Chapter 1: Introduction

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 1-1

1.1 In This Guide 1-2

1.1.1 Overview of the integrated Real Estate Management System 1-3
1.1.1.1 Purpose of iREMS 1-3
1.1.1.2 Benefits of iREMS 1-4
1.1.1.3 Source Systems 1-5
1.1.1.4 What is a Property 1-6
1.1.1.5 Participant and Contact Information 1-7
1.1.1.6 Departmental Enforcement Center (DEC) and iREMS 1-7
1.1.2 Operating Concepts 1-8
1.1.2.1 Window Regions 1-8
1.1.2.2 Title Bar 1-8
1.1.2.3 Menu Bar 1-8
1.1.2.4 Toolbar Buttons 1-8
1.1.2.5 Location/Address Bar 1-9
1.1.2.6 Scroll Bars 1-10
1.1.2.7 Status Bar 1-10
1.1.3 Using the Mouse 1-10
1.1.3.1 Holding The Mouse 1-10
1.1.3.2 Pointing And Clicking With The Mouse 1-11
1.1.3.3 The Right Mouse Button 1-11
1.1.4 Section 508 Compliance 1-12
1.1.5 User Guide and Training Materials 1-14
1.1.6 Help Line 1-14

List of Figures

Figure 1-1. Defining Properties 1-7
Figure 1-2. integrated Real Estate Management System (iREMS) page 1-14

1

Introduction

The integrated Real Estate Management System (**iREMS**) User's Guide provides the procedures that you need to effectively use **iREMS** for managing your portfolio of properties. Each chapter represents one or more functions in **iREMS**. The tasks that you can perform with each function are summarized at the beginning of each chapter, followed by an overview, step-by-step procedures, example of web pages, and description of fields.

The Real Estate Management System (REMS) was initially implemented in 1998, to assist users with managing properties. Since then many enhancements, changes and modifications were made to REMS to ensure compliance with departmental changes, the addition of Performance Based Contract Administrators (PBCA), changes in business rules and changes in the way Housing conducts business.

In November 2003, modifications were made to REMS to comply with amendments in Section 508 of the 1973 Rehabilitation act.

In early 2008, REMS was replaced by a newly designed system intended to move with housing into a Multifamily systems integrated environment. **iREMS** was designed and developed in compliance with the future business and technology modernization strategy, as defined in HUD's Enterprise Architecture blueprint.

Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Establish "What is a property in **iREMS**"
- Identify source systems and other systems that interface with iREMS
- Navigate using the Internet Explorer
- View Section 508 compliance items

1.1 In This Guide

The **iREMS** User's Guide consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1 The *Introduction* provides a system overview of **iREMS**, operating concepts, and help line information. The Section 508 compliance modifications are also available in the Introduction chapter.

Chapter 2 *Getting Started* reveals how to access, log in and exit out of **iREMS**.

Chapter 3 *Asset Management Portfolio/Dashboard* provides an overview of navigating the Asset Management pages. In this section you can view a list of all properties in your portfolio, search for a property or access a one of the listed properties.

Chapter 4 *Financial Statements* chapter allows you to view annual financial statements from FASS.

Chapter 5 The *Financing* chapter displays financing information for a specific property. The status history for each FHA number can be viewed. The primary FHA number is indicated for each property.

Chapter 6 *On the Management Review* pages you can view, add and update information pertaining to a management review. You can also view related project actions.

Chapter 7 *Occupancy* allows you to view property type, disability type and unit information. In addition, you can add or update the survey data about the inventory of affordable multifamily housing units for the elderly and disable. This data is obtained from owners or management agents and is used to provide accurate information to congress and the public via the Housing for disabled Survey.

Chapter 8 *Physical Inspection* allows you to view physical inspection data from the Physical Assessment Subsystem (PASS).

Chapter 9 *Property Attributes* displays the property name, any aka property names, property ID, primary address, other site addresses, and building information for the property. GEO coding and the year the building was built are provided for the primary address. Rent information from the Tenant Rental Assistance Certification System (TRACS) is also provided.

Chapter 10 *Property Participants* displays all participant information for a specific property. Participant and contact information can be added, updated, or deleted.

Chapter 11 In *Risk Management*, you can view troubled property information, state the problem and make a recommendation. You can also view Housing's plan of action.

