

## **HUD Northeast Region and LeadingAge Member Call**

*Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, 1 – 2:30 p.m.*

### **Attendees:**

- **From LeadingAge:**
  - Allison Roenigk Ciborowski, President & CEO, LeadingAge Maryland
  - Sarah Hemming, Director of Member Relations and Education, LeadingAge Maryland
  - Annalyse Komoroske Denio, Senior Policy Analyst, LeadingAge New York
  - Juliana Bilowich, Vice President of Housing Policy, LeadingAge
  
- **From HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing:**
  - Brett Wise, Director, Northeast Region
  - Yvette Jackson, Director, Asset Management Division (Baltimore)
  - Dean Santa, Director, Asset Management Division (New York)
  - Colleen Judge, Acting Director, Asset Management Division (Boston)
  - Brett Morash, Chief, Funding Branch, Northeast Region

### **Meeting Notes:**

- **HUD Northeast Region Staffing Changes and Organizational Adjustments:** Brett Wise, Colleen Judge, Yvette Jackson, Dean Santa, and Brett Morash from the HUD Northeast Region provided a comprehensive update on significant staffing reductions, branch consolidations, and the implementation of new management strategies such as the 'pool' system to address capacity challenges, with Juliana Bilowich and Annalyse Denio facilitating questions and clarifications from LeadingAge members.
  - **Staff Reductions and Branch Consolidation:** Brett Wise detailed that the HUD Northeast Region experienced a 29% reduction in staff from 228 to 161 in 2025, with the asset management side being more heavily impacted than production. Baltimore lost 42% of asset management staff, Boston 34%, and New York 24%, leading to the consolidation of account executive branches and the redistribution of responsibilities across the region.
    - An updated staff organizational chart can be found [here](#). Account Executive assignments are available [here](#) and are being updated as soon as possible; HUD staff have found the listing generally up to date in comparison with their internal records.
    - Brett Morash and the Funding Branch previously assigned administratively to the Boston Division will be moving under the NY

Division. The Funding Specialists will continue to service the region by states so operationally there will be no impact.

- No staff in the region were subject to RIFs.
- **In response to member questions: Michael (Mike) Patterson has left the HUD team. Michelle Cutkelvin remains on the HUD team.**
- **In response to member question: No indications that multiple HUD regions (i.e., the Northeast and Great Lakes/Midwest) will be consolidating in any way.**
- **Resolution Specialist Branch Changes:** The Baltimore division lost its dedicated resolution specialist branch, with responsibilities for troubled properties being reassigned to resolution specialists in Boston and New York. This change means that properties in Washington, DC, and other areas may now be serviced by staff based in different cities, leveraging the region's ability to manage assets remotely.
- **Implementation of the Pool System:** To manage increased workloads, the Northeast Region introduced a pilot 'pool' system for low-risk, low-touch properties, where a group of account executives collectively manages these assets rather than assigning them to a single individual. It should be transparent for properties that are part of the pool that the branch chief – rather than an account executive – is assigned to a work item.
- **Impact on Workload and Timelines in FY25:** Portfolio sizes per staff member have increased from around 70 to over 100 properties. Despite these challenges, the team maintained a 96% on-time completion rate for nearly 31,000 work items in fiscal year 2025.
  - **In response to member question and LeadingAge request: The Northeast Region has produced a document explaining the expected processing times for various routine transactions involving HUD's Multifamily Asset Management team in the region, available [here](#).**
- **Guidance for Communication and Follow-Up:** Participants were advised to follow up directly with their assigned account executive regarding pending work items, especially those submitted during the government shutdown, rather than using general inboxes to avoid duplicate logging and further delays. Branch chiefs and directors remain available for urgent escalation.
- **Service Coordinator Grants and Funding Processes:** Brett Morash, Dean, Colleen, and Juliana discussed the status of service coordinator grants, including upcoming renewals, the process for drawing from reserves during funding delays, and the importance of maintaining updated information in sam.gov, with practical advice for grantees and updates on staffing for grant specialists.
  - **Grant Renewal and Closeout Timelines:** The region is preparing to reissue renewals for 2026 service coordinator grants, with the process managed by

headquarters and impacted by the congressional funding interruptions, resulting in months-long delays for 2026. Grantees were reminded to submit vouchers for 2025 closeout by the end of January and to reach out early if they encounter issues, particularly with LOCCS access for form 27054E submissions.

- **Draws from Reserves During Delays:** In cases where grant funding is delayed, housing providers are advised to request a draw from reserves to cover service coordinator costs, with Headquarters recommending at least a six-month draw for Calendar Year 2026. Regional Directors confirmed this approach is acceptable as long as properties have sufficient funds and understand the draw is a loan to be repaid when grant funding arrives.
- **Maintaining Compliance with sam.gov:** Providers were reminded to regularly update their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in sam.gov, as expiration can disrupt vouchering for both funding and grants. This is a recurring issue that can cause significant delays if not proactively managed.
- **Grant Specialist Staffing and Support:** The region currently has two full-time grant specialists, with a third in the security clearance process. Staffing shortages have required Brett Morash to assist with grant specialist duties, and grantees are encouraged to include their grant specialist on communications to Account Executives regarding reserve draws to cover grant-related funding issues. Brett Morash can also assist.
- **Processing of New Grants:** Approximately 100 new service coordinator grants awarded in January of the previous year are beginning to be processed, with notifications expected in late January. Grantees should look for communications from Andrew Swenson regarding these awards.
- **Operational Impacts of Government Shutdown and Funding Delays:** Dean, Brett Wise, and Colleen explained the operational challenges caused by the 43-day government shutdown, including significant backlogs in work item processing, and described ongoing delays in subsidy payments and budget approvals due to appropriations issues.
  - **Shutdown-Induced Backlogs:** During the 43-day government shutdown, only a small number of staff were able to work, resulting in a backlog of 3,000–4,000 unlogged work items. It took several weeks to clear this backlog after staff returned, and the region is still working through the resulting delays.
  - **Guidance for Urgent and Delayed Items:** For urgent or delayed items, participants were advised to contact their assigned account executive or escalate to branch chiefs or directors as needed. Routine items are processed on a first-in, first-out basis, and requests for expedited processing are reviewed by division directors.

