Housing Counseling System (HCS) Instructions

As of July 11, 2019

All Housing Counseling Agencies participating in the housing counseling program must access the Housing Counseling System (HCS) to validate agency information and transmit their quarterly cumulative performance housing counseling activity report, HUD-9902.

Agency information from HCS is used to produce the state-by-state lists of HUD-approved housing counseling agencies on HUD’s web site. It is important, therefore, to check HCS frequently to ensure your agency information is current and accurate. Agencies should verify their “Agency Information” screens at least once every 90 days. If no change is required, simply mark the “Validated?” box on the right-hand side of your agency “Information” tab to indicate you have verified the information. The following information is how to access the system, change and/or validate the Profile Information, and How to file a HUD-9902 quarterly report in HCS. For assistance contact your point of contact (POC) or send email to: housing.counseling@hud.gov.

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HOW TO ACCESS HCS:

1. Go to: [https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/hcs/](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/hcs/)
   Click on the green “Log in to HCS” box.
   A login dialog box will appear for a User ID and password.
   DO NOT bookmark the popup box screen.

2. The AGENCY ID number is a 5-digit number that begins with 8 (8xxxx) or 9 (9xxxx)
   The USER ID number is: mx (plus last 4 digits of agency ID# if it begins with 8) or M8 (plus last 4 digits of agency ID# if agency number begins with 9) and the password the user created. The password is case sensitive. However, if you forgot your password call the assigned HUD Point of Contact in the Office of Housing Counseling to reset the password to the generic password.

3. When using the generic password, a dialog box will appear for the user that states: “your password is currently a default password, please change immediately”
   Click on the link “Go to homepage”.

4. Then the “Housing Counseling System” screen will appear.
   Click on “change password” in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
5. A screen will appear to setup or create a new password. Your new password must have a length of at least 8 characters, have at least one capitalized letter, one lower case letter, at least one numeric value but it cannot start with “0” (zero). Once the user changes the password it will be good for 90 days.

Once you changed your password and if successful, the next screen to appear is the HCS Home page with the Agency’s Summary page of data to view. The User’s ID and Name will appear at the top of the screen.

NOTE: There is only one user-ID and password per agency. If an agency has branch office(s) then there will be a separate user-id and password for each branch. All branch office(s) data must also be validated in the system.
HOW TO VALIDATE OR CHANGE AGENCY’S PROFILE INFORMATION

1. After logging into the system in steps 1 through 6 above, move the cursor onto the “Agency” tab and click on “Basic Agency Search”.

2. The system will automatically default to a search in the current fiscal year (Fiscal Year 2019). Enter the “Agency’s ID Number” that begins with an 8 (8xxxx) or if it begins with 9 (9xxxx) and click “Search”.

3. A “Agency List” screen will display the search results. Click the link for the agency name.

5. Click on the “AGENCY INFORMATION” to verify the date your agency began providing housing counseling services, your agency’s TIN#/DUNS#, Types of Counseling Methods, and Languages.
If your organization serves migrant workers, or serves residents of a Colonia or both, please indicate by checking the appropriate box or boxes. For this purpose, Colonias means any identifiable, rural community that is located in Arizona, California, New Mexico, or Texas; is within 150 miles of the border between the United States of America and the United Mexican States; and is determined to be a Colonia on the basis of objective need criteria, including lack of potable water supply, lack of adequate sewage systems, and lack of decent, safe, sanitary, and accessible housing.

If you provide other counseling methods or languages place check marks in the appropriate boxes, then click “Personnel” tab to verify the next screen

6. Click on “PERSONNEL” tab to change or verify the “Agency Manager” (person in charge of counseling program), the “Agency Senior Executive”, and the “Agency Contact for HUD use”. These names and phone numbers WILL NOT appear on HUD’s webpage list of agencies but will be used by HUD staff.
Please note: Only the person identified in “Agency contact for HUD use” will receive the special Email notices from our HQ office and/or from the Office of Housing Counseling (OHC) regarding policy/procedure changes etc. All personnel listed will receive system generated email notices upon automated agency status changes.