Chapter 12 The *Servicing* pages display all financing and subsidy contracts associated with the property. In addition, you can view information on other public subsidies, including the Reserve for Replacement account deposits and request funds for improvements to the property.

Chapter 13 *Summary* pages display cumulative, view-only information about the property. The Property Assignment page displays all assigned users and their roles for a property. The Property Summary page provides such information as property

status, primary address, participants, loans, and subsidies. The Property Summary Narratives page displays all summary narratives that have been entered in **iREMS** for a property.

Chapter 14 *Workload Management* allows you to add and update project actions, identify responsibility, and record results. You can also view the Project actions that are system-generated by **iREMS**.

Chapter 15 The *Subsidy Administration Dashboard* chapter provides an overview of navigating the Subsidy Administration Dashboard and sidebar options. From the Subsidy Administration pages you can access all contracts with contract processing functions.

Chapter 16 *Assistance Contracts* displays information on all subsidy contracts associated with a specific property. The contract status and details are also found on these pages.

Chapter 17 *Contract Processing* allows Multifamily Housing users and Contract Administrators to process Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act (MAHRA) renewals, perform rent adjustments, enter MAHRA Amend Rents Only rent increases, or enter information for a Notification to Opt Out of a Section 8 Contract. Data can be entered and updated for any active contract associated with a property. Rent Comparability Studies and Renewal Budget information is also entered in the Contract Processing module.

Chapter 18 *Security* information is presented primarily for security administrators (and their backups) in each program center. This chapter discusses how to register for a secure systems ID, as well as how a property is assigned.

1.1.1 Overview of the integrated Real Estate Management System

iREMS maintains critical information on Multifamily Housing projects. The system uses Internet Web browser technology and is accessible through a link on the Multifamily Housing HUDweb page. Authorized users of **iREMS** are located in HUD's field offices, HUD Headquarters, and the Departmental Enforcement Center. Industry users also have access to **iREMS** via the Internet.

Internet Explorer Chrome is HUD's preferred browser. **iREMS** is compatible with IE 6.0 or later.

1.1.1.1 Purpose of iREMS

iREMS serves as Housing's centralized database for maintaining and tracking multifamily property information. **iREMS** maintains the most critical data elements that were selected by the Multifamily Data Quality Task Force, which supports Housing's overall program mission. The data items were selected based on their use to measure program effectiveness rather than on the traditional emphasis of processing data and day-to-day project management. They were chosen using the following criteria:

- ☑ Must be necessary, rather than "nice to have"
- ☑ Must have programmatic relevance over a long period of time

- ☑ Must result in useful information at all levels of the organization
- ☑ Must be equally accessible to program staff and executive managers
- ☑ Must be easily obtained using program source data or other electronic aids
- ☑ Must support the Department's reform initiatives

1.1.1.2 Benefits of iREMS

✓ Easy to retrieve and correct data quickly

The principal benefit of **iREMS** is that Multifamily Housing has the ability to view and correct data quickly and easily.

✓ Ability to maintain an accurate inventory

Formerly, a single geographic location had multiple financing instruments and assistance contracts that were not connected (associated) in any way, which made it extremely difficult for Multifamily Housing to evaluate their portfolios correctly. Within **iREMS**, financing instruments and assistance contracts can be associated with the appropriate property to ensure Housing's portfolio analysis is accurate. Also, **iREMS** is the only system that contains every type of housing activity, such as insured and non-insured, Section 8 assistance contracts, HUD-held, HUD-owned, risk sharing, co-insurance loans, and grants.

✓ Record of ownership and other participants

In **iREMS**, you can keep a record of ownership and management entities for your property. **iREMS** retains a historical record of the ownership. The following information can be maintained in **iREMS**: owner and owner contact; management agent and contacts (national and regional); site manager; sponsor/developer and contact; leasee/operator and contact; contract administrator and contact; and holding and servicing mortgagees and contacts.

✓ Ability to correct unit information

Tracking units within a property have typically been a tedious task. In **iREMS**, Housing can maintain unit counts for the property as a whole. Consequently, you can provide more accurate unit information to the public.

✓ Ability to identify scattered site properties

Each individual site address for a property can be identified, allowing you to provide an accurate administrative record for the Enforcement Center and the community.