- **Subsidy Payment and Budget Approval Delays:** Subsidy payments, including PRAC and HAP payments, have experienced delays of up to 30 days due to appropriations lapses and the need to use prior-year funds. The process for increasing budgets or approving retroactive payments is slower than usual.
- **Processing Trends and Recommendations:** Colleen reminded attendees that providers need to submit budget packages at least 120 days in advance and ensure proper documentation for out-of-cycle requests to minimize back-and-forth and avoid multiple touches, which is especially important given current staffing constraints.
- **Processing Timelines:** As noted above, at LeadingAge’s request, the Northeast Region has produced a document explaining the expected processing times for various routine transactions involving HUD’s Multifamily Asset Management team in the region, available [here](#).
- **Policy Updates: HOTMA, OCAF, LEP, and Criminal Background Screening:** Dean, Colleen, Yvette, and Juliana addressed questions on the status of HOTMA implementation, OCAF release delays, guidance for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) accommodations, and recent communications regarding criminal background screening and immigration status, clarifying current requirements and regional practices.
  - **HOTMA Implementation Delay:** HOTMA implementation has been delayed by a year, with no new guidance or next steps from headquarters. The region will provide updates as they become available, and LeadingAge is planning training for early fall in anticipation of the new compliance date.
    - **In response to member question: HUD software development teams are reported to have made significant progress toward addressing the changes needed for implementation.**
  - **OCAF and Utility Allowance Updates:** OCAF numbers for 2026 are pending release, with headquarters indicating they are imminent. Account executives are holding off on processing items dependent on these numbers, and no projected figures will be used in the interim.
  - **LEP Guidance and Budgeting:** Colleen confirmed that owners remain responsible for ensuring meaningful access for LEP individuals under the Civil Rights Act and Fair Housing Act. While HUD has removed translated documents from its website, providers may continue to budget for translation services as required for program access. LeadingAge has maintained access to hundreds of translated documents that were previously made available by HUD.
  - **Criminal Background Screening and Immigration Status:** Yvette clarified that recent letters on criminal background screening and immigration status

are reminders of existing statutory and regulatory obligations, with no policy changes. Owners retain discretion in screening and must follow relevant federal, state, and local laws, but the 'one strike' policy applies only to PHAs, not multifamily owners.

- **Resident Stipend and Renter’s Insurance Policy Discussions:** Colleen, Dean, and Juliana discussed potential policy changes regarding the resident stipend threshold and the use of renter’s insurance as a property-wide strategy, including the possibility of regulatory waivers and the need for continued engagement with headquarters.
  - **In response to member question: On the Resident Stipend Threshold:** Following LeadingAge advocacy, HUD Headquarters is considering increasing the \$200 threshold under which resident stipends are not counted toward income, with openness to regulatory waivers on a case-by-case basis if justified. However, there is not yet a clear connection between this issue and broader work requirements for SNAP or Medicaid raised by LeadingAge.
  - **In response to member question: On Renter’s Insurance as a Budget Line Item:** While the model lease does not require renter’s insurance and the region does not review house rules, there is support for the idea of including property-wide renter’s insurance as a budget line item if approved by headquarters, especially as a strategy to reduce property insurance costs. LeadingAge is continuing to work with HUD Headquarters on this policy change.
- **NSPIRE Inspections and REAC Performance:** Dean provided an update on the status of INSPIRE property inspections in the region, noting an increase in failed inspections and the importance of owners being prepared for inspections, with regional staff proactively notifying owners of upcoming dates.
  - **Inspection Volume and Outcomes:** The region has completed 189 inspections this fiscal year, with a notable increase in failed inspections compared to previous years. Some properties have received zero scores due to refusal or inability to schedule or attend inspections.
  - **Notification and Preparation Practices:** Regional REAC coordinators send out lists of upcoming inspections, and staff are required to notify owners to ensure they are prepared.

#### **Follow-Up Tasks:**

- **Service Coordinator Grant Vouchering:** Service Coordinator grantees should ensure all service coordinator grant vouchers for 2025 are submitted before the end of January and address any issues with voucher submission or LOCCS access promptly by contacting the grant specialist and Brett Morash.
- **Service Coordinator Grant Reserve Requests:** Grantees requesting reserve loans should also indicate clearly in reserve requests when funds are being drawn to cover

service coordinator shortfalls, include the grant specialist on the email, and acknowledge that the funds are a loan to be repaid when grant funding is received.

- **HUD Website Updates for Account Executive Assignments:** HUD will ensure the HUD Northeast region website is updated to reflect the latest account executive assignments for multifamily properties following recent reorganizations.
- **Resident Stipend Regulatory Review:** LeadingAge will follow up with HUD Headquarters regarding the potential increase of the \$200 resident stipend threshold and the process for regulatory waivers, and communicate any developments to stakeholders, as well as policy changes on renter's insurance.