Then click on “Contact Information” tab to verify physical and mailing addresses.

7. After clicking on the “Contact Information”, verify the “Agency’s Contact” telephone number that clients should call and/or Fax number to use. If applicable, verify the Toll Free telephone number, Web Url, and the agency’s general email box that clients should use to contact the agency.

It is from this tab that the information will appear on HUD’s web page list of housing counseling agencies. Be very careful of what telephone extension number or email information, if applicable, is listed for public/client’s use.

Note: Only the Physical address will appear on HUD’s housing counseling webpage.
8. Then click on tab “AGENCY AFFILIATION” to verify the “types of counseling activities” provided by your agency. The Agency’s User cannot make changes on this page. HUD POC (see name in HUD POC box) will make any changes on behalf of the agency. Please also notify, via email, your HUD POC whenever there are changes to: counseling activities, an office move, merger, and/or agency’s point of contact.

If the agency is a LHCA or MSO (agency has an approval certificate from HUD Office of Housing Counseling) and the types of counseling activities are incorrect or if you have recently changed activities, please provide to the HUD POC a copy of the agency’s
amended housing counseling work plan regarding the counseling activity changes (adding or deleting activities). The OHC staff will update the counseling activities in the agency’s profile page and send a letter with a new approval certificate indicating the additional type of counseling activities or omission of the deleted activity/ies.

9. Then place cursor on the “Validated” box to place a check mark and scroll to bottom of page and click on “ok” to validate and save the changes you made on any of the previous tabs stated in steps 10 – 14. The screen and summary page will indicate the Last validated date.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR HECM counseling activity: The check mark for Reverse Mortgage Counseling is a system generated check mark that is marked for agencies that have at least 1 HECM certified counselor in the FHAC Certified Counselor database. Please do not contact HUD to place the checkmark in the Reverse Mortgage Counseling box.

For a list of the HECM counseling agencies that have registered exam qualified counselors, please visit HUD’s website at: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/housing-counseling/hecm/

10. If the agency is a Subgrantee or an Affiliate to a National Intermediary or State Housing Finance Agency (SHFA) please contact the Intermediary/SHFA (parent org) regarding the “Type of Counseling Activities” changes that need to be updated in HCS.

The Intermediary/SHFA must provide a copy of the Sub-grantee’s revised plan to the Point of Contact at the OHC in order for HUD to update the counseling activities in HCS.
HOW TO FILE QUARTERLY HUD-9902 ACTIVITY REPORTS IN HCS:

HUD recommends the counseling agency to transmit early the Quarterly HUD-9902 data through the CMS system to generate the reports early. This will be helpful so that the HUD Point of Contact (POC) has time to review the data and if there are any errors then there is still time to have the Agency’s User correct the entries in the system by the reporting due date. The quarterly report due dates are:

1st Qtr (Oct 1 – Dec31) by January 31   3rd Qtr (Apr 1 – Jun30) by July 31
2nd Qtr (Jan 1 –Mar31) by April 30   4th Qtr (Jul 1 – Sep30) by December 31

1. Each quarter all LHCAs, Subgrantees, MSO branch offices and Affiliates to National Intermediaries/SHFAs are to transmit their 9902 data through their CMS system in order to interface with HUD system to file this report.

Enter cumulative data for “ALL ACTIVITIES” (includes HUD grants) when filing 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter reports. Follow Steps 1 through 6 above to log into the system.

HCA should submit their agency updates as soon as their CMS product is on line with HUD. HCAs will prepare to submit their consolidated client and HUD-9902 reports for each required reporting period during the fiscal year. Agencies are still required to check HCS after transmissions to validate the data is accurate. Any discrepancies discovered should be corrected on their CMS and retransmitted. Corrections should not be made directly in HCS as the discrepancy will only reappear in the next transmission.

2. Then click on “HUD-9902” tab and select “Data Reporting Status Inquiry”.

3. The system automatically defaults to the current quarter in the fiscal year. Select the appropriate “reporting period” for the fiscal year, for example: FY2019, Quarter 3 and then click on “CONTINUE”.