✓ Improve portfolio management

Because each property can be assigned to a Project Manager, responsibility for the portfolio of properties is established. Property assignment facilitates accurate portfolio management. Project Actions can be

created to better track and resolve issues. **iREMS** also generates automatic project actions and follow-up project actions for predetermined items.

✓ Receive timely information from FASS and PASS

In an effort to keep **iREMS** current with other systems, there are additional interfaces. For example, **iREMS** is able to access Annual Financial Statements (AFS) and other related data from FASS. **iREMS** also receives physical inspection information from PASS for a property.

1.1.1.3 Source Systems

The **iREMS** database was initially loaded with information from existing systems. **iREMS** users are able to update most of the information directly in **iREMS**. Some information, however, is owned by other existing systems, and changes must be made directly in these systems. Interfacing with these systems ensures that the information is up-to-date in **iREMS**.

The integrated Real Estate Management System's database was initially compiled from the following source systems:

- F47 Multifamily Insurance System
- FOMNS Field Office Multifamily National System
- GEO Group 1 mapping software (used to geocode or pinpoint the physical location of primary addresses for properties
- HP Enforcement Center's Housing Professional
- LAS Loan Accounting System (for direct loans)
- LOCCS Letter of Credit Control System
- MARS Multifamily Accounting Reporting and Servicing System
- PAS Program Accounting System (through TRACS for capital advances, and for contract and budget authority for subsidy contracts)
- PMS Multifamily Property Management System
- TRACS Tenant Rental Assistance Certification System

FOMNS and HP were phased out as part of the initial REMS implementation. Key data from FOMNS and HP was loaded into REMS prior to their termination. The Development Application Processing (DAP) system for underwriting is the source of pre-endorsement information on all new financing instruments.

Although **iREMS** is the Department's official source for project management and tracking, certain Section 8 contract and financing data continues to be maintained in TRACS and F47. Information from TRACS and F47 is updated nightly in **iREMS**.

Information from LAS, LOCCS, MARS, PAS, and PMS is updated monthly. When data is entered in these systems, it does not appear in **iREMS** until the following month. Other systems that **iREMS** interfaces with on a regular basis include:

- ARAMS Automated Renewal and Amendment Management Subsystem (a subsystem of TRACS that handles the processing of contract renewals)
- DAP Development Application Processing
- DARTS Departmental Accounts Receivable Tracking/Collection System
- FASS Financial Assessment Subsystem for Annual Financial Statements
- MDDR Multifamily Delinquency and Defaults Reports
- PASS Physical Assessment Subsystem for physical inspection information

1.1.1.4 What is a Property

Multifamily Housing has reengineered their definition of a property. A single geographic location can have multiple FHA numbers. This makes it extremely difficult for Headquarters and Program Centers to correctly evaluate their portfolios. Therefore, Multifamily Housing has determined that a property identifier—a number—should be assigned to each property. A property is defined according to a regulatory agreement or a subsidy contract, for a non-insured property. Any FHA number or subsidy associated with the buildings and/or land defined in a regulatory agreement or other contract with HUD should be tied to the same property identifier.

The following guidelines should be used when defining all of the factors of a property ID:

- FHA numbers that are part of the same regulatory agreement
- A regulatory agreement that replaced a previous regulatory agreement
- If an FHA number represents financing on a property that also has or had a subsidy contract, whether the contracts are active or not
- If a contract represents subsidy on a property that has or had financing, whether the financing is active or not
- If the property never had financing with HUD but is subsidized, then the property may only have a contract associated

