CNA e-Tool, Version 3.0: User Basics Transcript

This video will walk CNA e-Tool users through the steps to create and complete a Capital Needs Assessment, or CNA.

There are 5 key steps to complete a CNA: Step one, initiate the CNA, step two, send the CNA to a partner, step three, prepare the CNA, step four, submit the CNA, and step 5, agency approval of the CNA.

Step one, Initiate the CNA.

To start, a user logs into the Secure Systems website to access the new CNA e-Tool to initiate a CNA. The CNA must be initiated by someone from the organization that will eventually be submitting the CNA to HUD. Throughout this webinar, we will refer to this role as “Submitter.”

When Submitters log in, they are directed to their personal user Dashboard. On the Dashboard, click on the green “Start New Assessment” button at the top right of the page. This directs the Submitter to the “CNA Summary” screen.

The CNA e-Tool Submitter will next be prompted to choose the approving agency. Currently, for most programs or events, the only option is HUD.

NOTE: On all screens, the CNA e-Tool prompts the user to complete all of the required fields through the appearance of a red vertical bar on the left side of the field. A user will not be able to save entries on the screen unless all of the required fields are completed. The red bar may also indicate that there is an error in the answer provided which must be corrected before it can be saved.

Next, choose the type of CNA. Different types of CNAs will be listed depending on the identity of the user. We’re selecting “Asset Development”, because in our example, the user is a lender working on a CNA for a new construction project. It is important to note that Asset Development applies to any CNA needed to support a borrower’s application for an insured mortgage, whether for new construction, rehabilitation, acquisition, or refinance.

Following this, choose the program or event that best corresponds to the CNA. We’re choosing the LIHTC 221(d)(4) Pilot.

Enter the “FHA number” or “Property ID” number for the property.

Fill out the Property Information and Property Contact information below and select “save” at the bottom of the screen to save information entered.

After completing the CNA Summary screen, the CNA Submitter completes the Participants screen by entering contact information for each of the partners known at the time. At a minimum, submitters should enter contact information for themselves and the property owner so that the preparer can make arrangements for the site visit and request necessary information. Select the green “Add New Participant” button on the top right of the screen to enter participant information. Fill in each of the fields. Enter the role of the partner and select Save. Preparers may also add participants to this screen and Submitters can revisit it, as needed, to add more participants later.

Step two is to send the CNA e-Tool to the Preparer.

Once the CNA Summary screen is completed, the “Send this CNA” becomes enabled and the Submitter can send the CNA to the partner responsible for preparing the CNA. In some cases, the Submitter may also assume the role of Preparer and complete the rest of the CNA.

A user can send a CNA to a Preparer by selecting the “Options” drop down menu at the top of the screen. Select “Send this CNA”, choose the needs assessor firm that will be assigned to complete the CNA, and press “Send CNA”. The CNA will appear on the Preparer’s “New Assignment Received” section of the Dashboard.

This establishes the Submitter & Preparer partnership for the CNA and the CNA may freely be sent back and forth between the partners. It’s important to note that once this partnership is established, the CNA cannot be sent to any other Needs Assessor Firms – meaning, a Preparer cannot be switched for this CNA. A whole new CNA must be initiated to send to different Preparer if the original partnership is terminated.

Step three is to prepare the CNA.

There are numerous sections of the CNA that will need to be completed by the Preparer. These sections are listed on the left menu bar of the screen.

The Sites screen is where users enter all the building sites that are included in the property. In most cases, there will be only one site. Click on the green “Add New Site” button to add a new site to the site table. Each site you create must be given a unique Site name.

The Unit Types section is where users enter all the types of units that can be assigned to buildings. Click on the green “Add New Unit Type” button to create a new unit type to be added to the unit type table. Enter a unique Unit Type name for each unit type created.

The Buildings screen is where users enter all of the property’s buildings for each site. In some cases, a site may not have a building. The site may consist of only surface parking or a required greenspace set-aside. Click on the green “Add New Building” button to add a new building to the buildings table.

The Units and Common Spaces screen is where unit and common space information is entered for each building. Click on the building to which you want to assign previously created unit types and add common spaces in the building table. The Units section is where users specify the number of each unit type that exist in a building. Click on the green “Add Unit Type to Building” button to select and add a unit type. The Common Space section is where users name and describe the common spaces within a building. Click on the green “Add Common Space to Building” button to add a new common space.