![Image of Housing Counseling System](image-url)
4. Enter the Agency’s five digit “Agency ID” number (8xxxx) or (9xxxx) and then click on the “Submit Inquiry” button.

5. The 9902 will appear on the screen in a display only format. Review the 9902 report. If the report is correct, click the Validate button.

If the report is not correct, return to your CMS to make the necessary corrections and resubmit.

**Manually Entering 9902 form data in HCS**

If the agency is not able to submit 9902 data from their CMS, the 9902 can be entered manually in HCS as a last resort. To enter or revise the data on the 9902, click the “Update” button.
The 9902 report will display in an editable format for entering cumulative data for the “All Counseling and Education Activities” column and if applicable, the HUD Funded Activities column(s).
- First enter total budget amount before entering any data in Section 3.
Enter the 9902 data:

- **All Activities column**: Enter the total cumulative number of households for each row in the 9902, including those funded by a HUD grant.

- **All HUD Funded Activities column**: you will not be able to enter data in this column. It will calculate the sum of the values entered in the grant specific...
- **Grant Funded Columns:** The grant funded columns represent a sub-set of the number reported in the All Activities that were funded by a HUD grant. In the screen example, the agency has one grant applicable to the reporting period (2018-1 COMP). The grant funded columns that display will depend on the grants available to the agency for that reporting period. In each grant column, enter the total cumulative number of households for each row in the 9902 that were funded by that grant.
Example: 2018-1 COMP Funded column: enter the total number of households for each row in the 9902 that were funded by the HUD 2018-1 COMP grant.

Note: the grants that your agency has for the reporting period may be different than what is shown in the example. If the agency has more than one grant applicable to the reporting period, there will be multiple grant funded columns.

- The total number of HUD Funded Activities (total of the HUD Grant columns) may not be greater than the all activities number.
- Totals in Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 should equal the total counseling (Section 8 plus Section 9). (Section 3 Total = Section 4 Total = Section 5 Total = Section 6 total = Section 7 Total = (Section 8 Total + Section 9 Total). The section totals should be equal using this formula.
- The system will automatically indicate an error if data is not correct due to math error(s) in a particular section of the report. The error(s) must be corrected before the system will automatically validate the data.

Note: When the agency files their 2nd qtr report (Jan01-Mar31), data must be Cumulative data from the start of the fiscal year through March 31 in both the All Activities and HUD grant columns. Even if a grant’s performance period started the previous fiscal year, the HUD-9902 report represents the activities conducted in that fiscal year only.

- Complete the data entries and then scroll to the bottom of page and click the “SAVE” button.
Subgrantees and Affiliates to a National or SHFA Intermediary, and MSO branch offices quarterly HUD-9902 Activity reports in HCS will automatically generate a cumulative report for the parent organization (Intermediary/SHFA/MSO).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If the user is from a Subgrantee or Affiliate to a National Intermediary or to a SHFA please contact the Intermediary (parent org) regarding the Subgrantee/Affiliate reporting requirements to determine who is responsible to file the data in the “HUD Funded” column in HCS.

If the agency is from a MSO, the user from a MSO-branch office should contact the MSO main office point of contact to determine who will file the branch report(s) manually in HCS for the “All Counseling & Education Activities” and “HUD Housing Funded Activities” columns.

Remember, there is only one User ID and Password for each agency. If the Intermediary User is going to file the 9902 report on behalf of the Subgrantee/Affiliate it is still the Subgrantee/MSO branch Agency User’s responsibility to “Validate” the Agency’s Information that is described in the instructions above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgrantee/Affiliate</th>
<th>Reporting Details</th>
<th>HUD Funded</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Subgrantee/MSO Branch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 10 Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multiple Agencies have reported problems with their 9902 submissions, and the Office of Housing Counseling asks that you please make note of the following:

- Agencies must be aware that manually inputting 9902 data into the Housing Counseling System is not the preferred method. HUD recommends submission of 9902 data via a HUD compliant Client Management System. Any data manually entered into the Housing Counseling System will be overwritten if a submission is received via a HUD compliant Client Management System. This includes agency profile information. Agencies should not use a combination of manual entry and automated CMS data submission.