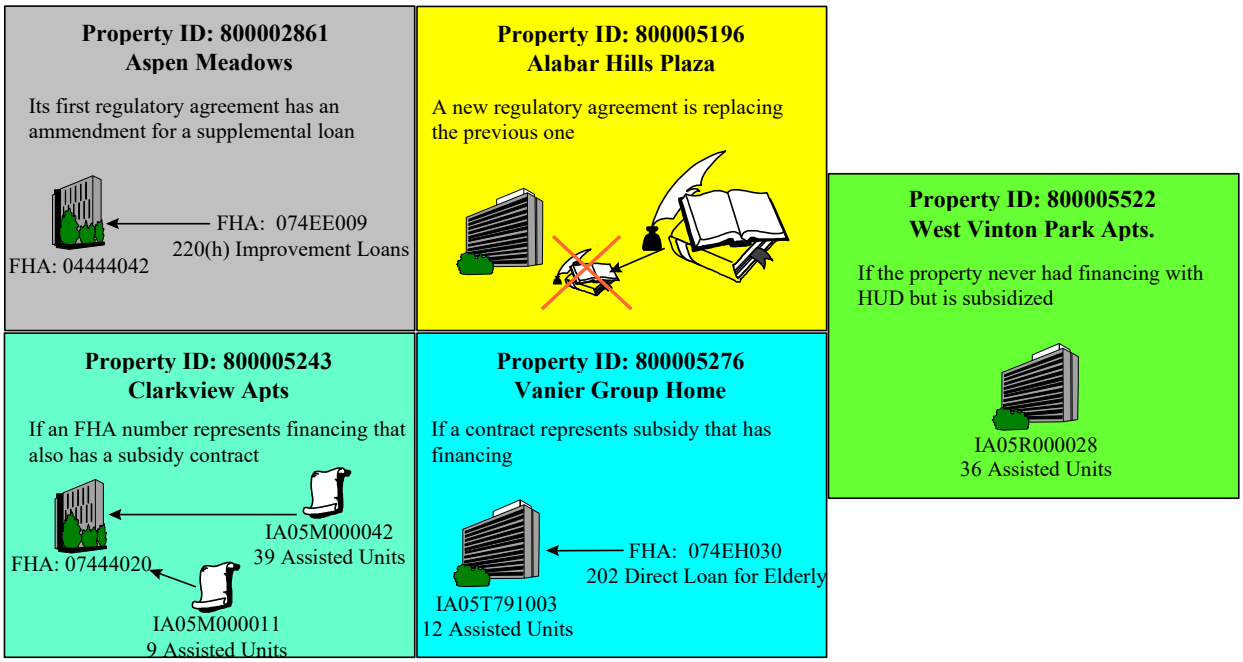


Figure 1-1. Defining Properties

1.1.1.5 Participant and Contact Information

All of the participants related to the property can be maintained in **iREMS**. **iREMS** allows you to record the following participants and their contacts:

- Owner and Contact
- Management Agent and Contact
- Site Manager
- Sponsor/Developer and Contact
- Lessee/Operator and Contact
- Contract Administrator and Contact
- Holding Mortgagee and Contact
- Servicing Mortgagee and Contact
- Resident Organization Contact

1.1.1.6 Departmental Enforcement Center (DEC) and iREMS

The Departmental Enforcement Center (DEC) monitors troubled properties through **iREMS**. DEC staff can use the DEC Referral pages to record referral and acceptance information as well as problems and resolutions. The DEC Narrative records pages provide the history of DEC analysis and recommendations. The DEC Portfolio Review, DEC Referral List and DEC Workload Queues are also used exclusively for recording DEC activity.

1.1.2 Operating Concepts

Access to **iREMS** is obtained through HUD's intranet, the HUDweb. **iREMS** pages are user-friendly and offer a variety of helpful features. **iREMS** requires a Web browser to display data. Some features described are specific to Internet Explorer, which is HUD's standard browser.

1.1.2.1 Window Regions

Window regions are the specific areas on the windows. The bottom region of each window is the main region, and it is the largest in area. It is where the information that you requested is displayed, and where you can enter information and commands.

1.1.2.2 Title Bar

The top region on every **iREMS** window is the title bar. The title bar lets you know exactly where you are in iREMS by naming every page as it is displayed.



For example, the title bar shown here indicates that you are currently working on the Login page.

1.1.2.3 Menu Bar

The second region displayed on every window is the menu bar. The menu bar lets you know what functions are available through your Internet browser.



When you click on an item on the menu bar, a pull-down menu displays the functions. If an option on the pull-down menu has a triangle (▸) next to it, a second pull-down menu can be reached by clicking on that option. Clicking on a pull-down menu option (or on the second pull-down menu) is all that is needed to access a particular function. If a mouse is not available, press the Alt key while typing the underlined letter in the menu item.

1.1.2.4 Toolbar Buttons

While you are performing a function, the toolbar is displayed in the third region of every window. The toolbar provides a shortcut to the menu options that are used most often. Only the buttons with names displayed in black are active. By clicking on an active button on the toolbar, you initiate the activity you want to perform, such as printing the page.