The Parking screen is where users enter information about parking. To begin entering parking information, select a site in the table. First, enter information about surface parking. Enter the surface area, type of surface, and other information shown on the screen. Then, click on the green buttons to “Add New In-Unit Garage Spaces” or “Add New Common Garage Spaces”.

The Utility Types and Rates screen is where users enter information on the utilities used at the property. Click on the green “Add New Utility” button to add a new utility to the utility table.

Use the Units Inspected screen to enter information about which specific units are to be and/or were inspected. Click “Add New Inspection Sample” to add a new inspected unit.

The Components, Alternatives, and Recommendations screen is where users list all the property’s physical attributes, assign one or more Alternative for each Component, and indicate the recommended Alternatives. Click on the green “Add New Component” button to add a component. Fill in the component information and click “Save”. Following this, add the alternatives for that component by clicking on the green “Add New Alternative Button. Finally, select the recommended course of action for the Component.

The Narratives and Attachments screen is where users describe the condition of the property’s physical attributes, or other items that may require commentary. This screen provides space to enter any narrative that is pertinent to the CNA and is in addition to the information already provided in previous sections. Use the dropdown to indicate the ASTM outline topic you are writing about. Add attachments by clicking on the green “Add New Attachment” button. Attachments should be added to reference and support specific narrative topics and statements.

The Financial Factors section is where the CNA Submitter specifies the parameters used to structure the Financial Plan for funding recommended future repairs and replacements. Enter data including the Year 1 annual deposit per unit amount, initial deposit to Reserve for Replacement amount, and percent change in annual deposit. HUD will periodically set values for inflation and interest on short-term deposits, such as Reserve for Replacement escrow balances. This will remain in effect for the initiated CNA for a specified number of days.

And finally, the Repair Replace Decision screen is where the CNA Submitter makes the final decision about which of the preparer’s recommendations to accept. The submitter can select a component, review the component alternatives that were recommended by the Preparer, and, if they so choose, select a different alternative. If no changes to a recommendation are made by the Submitter, then the Preparer’s recommendation will carry through.

For more detailed instructions on how to navigate the CNA e-Tool and complete a CNA, please reference the CNA e-Tool User Guide and CNA e-Tool Trainings that will be posted on the CNA e-Tool page of HUD’s website and the HUD Exchange.

Step four is to submit the CNA.

Once all of the necessary screens have been completed by both the Preparer and the Submitter, the CNA Submitter submits the CNA to the Approving Agency for review.

Select the “Validation” tab and respond to any flags by clicking the green “Respond to flags” button on the top right. Please note that the CNA may be validated at any point in the preparation process to see the validation results of the data entered. You may validate the CNA as often as needed.

A CNA cannot be submitted if “Severe” flags exist. Any data that caused Severe flags must be corrected. The Submitter should enter explanations and justifications for the Informational and Warning types of flags by clicking on the “Respond to flags” button.

Select the “Options” drop down menu at the top of the page and select “Submit CNA”. This option will only appear once the CNA has been validated.

Step 5 is to receive the agency review decision.

Either HUD or USDA will review the CNA once it has been submitted. Once submitted, the CNA will appear under the “With Agency” section of the Submitter’s dashboard. The Submitter will receive notification when the CNA is approved or returned requiring revision. The Returned CNAs will have HUD’s response notes for the flags and decision comments that communicate the Approving Agency’s reasons for the “Return.”

Step 6 is to create a new version of returned CNA for revision and re-submission.

CNAs in “Returned” Status can no longer be edited. However, the Submitter can select “Create a New Version” in the Options menu and duplicate the returned CNA. This new version that may be edited and revised freely.

The Submitter may send the CNA to the original partner who prepared the CNA to make the edits. The Preparer may choose to create a new version him or herself from the returned CNA that will appear on the “My Partner’s Desk” section of his or her dashboard and proceed to make revisions. Once all the issues are addressed, the Submitter can submit the CNA to the Approving Agency.

For more information about navigating the CNA e-Tool, users may refer to the CNA e-Tool User Guide, which will be available on the CNA e-Tool page of HUD’s website once version 3.0 is launched.