- Agencies need to manually check to ensure that the data submitted to Housing Counseling System is valid and correctly received. Once a submission has been made, please log into HCS to ensure that the data appears in the system and is correct. There is no limit to the number of times an agency can submit a 9902. If a reporting error is found, simply correct the error in the Client Management System and resubmit to HUD. Agencies should always submit, check the data in HCS, and submit again if necessary.

**HUD-9902 Data Quality Alerts**

Data Quality Alerts have been added to the 9902 form in HCS to alert agency users to possible errors in 9902 reporting. The alerts will check for:

- **Zero impacts entered in Section 10 Impact and Scope of One-on-One Counseling Services**
  - Indicates agency is not reporting any impacts.

- **Total impacts entered in Section 10 total is the same as the Section 9 total for one-on-one counseling.**
  - Indicates agency is not reporting multiple impacts.

- **Total impacts entered for 10c (developing a sustainable budget) is less than Section 9 total for one-on-one counseling.**
  - Indicates agency is not developing a budget with counseled clients, this is a counseling requirement

- **Zero impacts reported for 10e - households gained access to resources to improve their housing situation**
  - Indicates agency is not properly reporting impacts

- **Agency’s yearly budget is not entered.**

If data quality alerts have NOT been identified for a 9902, there is no change to the display of the 9902.
If data quality alerts have been identified for a 9902, a **Data Quality Alerts section** will display below the Validation information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Quality Alerts</th>
<th>Data Quality Alerts have been identified for this 9902 report and have not been addressed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Data Quality Alerts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity of Households (select only one)</th>
<th>All Activities</th>
<th>All HUD Funded Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Hispanic</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Not Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Chose not to respond</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3 Total: 403 | 338
Click the **Review Data Quality Alerts** button to display the specific alerts for that 9902. The **Data Quality Alert** pop-up displays listing all applicable alerts for the 9902.

The Data Quality Alerts indicate that while the 9902 has been submitted and accepted by HCS, there are some indicators that there may be some errors in reporting.

The agency user should review the information provided in the Data Quality Alert pop-up. The user has three options:

- Ignore the Data Quality Alerts for the moment.
- Update the 9902 reporting to remove the alerts.
- Accept the alerts to indicate that the reporting reflects valid reporting on the counseling activities conducted during the reporting period.

**1. Ignore the Data Quality Alerts**

To ignore the Data Quality Alerts, click the **Close** button.
The Data Quality Alert pop up will close. The Alert will remain on the 9902.
2. Update the 9902 reporting to remove the alerts

To remove the alerts, the agency should revise the 9902 reporting using the original method of submission.

If the agency submitted via their CMS:

1. Click the Close button on the Data Quality Alert pop-up.
2. Close the 9902 form in HCS.
3. Return to the agency’s CMS to update the counseling activity data.
4. Submit the updated reporting from the agency’s CMS.

If the agency submitted manually in HCS:

1. Click the Close button on the Data Quality Alert pop-up.
2. Click the **Update** button on the 9902.
3. Update the 9902 reporting data and click **Save**.

If the updated 9902 (updated from either the CMS or manually in HCS) addressed all of the alerts, the Data Quality Alert section will not display on the 9902.
3. **Accept the Data Quality Alerts**

If the reporting reflects valid reporting on the counseling activities conducted during the reporting period, the agency user should **Accept** the alerts.

**Accepting** an alert tells the HUD POC that:

- The agency has reviewed the alerts and confirmed that the reporting is accurate.
- Since the reporting is accurate, the agency will not change the 9902 reporting to remove the alerts.

The alerts are only meant to identify possible data quality issues. **There is no negative impact to the agency user for accepting the alerts.**

To accept an alert:

1. Check the checkbox next to the alert.

2. Enter a Comment (not required).

3. Click the **Accept** button.
Complete steps 1 – 3 for each data quality alert that displays.

If all the alerts have been accepted, the data quality alert message on the 9902 will still display but will update to indicate that the agency has addressed the alerts.
For HCS assistance contact your point of contact (POC) or send email to: housing.counseling@hud.gov.