(Back) Displays the previously viewed page.

Note: This button should not be used during iREMS processing.



(Forward) Displays the next screen in a sequence of screens already viewed.

Note: This button should not be used during iREMS processing.



(Stop) Allows you to terminate the screen loading process.

Note: This button should not be used during iREMS processing.



(Refresh) Displays the newest version of the information on the current Web site.
Note: This does not refresh the pages in iREMS. You must leave the page and return to see updated information.



(Home) Displays the designated home page.

Note: This button should not be used during iREMS processing.



(Search) Allows you to search the text on the screen for key words.



(Favorites) Allows you to create a bookmark for your frequently visited sites.



(Media) Opens window for access to WindowMedia.com



(History) Allows you to view Web pages visited on previous days.



(Mail) Allows you to access mail via Browser mail service.
Note: This is not used for HUD's Lotus Notes.



Prints the page to your default printer.



(Edit) Allow you to edit within Netscape Navigator or Notepad.

Note: This button should not be used during iREMS processing.

1.1.2.5 Location/Address Bar

The Location/Address bar displays the network address of the page currently displayed. You can type a URL (Web address) directly into the Location or Address field.





The Internet Explorer icon indicates whether the system is busy working. When Explorer is loading a page, the flag symbol within the icon waves.

1.1.2.6 Scroll Bars

The scroll bars appear whenever there is more information to display on the screen or in a dialog box or list box. There are horizontal and vertical scroll bars on the bottom and right side of the screen. Clicking on an arrow on the scroll bar causes the display to move left, right, up, or down, so that additional information can be seen.

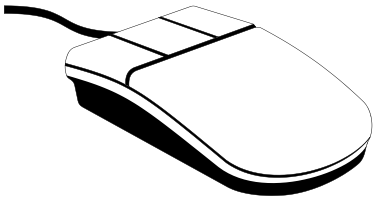


1.1.2.7 Status Bar

The status bar at the bottom of the window displays many types of information, such as the percentage of the document already loaded, the rate at which it is loading, what will be loaded after clicking on the linked text or images, and messages about contacting the server.



1.1.3 Using the Mouse



Before the mouse, computers operated much like their predecessor—the typewriter. As you typed, the cursor moved to the right. To move up or down or to move left or right in the text, you had to use the arrow or navigation keys.

Now you can put your cursor in any area of the screen by moving the mouse. As you move the mouse on your desk, the cursor, or mouse pointer, moves on the page.

1.1.3.1 Holding The Mouse

To hold the mouse properly, place your hand on top of the mouse so your fingers point in the same direction as the mouse "tail" or cable that connects the mouse to the computer. The heel of your hand should rest lightly on the desk or mouse pad. Your thumb and little finger should gently grip the sides of the mouse. To move the mouse, gently slide your hand left or right, forward or back. Focus on wrist motions for greater control.

Some mice have two buttons and others have three. With iREMS, either type of mouse may be used. The left button is used for all actions, and the right button provides access to task menus. To hold the mouse correctly, rest your index finger on the left mouse button.

✍ *Note: If you are left-handed, the mouse buttons can be reversed through the Mouse settings in the Control Panel window. Ask your ATA for assistance with changing your mouse buttons.*

1.1.3.2 Pointing And Clicking With The Mouse

Primarily, a mouse is used to point and select. As the mouse pointer performs different functions, its shape on the screen changes. Generally, the mouse pointer is an arrow (), but it may be displayed as an hourglass () while it is processing or starting an application.

When the mouse pointer is an arrow (), you can select menus and other objects on the screen. In Internet Explorer, when the mouse pointer is a hand with a pointing index finger (), you can select a link or picture to navigate to another screen.

To select an item:

Place the tip of the mouse pointer arrow () on the object, link, or button you want to select and click the left mouse button once. When you select a link or button, its function is performed.

To select more than one word:

1. Place the mouse pointer () at the beginning of the words or phrase.
2. Press the left mouse button and hold it while moving (or "dragging") the pointer to the end of the words or phrase to be selected. The area is highlighted as you move the mouse.
3. Release (or "drop") the mouse button.

✍ *Note: Dragging is especially useful for highlighting or moving text.*

Once an object or word has been selected (appears highlighted), you can deselect it by placing the mouse pointer on it and clicking once more with the left mouse button.

