we had, a question about historic preservation. "Will the system automatically generate a notification for tribe, or is it really also indicated or do REs need to continue to do this manually?"

Liz Zepeda: You do need to continue to do this manually. That's one of those long range plans things that we would love to have in the system, but right now we're not there yet. We do have links to our website throughout that has guidance and examples and things that you can use to generate that yourself, but the system won't do it for you at this point.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next we had a couple of follow-up questions about in-house contractors. "Can we get clear definition of what it means for in house and the process for getting those people signed up for HEROS?"

Lauren McNamara: Okay. An in-house consultant is a person who has a desk in your office. They sit there and they have a responsible entity email address. They're basically functioning as full-time staff person for an office to do environmental reviews. If you have any questions, please, contact your field environmental officer or regional environmental officers, or they probably loop us in, and we'll talk to them about that. This is someone who functions as an employee of the responsible entity and not as a consultant.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then another question about consultation. What do you enter for the consultation if you have a programmatic agreement?

Lauren McNamara: If you had a programmatic agreement, you wouldn't get to the initiate consultation portion. You would simply say on the first question if the activities were exempted by a programmatic agreement, you would select, no and next, and then you would enter the information that's in the programmatic agreement and be taken to the screen summary. You wouldn't get to the consultation portion of this Historic Preservation screen if you had a PA in place that covered the activities of the project.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, and then I know everyone has been asking about this. I promise I'm not ignoring you. We were saving it until the end, but when will HEROS become mandatory for all users?

Lauren McNamara: We estimate that HEROS will hopefully be mandatory in 2017. We know that seems far off, but we need to make sure that all of the user roles and partners who are involved in the environmental review process are in the system, that the system is functioning as it should, that everyone is comfortable with the system, that all HUD programs that need to be in the system are in the system prior to making it mandatory. We are saying 2017. This is the time to give us feedback. If something's not working please use AAQ. If you have suggestions, if you have

complaints, please, use AAQ to let us know. We're looking at this as an extended pilot period to iron out any issues that we have. So this is the time to give us your feedback. Even though HEROS isn't mandatory, using it now helps make a better system for when it is mandatory.

Liz Zepeda: We wish we could give you a firmer answer on that, probably even more than you do. Some of this is dependent on when we get funding to put in the changes we need. We're not going to make you use a mandatory system that doesn't work. We can't make promises about when we can make every function work properly. Hopefully we can get everything into a well-oiled machine very soon.

Liz Zepeda: Okay. Great. We do have another webinar. We're planning to hold another one early next year. If you have any requests for what you'd like those webinars to cover, and specific information or topics or structure, please, send in a comment to our Ask a Question. We'd really appreciate your feedback on what you want to know more about. We're happy to take your requests.

Lauren McNamara: Once again, here's our information. This is all in welcome emails. It's all easily found on the HUD exchange. The contractor Cloudburst will be sending you a survey link with instructions on how to get credit and to give an evaluation on this Q&A session. I believe we have one final poll question, but thank you very much for your participation. Ben, do you have any final words for everyone? Okay, great. Thank you very much everyone.