If a procedure instructs you to double-click on or activate an object, rapidly press and release the left mouse button two times in succession.

1.1.3.3 The Right Mouse Button

In HUD XP the right mouse button serves as a shortcut to action menus. In **iREMS**, you generally do not need to use the right mouse button.

To use the right mouse button:

1. Place the mouse cursor on the desired area of the screen and select it with the right mouse button.
2. When the shortcut menu pops up, select a function.



1.1.4 Section 508 Compliance

iREMS was designed to comply with amendments in Section 508 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. This ruling specifies that federal agencies must make electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Internet Explorer replaced Netscape as HUD's preferred browser. Therefore **iREMS** was designed to be compatible with the Internet Explorer browser and meet Section 508 requirements.

The following chart addresses section 1194.22 in Appendix A of the Web Accessibility Guidelines. (Please refer to the HUD Accessibility web page for the entire requirement lists) The table below identifies the requirement and **iREMS** Section 508 compliance.

Section 1194.22 Web-based Internet information and applications requirements:	iREMS Compliance:
(a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).	**iREMS** is operative via keyboard strokes, without the use of the mouse. All items on pages have been labeled with text that can be read by assistive technology such as JAWS.
(b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.	**iREMS** has no multimedia presentation.
(c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.	An ASTERISK will now follow the RED FHA number, used in the heading to identify that there is no primary FHA.
(d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.	**iREMS** does not use style sheets to make things look different.
(e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.	**iREMS** does not use server-side image maps.

Section 1194.22 Web-based Internet information and applications requirements:	iREMS Compliance:
(f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.	A client-side image map is an image map that is run by the browser rather than a server. **iREMS** uses client-side image maps on the Navigation Bar – Alt text is used to identify where the user is on the image.
(g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.	**iREMS** reads each column header with the corresponding row header for information in each cell.
(h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.	**iREMS** does not have any multi-level tables, therefore NO CHANGES WERE REQUIRED IN **iREMS**.
(i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation	**iREMS** pages have separate frames for the header, footer and navigation bar. These items are read first.
(j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.	Not applicable to **iREMS**, therefore NO CHANGES WERE REQUIRED IN iREMS.
(k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.	If we cannot make a page compliant, there is the alternative of creating a text only page. This is the last resort to meet compliance; **iREMS** did not have to implement this to be Sec 508 compliant.
(l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by Assistive Technology.	An example in **iREMS** is the View Physical Inspection Button. The script checks the role and assignments to determine who gets the button and which Alt tag applies.
(m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).	NO CHANGES WERE REQUIRED IN **iREMS**.
(n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using Assistive Technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.	**iREMS** has made changes necessary to become Sec 508 compliant Application can be used with Assistive Technology such as JAWS.
(o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.	NO CHANGES WERE REQUIRED IN iREMS.
(p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.	**iREMS** does not require timed responses, therefore, NO CHANGES WERE REQUIRED IN **iREMS**.

1.1.5 User Guide and Training Materials

The integrated Real Estate Management System (**iREMS**) page has links to the **iREMS** user guides, to the What's New document that explains changes in REMS, and to information about training broadcasts. See Chapter 2, Getting Started, for information on accessing the integrated Real Estate Management System (**iREMS**) page.



Figure 1-2. integrated Real Estate Management System (iREMS) page

1.1.6 Help Line



A national Help Line is available to all **iREMS** users between 8:00 a.m. and 6:30p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday. The individuals staffing the Help Line can assist with any questions or problems that you may encounter while using **iREMS**.

The following procedures will assist the Help Line staff to respond quickly to your inquiry:

1. Write down the error message displayed by the system. Be as specific as possible.
2. Write down the name of the page and what actions were being performed when the message displayed. (Include the keystroke or clicking sequence, if possible.) Example: I completed the

Ownership page with Property ID "2354" and clicked on "Save.". I received the message: "Error: The requested operation could not be performed by the proxy."

3. Try to find the solution in the **iREMS** User's Guide.
4. Call the Help Line at 1-800-767-7588 or e-mail your question to the Real Estate MGMT mailbox (Real_Estate_Mgmt@hud.gov). Hours of operation are: 9:00 AM till 8:00 PM.

✍ *Note: Please make sure you select the correct mailbox in email because there are two mailboxes beginning with the words "Real Estate."*